

Training for All: Training for the Editorial Office and Beyond

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At the heart of a successful journal lies its editorial office. The objective of this session was to prepare editorial offices, publishers, and societies with tools for successful journal and editorial office training and management. The session also highlighted the importance of standardizing policies, documentation, and workflows for everyone involved with the journal, whether it be editorial and production staff, journal managers, or peer reviewers.

Editorial Staff Training

Jennifer Mahar, from Origin Editorial and Editorial Evolution, started out the session with the importance of training your editorial staff. The keys to a well-run editorial office include communication, time management, reporting, policies, and workflow. Training programs also aim to equip editorial staff with the necessary skills and knowledge to manage journals and publication. Mahar explained that not only is it vital for new hires in the editorial office to have a mentor available for support during the initial month, but thorough author instructions, introduction to peer review, policies/procedures, and organizational charts should also be provided to assist a smooth onboarding process. Journal managers must also define their expectations of their staff, from turnaround times to work hours. She added that if a journal manager is not clear on expectations on both sides, the new hire will not get their tasks done in the way that the manager expects. Journal managers need to be clear in their communication to staff.

<https://doi.org/10.36591/SE-4703-03>

Added value training ought to be provided to editorial staff. Journal managers need to encourage their staff to become familiar with author instructions, style guides, standardized forms, policies, and procedure manuals. Ethics and social media training is becoming increasingly more important. Everyone involved with the journal should be encouraged to participate in continuing education, attending conferences or online seminars, and subscribe to blogs and newsletters. Mahar added that there is a training module at your staff's disposal for just about everything. Mahar provided follow up documents as Supplemental Material.

Training Production Staff

Danny Lambert, Scholarly Publishing Professional, provided insights on developing production staff. He explained that the primary responsibilities of production staff are the operations and project management of journals and books, which serve as a valuable training ground for early career staff. Other primary responsibilities are ensuring on-time delivery of content and maintaining quality through proofreading and other quality control measures.

Technical and customer service writing are also valuable skills the production staff should possess. The language of internal documentation and customer service emails should be kept simple; their instructions should be tangible and easy to follow. Lambert emphasized to be aware of your audience and use plain language. Authors are among a publisher's most valuable customers. It is helpful to paraphrase what they are saying to show that you care. He noted that LinkedIn Learning's Customer Service Email writing course (<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/writing-customer-service-emails-22379835>) is a valuable resource for training production staff in customer service and even technical writing. Coaching and cross-training among staff are other valuable activities.

Journal Management Training

Next, Ginny Herbert, from AIP Publishing, discussed how journal managers act as diplomats and wear many hats within their organizations. She noted that they "translate the organization's vision into product-level strategy and drive execution through relationship management." Building these relationships is crucial for effective journal management. The role of journal manager can also be defined by 4 core competencies: 1) relationship management, 2) project management, 3) product strategy, and 4) industry knowledge.

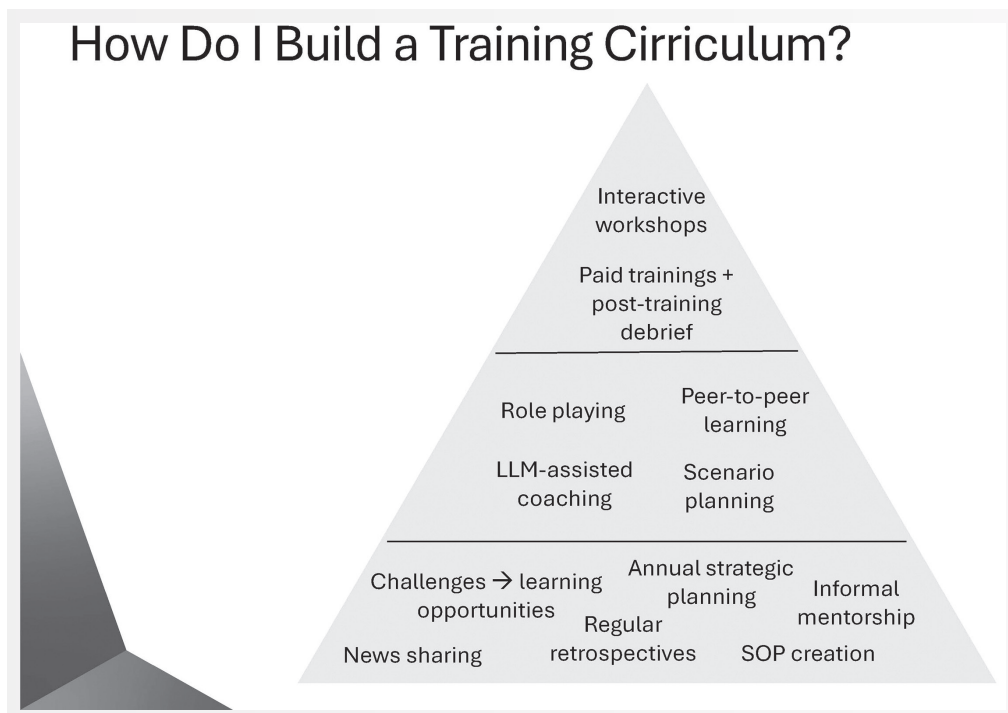


Figure. Commonly used style guides during the manuscript editing process. Image Credit: Peter J Olson.

Herbert discussed how journal managers should encourage active learning with their teams by having team members teach each other a new skill, then assign a project so they can practice what they have learned. She noted that this is a far more effective way to learn and retain new skills and can foster collaboration between the person doing the training and those who are learning. Teams with greater emotional intelligence and personality diversity are more successful. The more curiosity, the better.

Herbert included a training curriculum pyramid (Figure) to showcase what journal managers can provide to benefit their editorial teams. The base of the pyramid includes basics like being a good manager by fostering informal mentorship and sharing news with your team to help with training and curiosity. The middle focuses on role playing and peer-to-peer learning. The top level includes interactive workshops and training, which, despite being time-consuming and expensive, are the most important.

Review Training

Lastly, Jason Roberts, from Origin Editorial, ended the session with a discussion on conceptualizing reviewer training. He remarked that there is a great need for reviewer training as it is likely that most reviewers have received little training. Organizations may not be responsible for training reviewers; however, by doing so, journals and societies can boost the number of qualified reviewers in their pool.

Journal-led training and developing a training philosophy are crucial not only for having good reviewers but also for engagement to help foster loyalty and turn those reviewers into potential authors. He emphasized that this is a chance for journals and societies to model, improve, and diversify the pool of future researchers and reviewers.

Training efforts should target various groups, including early career researchers who may lack adequate mentorship, underrepresented populations to diversify reviewer pools and improve peer-review quality, society members who could benefit from peer review training as a membership benefit, patient reviewers to offer unique perspectives on research, and mentorship programs that can be conducted virtually with proper oversight. Roberts added that training methods may include webinars for group sessions, on-the-job experiential learning under guidance, and slide shows or written materials for self-paced learning.

Roberts went on to explain that the training of peer reviewers should aim for a balanced approach, focusing on such areas as defining what makes a good reviewer and establishing clear criteria for effective peer review. It is important to model good behavior by focusing on reviewers who do good reviews and promote their reviews and why they were good. Journals can provide reviewers with acceptance and rejection criteria that covers methodological reasons, as well as poor reporting, statistical, and writing problems.