

Utah Journal of Communication

Publication Aids For Prospective Authors

- *Tips for a Streamlined Peer Review Process*
- *Concise Guide for Preparing GIFT Articles*
- *Academic Book Reviews Explained*
- *The Role of Brief Reports in Peer-Reviewed Journals*



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The Utah Journal of Communication is an open-source, peer-reviewed journal for scholars in the diverse field of communication. While articles by scholars living in Utah, as well as articles covering topics particularly relevant to the state of Utah are especially welcome, all are encouraged to submit their work. Manuscripts from academics, professors, doctoral candidates, and masters candidates always receive full consideration regardless of any Utah connection.

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Editor-in-Chief, Utah Journal of Communication

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Dear Esteemed Colleagues,

I hope this message finds you well. As the Editor-in-Chief of the Utah Journal of Communication (UJOC), it is my pleasure to extend an open invitation to submit your manuscripts for consideration in our upcoming issues. The UJOC is an open-source, peer-reviewed academic journal committed to publishing groundbreaking research and scholarly articles that advance the dynamic field of communication.

In an era marked by rapid technological advances and an overwhelming influx of information, the role of peer-reviewed journals like the UJOC becomes increasingly critical. Peer review serves as a hallmark of academic rigor, ensuring that the research and scholarship we publish meet the highest standards of excellence and reliability. It is through this meticulous scrutiny that we collectively raise the bar for academic discourse, thereby fostering innovation, validity, and integrity in the field of communication.

The continued development of scholarship within this field not only enriches our academic community but also has far-reaching implications for society at large. From enhancing public discourse to informing policy, effective

communication stands as a cornerstone of a functioning democracy and a globalized world. By contributing to peer-reviewed journals, you are playing a vital role in shaping the future of communication, fortifying its intellectual foundations, and ensuring its relevance and adaptability in addressing the challenges and opportunities of our time.

As an editorial board, we are driven by three core goals:

1. **Efficiency and Rigor:** We aim to promptly and efficiently publish material that meets high scholarly standards and serves as an invaluable resource for communication scholars and professionals.
2. **Leading Conversations:** Our journal aims to be at the forefront of debates and discussions concerning all aspects of communication, bringing diverse perspectives to a wide audience.
3. **Regional Influence:** Although we hold a special focus on promoting scholarship within the Intermountain West region, we are committed to making a broad impact in the communication field at large.

Special Issue: Assistance for Prospective Authors

Recognizing the challenges that many face in the process of academic publication, we have designed our next issue to include a series of how-to articles aimed at assisting prospective authors. These articles will cover a wide range of topics, including but not limited to, research methodologies, manuscript preparation, navigating the peer-review process, and effective strategies for scholarly communication. Our goal with this special issue is to demystify the publication process, providing tangible guidance that can support you in your journey towards successful publication.

Open to All

While we especially welcome submissions from scholars residing in Utah or articles that delve into topics particularly relevant to the state, UJOC is open to submissions from academics, professors, doctoral candidates, and master's candidates worldwide. Every submission will receive full consideration, irrespective of geographical location or affiliation.

Submission Guidelines

Detailed information regarding our submission guidelines, peer-review process, and other relevant material can be found on our official website, www.UJOC.org/. We encourage you to review these guidelines carefully before making a submission.

This is an excellent opportunity to contribute to a respected academic journal and to enrich the field of communication. I look forward to receiving your manuscripts and to the engaging, enlightening conversations that they will no doubt inspire.

We thank you for considering the Utah Journal of Communication as a venue for your scholarly work. Let us work together to advance the ever-evolving discourse in the field of communication.

Sincerely,

Dr. Hayden V. Coombs
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Tips For A Streamlined Peer-Review Process

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Abstract

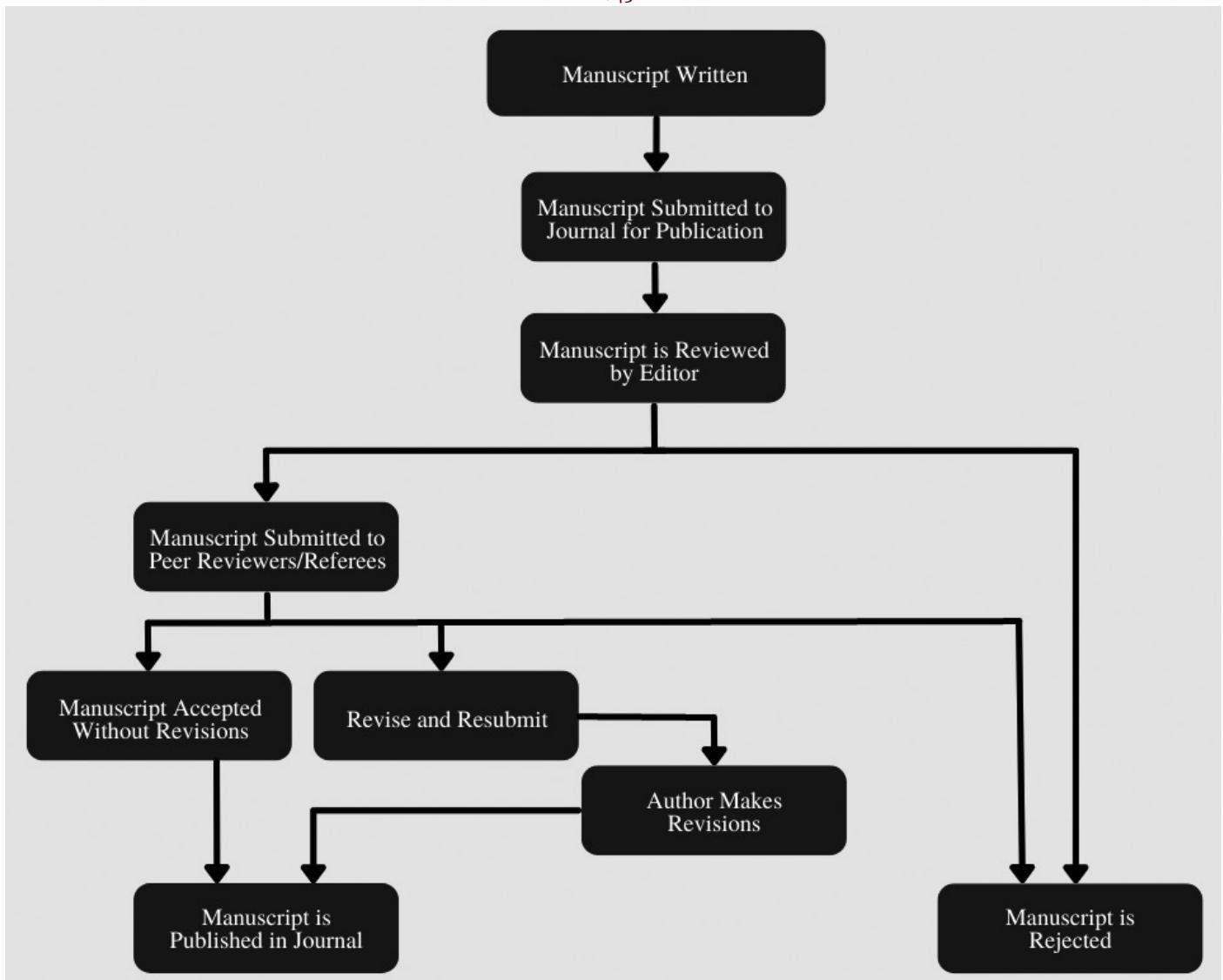
Quality peer reviewing is not only crucial for publications, but it is vital for the career development of academics. Without a standardized review process, academic publications can struggle to organize peer review reports in a way that provides authors with specific and effective feedback. This paper offers publications and referees a structured process that is mutually beneficial for publications and authors alike. The suggestions and methods discussed in this paper were tailored explicitly for the Utah Journal of Communication, an open-access journal that employs a double-blind peer review process, but were also presented in a way generally applicable to all journals with standard peer review practices.

Key words: peer review, referee, scientific research, double-blind review.

The peer-review process, also known as “refereeing,” is the standard practice for academic journals. It allows publications and the academic community to identify potential inaccuracies that may flaw the outcome or the presentation of scientific research (Mayden, 2013). A thorough peer review can provide an accurate assessment of the validity, quality, and originality of an article under review while simultaneously maintaining the integrity of a publication (Berk et al., 2017). The peer review process has become the foundation of the scholarly publication system because it effectively subjects an author’s work to the scrutiny of other experts in the field, thus encouraging authors to strive to produce high-quality research that will advance the field (Kelly et al., 2014). The figure on the next page illustrates how the peer review process is often conducted.

The peer review process is a critical component of the academic publishing process. It serves several essential functions, including:

- **Quality Control:** Peer review helps to ensure that the research published in academic journals is of high quality and meets established standards for scientific or scholarly research.
- **Objectivity:** By having multiple independent experts evaluate a piece of research, peer review helps to ensure that the findings are objective and unbiased.
- **Feedback:** Peer reviewers provide feedback to the authors on the strengths and weaknesses of their work, which can help to improve the quality of the research.
- **Credibility:** Peer-reviewed publications are generally considered more credible and trustworthy than non-peer-reviewed sources, as they have undergone a rigorous evaluation process.



- **Filtering:** Peer review helps to filter out lower-quality research, saving researchers time and effort when searching for relevant literature on a topic.

The peer review process is essential for maintaining the integrity and reliability of academic research and ensuring that the published work is of high quality and makes a valuable contribution to the field.

Double-Blind Review

The double-blind peer review process is used to evaluate academic or scientific publications in which the identities of the reviewers and the authors are kept anonymous. This method is intended to prevent bias and ensure that the evaluation is based solely on the content of the publication. In a double-blind review, the author's name and other identifying information are removed from the manuscript before it is sent to the reviewers. The reviewers' names are also kept confidential from the authors, to allow for a more objective and fair assessment of the work.

Steps to a Successful Peer Review

Peer reviewing an academic article involves a critical evaluation of the research and its methods, as well as providing feedback to the author. Here are some steps to follow when peer reviewing an article:

1. **Read the article carefully:** Read the article thoroughly and understand the main argument and findings presented. Notify the editor immediately if there is a conflict of interest.
2. **Examine the research question(s):** Be sure to evaluate the importance of the research questions as stated in the manuscript. Objectives and justification should be aligned with the research questions. The term "alignment" refers to the logical and congruent progression between each element of the academic and scientific research process.
3. **Evaluate the methodology:** Assess whether the research methods used are appropriate for the study and whether the data is analyzed correctly.
4. **Assess the originality:** Verify that the content of the article is original and that the author has properly cited any sources used. Evaluate

how the research contributes to the field.

- Identify strengths and weaknesses: Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the article, highlighting any errors or inconsistencies in the research.
- Provide constructive feedback: Provide specific and actionable feedback to the author on how to improve the article.
- Make recommendations: Based on your evaluation, recommend whether the article should be accepted, rejected, or revised.
- Maintain anonymity: Remember to maintain the anonymity of both the authors and the re-viewers during the process.
- Make a final recommendation: State whether you recommend if the manuscript should be accepted, accepted with revisions (also known as “R&R,” or revise and resubmit), or out-right rejected. Remember that the final decision will be that of the editor-in-chief or editorial board.

It's important to keep in mind that the peer review process is not about rejecting papers, but instead about helping authors improve their papers. Thus, even if the manuscript is not ready for publication, it's important to give the authors detailed feedback and guidance on how to improve their work.

Conclusion

The peer review process is fundamental in assisting editors in selecting credible, high-quality research papers to publish in scientific journals and ensuring the correction of any errors or issues present in submitted papers (Kelly et al., 2014). While this article attempts to provide a general framework for refereeing original research manuscripts, no universally accepted means of peer review exists. However, new and experienced referees alike can take comfort in the notion that, like writing scientific articles, refereeing is an ongoing process that rewards you with knowledge and experience (Lippi, 2018). Aside from ensuring that only quality research papers are released into the scientific community, refereeing can also benefit your career as a researcher as you develop expertise in your respective field, enhance your critical thinking skills, network with publishers and fellow researchers, demonstrate credibility to your peers, contribute to the academic and scientific communities, and advance your career.

References

Berk, J. B., Harvey, C. R., & Hirshleifer, D. (2017). How to write an effective referee report and improve the scientific review process. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 31(1), 231–244. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.31.1.231>

Kelly, J., Sadeghieh, T., & Adeli, K. (2014). Peer Review in Scientific Publications: Benefits, Critiques, & A Survival Guide. *EJIFCC*, 25(3), 227–243.

Lippi, G. (2018). How do I peer-review A scientific article?—a personal perspective. *Annals of Translational Medicine*, 6(3), 68–68. <https://doi.org/10.21037/atm.2017.12.15>

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Concise Guide for Preparing GIFT Articles

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Abstract

This paper presents a suggested format for “Great Ideas for Teaching” (GIFT) articles. GIFT panels are frequently among the most well-attended panel sessions at academic conferences. While this paper offers guidelines specifically for the Utah Journal of Communication, the format presented is applicable to a wide range of publications in the social sciences.

Keywords: *GIFT, Great ideas for teaching, GIFTS, Great ideas for teaching students.*

The term, “GIFT,” is an acronym that stands for “Great Ideas for Teaching.” GIFT articles, also known as “GIFTS” (great ideas for teaching students), are those articles in peer-reviewed journals focused on classroom activities designed to engage students (O’Keefe, 2013).

Going beyond the traditional, “read the text, look at the slides” method of instruction, GIFTs offer educators across the diverse field of communication studies with innovative, engaging, and exciting instructional methods and lesson plans. As such, GIFT articles should be based upon a classroom-tested principle, theory, or concept the author wants to magnify.

How to Write a GIFT?

To create a GIFT, consider the following example. An often-discussed interpersonal communication theory in the basic communication course (as well as in designated interpersonal communication courses) is Steve

Duck’s Relationship Dissolution Model. This model outlines the four phases that relationships pass through on their way to termination (Duck, 1998). The final phase, grave dressing, refers to communication behaviors partners exhibit in “tidying up” and creating an official ending story (Duck, 1998). This is where the GIFT can occur as instructors search for a way to make these phases memorable and applicable for students.

One avenue in exploring this final phase could be to ask students to share their experiences in what they have heard people say about why their relationship ended. Instructors may opt to introduce some fun research skills by asking them: What is common among these stories? Follow up thoughts might be: Why would people choose to tell the story “This way”?

However, instructors could also choose to go bigger by having students find stories online either in writing or videos that could, in turn,

be analyzed for themes. Such work can help students think about their own experiences and better understand the value of “stories” as well as how to structure messages to achieve a particular goal (see Barton & Turman, 2008).

The genesis for other GIFTs may come in the form of classroom management issues such as: How can I get students more committed to reading the syllabus or other descriptive course links to answer some of their own questions? One approach might be to turn this exploration process into a game (see Stein & Barton, 2018). This type of GIFT is simply looking for answers to common concerns instructors have and offering effective solutions.

Formatting your GIFT

Innovative pedagogy can come in many forms, including original teaching ideas, lesson plans, semester-long activities, and classroom assessments.

Original teaching ideas may address any communication course, including research methods, technologies, theory, interpersonal, intercultural, instructional, mass, organizational, public relations, media studies, and public speaking, whether introductory or advanced (NCA, n.d.).

A complete GIFT submission should contain the following components:

1. a brief title,
2. the course(s) for which the activity is intended,
3. the objective(s) or learning outcome(s) for the activity,
4. a brief theoretical rationale for conducting the activity,
5. a description/explanation of the activity, including any preparation/preliminary steps and necessary materials,
6. a debriefing, including typical results,
7. an appraisal of the activity, including any limitations or variations, and
8. references.

Unit activities or semester-long activities may entail an original teaching activity that takes place throughout an entire class unit that spans several days or weeks or even throughout the semester. Unit and semester-long activities should follow the same format as the single class activity, but will likely be longer than a standard GIFT article.

Classroom assessment articles involve systematic reflection and analysis of instructional practices that improve the quality of specific courses or overall programs (NCA, n.d.). Assessment articles should be data driven and provide

educators an opportunity to modify their instructional practices based on the results of such studies.

Assessment articles should contain the following components:

1. a brief title;
2. the assessed course or program;
3. an abstract of 100 words or less;
4. a brief statement of the problem and theoretical rationale;
5. the research question(s) or hypothesis(es);
6. the method for data collection;
7. the results;
8. a discussion of the implications of the results on instructional practice; and
9. references.

Suggested Readings

The following articles are examples of peer-reviewed GIFT articles that were well-written and appropriately formatted.

- Barton, M. H., & Turman, P. D. (2008). “We decided to call it quits”: An exercise in applying Duck’s dissolution model to students’ breakup stories. *Communication Teacher*, 22(2), 35–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17404620802023177>
- Bergstrom, K. (2020). Who is playing Pokémon go? an observational activity. *Communication Teacher*, 35(2), 93–97. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2020.1839113>
- Cunha, F. R., van Kruistum, C., & van Oers, B. (2016). Teachers and facebook: Using online groups to improve students’ communication and engagement in Education. *Communication Teacher*, 30(4), 228–241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2016.1219039>
- Jong, W. (2020). Public leadership in times of crisis: Lessons to learn from a crisis communication point of view. *Communication Teacher*, 35(2), 86–92. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2020.1824296>
- McWhorter, C. (2020). Black hair in the media: Racial portrayals are more than skin deep. *Communication Teacher*, 35(1), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2020.1807033>
- Stein, K. A., & Barton, M. H. (2019). The “easter egg” syllabus: Using hidden content to engage online and blended classroom learners. *Communication Teacher*, 33(4), 249–255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2019.1575440>
- Zhao, X. (2020). Auditing the “me inc.”: Teaching personal branding on linkedin through an experiential learning method. *Communication Teacher*, 35(1), 37–42.

Conclusion

The UJOC Editorial Board invites all communication educators to take a step back and identify those teaching ideas and practices that should be shared through a GIFT article. Some of these teaching gems will be brand new, while others may be those that have stood the test of time. Searching a variety of journals that publish GIFT articles like the *Communication Teacher*, published by the National Communication Association, is a great place to begin. Below is a list of suggested readings and examples of well-written GIFT articles for educators new to this style of scholarly publication.

References

Barton, M. H., & Turman, P. D. (2008). "We decided to call it quits": An exercise in applying Duck's dissolution model to students' breakup stories. *Communication Teacher*, 22(2), 35–38. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17404620802023177>

Duck, S. (1998). *Human relationships*. Sage.

National Communication Association. (n.d.). Aims and Scopes. *Communication Teacher*. Retrieved February 20, 2023, from <https://www.tandfonline.com/action/>

O'Keefe, P. (2013). Gifts from our journals: Transferring notes in the margin to teachable moments. *Western Journal of Communication*, 77(1), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10570314.2012.742925>

Stein, K. A., & Barton, M. H. (2019). The "easter egg" syllabus: Using hidden content to engage online and blended classroom learners. *Communication Teacher*, 33(4), 249–255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17404622.2019.1575440>

Academic Book Reviews Explained

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Abstract

Academic book reviews provide a valuable service to the academic community by critically evaluating new works, promoting the development of scholarship, and contributing to the quality of academic publishing. A well-crafted book review offers thought-provoking perspectives and encourages discussion and debate among scholars. The Utah Journal of Communication (UJOC) seeks book reviews for upcoming issues. This paper outlines the rationale and process for writing and submitting book reviews to the UJOC.

Keyword: Book reviews, Academic publishing, Academic book reviews

The Utah Journal of Communication seeks book reviews that further its mission to publish informative, academically rigorous scholarship benefiting communication scholars and professionals in intellectual pursuits and career development. This paper provides a succinct rationale that explores the purpose and potential benefits of book reviews. It also proposes guidelines and strategies for writing effective book reviews.

Rationale

When they are approached with the same intellectual rigor that characterizes effective research, academic book reviews provide a valuable service and play a significant role in the scholarly community. They are compelling, authoritative, and useful. They serve an important role in the process of peer review, identified by Biagioli (2002) as “one of the fundamental conditions of possibility of academic knowledge and the construction of its

value” (p. 11).

Overall, effective book reviews contribute most, if not all, of the following benefits:

- A summary and synthesis that distills the author's primary points or arguments while highlighting key insights and contributions to the greater body of knowledge (Wessely, 2000).
- Critical evaluation of the book's content, research method, and/or arguments, providing benchmarks for measuring its quality and reliability (Lindholm-Romantschuk, 1998).
- A suggested context for viewing the book's place in related scholarship with an emphasis on its relevance and role in broader academic conversations (Felber, 2002; Lindholm-Romantschuk, 1998).
- A basis for scholarly exchange that leads to productive debate and discussion; greater understanding of contemporary issues in

- the field; ideas and strategies for effective teaching; and/or development of new research directions or questions (Hartley, 2006).
- Exposure to new ideas and emerging scholars in both familiar and allied disciplines, suggesting fresh perspectives on existing ideas or theories while encouraging interdisciplinary research and cooperation (Lee et al, 2010; Lindholm-Romantschuk, 1998).
- Recommendations that identify specific target audiences while providing a frank assessment of whether the book merits the time and expense of purchase and reading (Stahl, 2018).

Likewise, reviewers themselves play an important part in the academic process. Citing Toner (1997) and Miranda (1996), Lee et al. (2010) identified this role as contributing to scholarly literature “by acting as entrusted critic(s), with the responsibility of informing the readership of seminal works and warning it of inaccurate scholarship” (p. 60). Despite the reality that “academic administrators do not view book reviews very favorably” (East, 2011), one scholar has argued that effective reviews are “rhetorically and interactionally complex and represent a carefully crafted social accomplishment” (Hyland, 2004, pp. 43-44).

Some 25 years earlier, in the first edition of their annual review of literary scholarship and subsequently in a journal article on academic publishing, Hoge and West (1979) called on universities to reward worthwhile book-reviewing on the same plane as peer-reviewed scholarship. They defined “worthwhile” by advocating stringent standards for reviews and criticized reviews that were “brief, impressionistic, formulaic, bland, badly written, or, most distressing of all, nothing more than sales pitches or gratuitous hatchet jobs, ever so thinly disguised” (p. 35).

In short, effective book reviews benefit peers and students by saving them time, stimulating critical thought and scholarly debate, and providing useful directions for future teaching and research (Lee et al., 2010; Brown, 2018). Reviewers play an important role in the scholarly process when their reviews are accurate, conscientious, balanced, and free of bias, and they should be rewarded commensurately (Hoge & West, 1979; Hyland, 2004).

Reviewing for UJOC

At times, the UJOC Book Review Editor will invite reviews of specific books. However, in most cases, reviewers will choose their own books. An appropriate book for review will have been

published no more than three years earlier than a particular UJOC issue’s publication date. The book must be relevant, both to communication and to the reviewer’s own expertise. Reviewers are expected to possess knowledge or background in the book topic. They should avoid reviewing books by authors they know personally or with whom they have a conflict of interest, whether real or perceived. Finally, reviewers should avoid books on subjects about which they harbor strong emotions, especially if they believe they could not review the book fairly and professionally.

After choosing a book to review, the reviewer should read the book — the entire book, including foreword, preface, acknowledgements, references, index, and appendices — at least once, and preferably twice. During the process, it is advisable to take notes on significant points and annotate specific passages. Most reviewers also make notes in the book’s margins as they read. Observations are more likely to be effective if they focus on the following:

- The central question or issue the book addresses.
- The book’s premises and argument or thesis.
- How the book is organized to support the argument or thesis.
- Whether the author(s) provides sufficient evidence to support his/her/their claim(s).
- Whether the evidence is based on credible, relevant sources.
- Whether the author(s) fails to recognize or cite relevant research or evidence.
- The extent to which the author or authors achieve his/her/their purpose.

Preliminary evaluation begins as the reviewer reads the book and takes notes. However, honest reviewers avoid making final judgments about the value or contribution of a book until after they have read it and prepared complete, detailed notes. Only at that point should the reviewer engage in critical evaluation that helps him/her/ them reach a fair, balanced conclusion about the book and its value.

Review Content

UJOC reviews should begin with a bold-faced heading that reflects the author or authors’ name(s), the book’s complete title (including edition number, if applicable), the publisher, the year of publication, the number of pages, and the price. On the next double-spaced line, the reviewer should insert his/her/their name and affiliation. A complete example can be seen on the next page:

Olga Baysha, Democracy, Populism, and Neoliberalism in Ukraine: On the Fringes of the Virtual and the Real, Routledge, 2023, 140 pages, \$52 hardcover, \$20 paperback, \$20 digital.
Oxana Shevel, Tufts University

The review should begin with a compelling introduction that focuses on three things: the book's context, its primary argument or thesis, and the reviewer's overall evaluation. The latter may be brief, but it should include an opinion about the book's place in the broader context of academic/scholarly inquiry in the field.

The balance of the review should include the following, as applicable:

- A concise summary of the book's content (primary arguments/thesis, premises, evidence, and conclusions). This summary should be objective and content-neutral; it should allow the reader to each conclusion about the value of the content without the reviewer's input. The summary should not be written as a chapter-by-chapter recap, but as an overall synthesis of the content.
- A critical analysis of the book. Because this analysis constitutes the heart of the review, the reviewer should focus on:
 - » Research method, if applicable. Is it appropriate for the topic? Is it effective?
 - » Argument or thesis. Is it supported by the evidence? Is it coherent? Does it draw unfounded conclusions?
 - » Evidence. Are primary and secondary sources cited and referenced? Are they relevant? Does the book ignore or fail to recognize relevant research in the field?
 - » Organization. Is the book's structure logical? Is it easy to follow?
 - » Writing. Is the prose clear and effective? Does it speak to the target audience on its level?
 - » Contribution. Does the book add to the body of knowledge in the field? Or does it merely parrot extant research? In what ways, if any, does it advance scholarly inquiry in a meaningful way?
- In addition to the critical analysis, reviewers might also:
 - » Offer specific criticisms, as needed. Address significant shortcomings through constructive criticism and offer recommendations for improvement.
 - » Provide a recommendation. Based on its merit, should other scholars buy this book or require students to buy it? Recommendations should be explained.
 - » Conclude on a positive note. To the extent that it is possible, the final paragraph should accentuate the book's upside. (On the other hand, reviewers should not

- feel obligated to embellish or otherwise misrepresent the book's value or its place in the scholarly literature of the field.)
- » Cite sources and provide references for evidence or commentary referenced in the critical analysis.

Please avoid vague criticisms based on typographical errors or minor errors of fact, unless these errors are so numerous that they raise questions about the overall quality and reliability of the book. Bear in mind that this is the author's book, not the reviewer's book. Reviewers need not criticize the author for failing to write the book that they think the author should have written.

Rules of the Road

UJOC book reviews should conform to the following conventions:

- Style. UJOC is an APA-style publication. All citations and references must adhere to the 7th edition of the APA Publication Manual.
- Length. Reviews should be a minimum of 750 words but should not exceed 1,500 words.
- Quotations. Opinions and other references to the book should be accompanied by direct quotations; quotations should include page numbers.
- Writing. Guido H. Stempel III served as editor of Journalism Quarterly from 1972 to 1989. As Distinguished Professor in the E. W. Scripps School of Journalism at Ohio University, he would tell students, "The greatest need in contemporary academic writing is a return to the simple, subject-verb-object sentence" (personal communication, October 17, 1995). That declaration is as true today as it was nearly 28 years ago. The simple declarative sentence is the workhorse of clear, effective scholarly prose. Academic writers would do well to heed Dr. Stempel's advice.

To summarize, academic book reviews provide a valuable service to the scholarly community by critically evaluating new works, promoting the development of scholarship, and contributing to the quality of academic publishing. A reviewer's overall evaluation of a book may be favorable or unfavorable. However, the reviewer's tone should always be courteous. In all instances, a reviewer owes the reader and the author(s) a fair assessment of a book's contents and conclusions.

To submit book reviews to the Utah Journal of Communication, please send them to submissions@ujoc.org and insert the words Attention: Book Review Editor in the subject line.

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The Role of Brief Reports in Peer-Reviewed Journals

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Abstract

The prevalent emphasis on the length of academic papers can compromise the quality and relevance of scholarly research. Such an undue focus often results in overlooking valuable insights that may not conform to conventional paper-length criteria. This article advocates for the recognition and utilization of brief reports in academic publishing. These reports, characterized by their conciseness, ensure that valuable findings are disseminated without the need for unnecessary elaboration. Five types of brief reports are highlighted: Conceptual Papers, which present hypotheses based on preliminary data; Case Studies, which provide insights from specific events; Viewpoints, offering unique perspectives from scholars based on their experiences or affiliations; Literature Reviews, offering exhaustive and current overviews on specific topics; and Technical Reports, which bridge the gap between academia and practical applications. Emphasizing the value and brevity of content, rather than length, can enhance the richness and diversity of academic literature, benefiting the entire communication research community.

Key Words: *Brief report, Academic publishing*

Too often, an individual scholar's benchmark for quality academic scholarship includes the unnecessary expectation for each paper to be lengthy. As a PhD student, I remember PhD candidates scrambling to make their dissertations as long as possible, hitting arbitrary page-length goals. I also remember being at a conference and overhearing a faculty member boasting to his students about the length of his own dissertation. This focus on length is both unnecessary and can have a negative impact on the quality of academic research. “Unfortunately, instead of enhancing your article, overwhelming details may become a distraction to your readers” (Surprenant, 2022, p. 1).

One of the existing remedies to this convolution is the brief report. A brief report can take many forms, as outlined below. But each version of the brief report has an essential similarity, which is brevity. Brief reports allow scholars the opportunity to publish important and valuable findings without having to go through the arduous and unnecessary task of lengthening a manuscript to fit a journal's expectations.

The key to any brief report however, is that it does provide obvious value to scholars in the field. While the bar for manuscript length is lowered, the bar for academic excellence should not be.

Brief Report Types

Five brief report types are listed below. However, this should not be considered an exhaustive list.

Conceptual Papers

A conceptual paper focuses on a researcher's developing hypothesis using preliminary, or even incomplete data. The paper may also focus on a finding that is part of a larger research project, and may not be properly highlighted in a longer-length article. One example of a conceptual brief report comes from Chung, Lee, & Keum (2023). In less than 3,500 words, these authors successfully and concisely explain their study about the association of online hate and social norms. The paper quickly manages to provide valuable information to the communication research community.

Case Studies

The case study is a common form of academic writing, often focusing on a single event, or series of events. In these types of papers, there is something valuable to learn from the episode. For example, crisis communication publications are often focused on specific events that can be classified as a crisis. These case studies can convey the appropriate information rather briefly, like Benoit's (2018) analysis of an incident with United Airlines, which was written in less than 3,000 words.

Viewpoints

Viewpoint articles often don't look like traditional articles, in that they take a different approach. Oftentimes a scholar will have a very unique, but valuable perspective because of their previous experience, geographical location, relationships with important actors, etc. Being able to publish and archive these unique outlooks can have great value to other researchers. Therefore, even though these types of articles don't usually have a great deal of accompanying data, they can still benefit the field. For example, a recent publication about the problematic integration theory (Kwitonda & Babrow, 2023) features co-author Austin Babrow, the scholar that introduced the theory to the field. His unique viewpoint on this theory provides an obvious value that other scholars cannot replicate.

Literature Reviews

While literature reviews are often only one piece of the puzzle when putting together a manuscript, occasionally a review of literature that is both exhaustive and current can provide value to the field completely on its own. For example, Porismita Borah (2011) completed a systematic review of all literature surrounding framing

theory, which served as a great starting point for many framing studies for several years, resulting in over 1,000 citations.

Technical Reports

Finally, technical reports represent the applied side of communication research, giving practitioners an opportunity to publish their findings from experiences and projects that are happening outside of academia. These reports can be especially beneficial in integrated communication marketing fields. For instance, Bright and Bagley (2017) published a report on the work that was completed for the Gulf States Health Policy Center. The report is very practical in its application, and yet serves as a great resource for those working in similar fields.

Conclusion

As long as value is not deserted, brief reports are an underutilized resource in the field of communication. There exists so much precious information that has not cracked the academic pipeline because it does not do well in the traditional research format. If publishers and authors both made brief reports a more common approach to dissemination, the communication research community would greatly benefit.

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Call for Manuscripts

The UJOC aims to be a general forum for communication scholarship, and all theoretical approaches and methods of scholarly inquiry are welcome. Submitted manuscripts should make original contributions to academic research in communication studies and address critical, theoretical, and empirical questions in communication relevant to scholars within and across specializations.

The UJOC is an open access journal available to all at no cost. While articles by scholars living in Utah, as well as articles covering topics particularly relevant to Utah are especially welcome, we encourage authors from all places to submit their work to this issue of the UJOC. Every paper receives full consideration regardless of any Utah connection. At least one article of each issue will be reserved for a current masters or doctoral candidate.

Original Research

All submitted manuscripts should include an abstract of 100–200 words and five keywords. The standard article length is 3000–4000 words, including references, tables, figures, and notes. The organization is mainly dependent on the methodological tradition used. However, all submitted manuscripts should include a title page, an introduction, a literature review, a methodological summary, a report of results and findings, a discussion that explains the impact and analysis of the study, and a conclusion that considers the study's limitations and implications for future research. The UJOC adheres strictly to the 7th edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA 7). Submitted manuscripts should include:

- Title page with full article title and each author's complete name and institutional affiliation.
- Abstract of 100–200 words and five keywords at the end of the abstract.
- Text
 - » Begin article text with introduction.
 - » Headings and subheadings should be completed in accordance to APA 7.
 - » Each text citation there have a corresponding citation in the reference list and each reference list citation must have a corresponding text citation. The reference list should also be completed in accordance to APA 7.

Book Reviews

Scholars who are interested in publishing an academic book review in the UJOC should give careful consideration when selecting a book and preparing their submission.

Books under review should have been published within last three years. The subject of book must be relevant to the field of communication, as well as the the focus and scope of the UJOC. The subject of the book should also be relevant to the expertise and field of study or practice of the reviewer; one must possess adequate knowledge or background in the subject. Reviewers should also avoid books written by an author they know personally, or for which there may exists some real or perceived conflict of interest. Reviewers should also avoid subjects about which you feel strong emotion or that you do not believe you can review fairly and professionally.

Completed book reviews should be only 1,000–2000 words in length and contain the following elements:

- Author, title in full, place, publisher, date, edition statement, number of pages, price.
- Reviewer's name, institution.
- A description of the topic, scope, and purpose of the book.
- Relevant information about the author or editor.
- The author's point of view or frame of reference.
- The thesis or message of the book.
- The school of thought or scholarly current that the book arises from.
- Comment on intended audience or readership.
- Evaluation of the author's success in achieving their purpose.
- Contribution to knowledge in the field.

GIFTs

Occasionally, the UJOC will publish “Great Ideas For Teaching” articles that focus on innovative pedagogy. Articles include original teaching ideas, lesson plans, semester-long activities, and classroom assessments.

Original Teaching Ideas

Communication educators in all contexts are invited to submit original teaching activities for classroom implementation. Activities may

address any communication course, including research methods, technologies, theory, interpersonal, intercultural, instructional, mass, organizational, public relations, media studies, and public speaking, whether introductory or advanced. Single Class submissions should generally contain no more than 1500 words.

Unit Activities

This may entail an original teaching activity that takes place throughout an entire class unit that spans several days or weeks. A unit activity should follow the same format as the single class activity, and should contain no more than 2000 words.

Semester-long Activities

Original teaching activities that outline a semester-long project or approach to an entire course are also welcome. These manuscripts should follow the same format the single class activity and should generally contain no more than 2500 words.

Assessment Articles

Communication educators in all contexts are invited to submit original assessment research. Assessment involves systematic reflection upon and analysis of instructional practices and challenges communication educators to monitor student learning as well as improve the quality of specific courses or overall programs. Assessment articles should be data driven, qualitative or quantitative. Assessment research provides educators an opportunity to modify their instructional practices based on the results of such studies. Submissions should generally contain no more than 3,500 words.

Brief Reports

The UJOC will occasionally accept and publish brief reports. Brief reports are shorter than traditional submissions and often do not meet the typical rigor expectations of more developed papers. However, any brief report should provide obvious value to scholars in the field of communication.

Submission Types

Conceptual Paper: Focuses on developing hypotheses and/or research questions. Often preliminary or incomplete data is used to support concepts the author(s) is developing.

Case Study: Applies communication theory or conceptual frameworks to interventions, experiences, or events that provide new insight and understanding to the field of communication.

Viewpoint: Papers that rely heavily on the author(s)' interpretation of data, artifacts, or

events, more so than in traditional research papers.

Literature Review: These papers should only be submitted if the literature review provides a comprehensive update of literature on a specific communication theory or concept that hasn't been previously published by any author.

Technical Report: These reports usually reflect applied work done by the author(s) in practical and professional contexts.

What to Include

- A brief title,
- Submission type,
- Abstract with up to five key words,
- Main text (headings will vary depending on submission type),
- Include any tables and figures in the main text (tables and figures should be used sparingly in brief reports),
- References.

Peer Review Process

Manuscripts considered by the UJOC Managing Board to be of sufficient quality and in line with the UJOC mission will be sent to two members of the UJOC Editorial Board. The editorial board editors will serve as the peer reviewers of the double-blind review for those works deemed ready for external review. All reviewer feedback is then sent to the UJOC Managing Board, which will send a final decision letter to the corresponding author. The UJOC Managing Board retains the right to make changes in accepted manuscripts that do not substantially alter meaning, as well as for grammatical, stylistic, and spatial considerations.

Publication Schedule

Topic/Issue	Submission Deadline	Publication
General 1.1	12/18/22	April 2023
Apologia 1.2	8/31/23	Nov. 2023
General 2.1	12/18/23	May 2024
Sports 2.2	7/31/24	Nov. 2024
General 3.1	12/18/24	May 2025
National Parks 3.2	7/31/25	Nov. 2025

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