



**PLOTINA SUMMER SCHOOL  
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**CONDUCTING PEER REVIEW**

**Dr. Eda Ulus  
University of Leicester**

# OVERVIEW OF PEER REVIEW PROCESS

- Submission of manuscript to a journal or grant scheme, to double-blind peer review – neither the author nor the reviewers will see the names of one another
- This session focusses mostly on the reviewing for journals
- After submitting to a journal, generally there can be the following outcomes: Desk-rejection by Editor; or manuscript sent to (usually 3) reviewers
- After reviews are complete, the Editor makes a decision based upon the reviews, which could be Rejection after review or a ‘Revise and resubmit’ decision
  - *Reviewers are underappreciated but central to the process of article publications*



# CONDUCTING PEER REVIEWS

## MY GUIDING PRINCIPLE – *CRITICISM WITH CARE*

From the work of Professor Yiannis Gabriel:

*Criticism can be destructive. This is especially so if it is experienced as unfair; but even fair criticism can undermine or destroy a theory, a process or a person in their early stages of development.*

*Thus many a good idea has been killed by criticism. Many promising organizational members have been discouraged or devastated by harsh criticism by their leaders. (Gabriel, 2009: 382).*

*Care without criticism destroys learning every bit as certainly as criticism without care. (Gabriel, 2009: 384)*

Now thinking of these points in relation to reviews...

Gabriel Y. (2009) Reconciling an Ethic of Care with Critical Management Pedagogy. *Management Learning* 40: 379-385.



# CONDUCTING PEER REVIEWS

## MY GUIDING PRINCIPLE – *CRITICISM WITH CARE*

- When beginning to review, it is crucial to engage in reflexive thinking about one's own biases, theory and methods preferences, limitations in knowledge, and so on, so that these do not negatively affect assessing the author's work
- My focus: What are the ideas in the paper?  
How can I help to support the development of the paper?  
What parts need clarity?  
Are the contributions clear?
- Start with constructive comments, and suggestions/criticisms should be delivered with care
  - Think about how we would like our work to be assessed?



# CONDUCTING PEER REVIEWS

A few stories of what *not* to do....

A quantitative dismissal of qualitative research

‘Sorry but I wanted to impress the Editor....’



# CONDUCTING PEER REVIEWS – SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS

- Remember that you are 1 of (usually) 3 reviewers – it's not possible for 1 reviewer to guide all aspects of the paper
- *Consult the journal for any specific reviewer guidelines for that journal*
- Make specific, achievable, clear recommendations for the advancement of the manuscript
- Think of yourself as a developer of a person's work – and remember it is **her/his/their work**, not ours – it is not our place to push our ideas of how we would have done the work



# CONDUCTING PEER REVIEWS – DIVERSITY AND SENSITIVITY

- Language sensitivity
- Global English language hegemony in academic publishing
- Authors may not be native speakers and may not have access to institutional resources for proofreading
- Remember to focus on *ideas* - The Editor and later stages can address if there are any language points on which to focus
- And remember that there are many differences in language expression even among English-majority countries



# CONDUCTING PEER REVIEWS – EXAMPLE WITH GRANT APPLICATION REVIEW

Reviewed for a small, highly-competitive UK-based grant scheme

Consult the funders' requirements for reviewers and expectations

My review feedback included positive points about the potential contributions of the project, followed by comments on ethical considerations, clarity in methodology, and suggested references – balancing my expertise in the topic, with respect to the author(s)' ideas and intentions for the grant

The project that I reviewed was awarded one of the grants  
– YAY! 😊





# CONDUCTING PEER REVIEWS – PARTING THOUGHTS

- *Criticism with Care*
- *Awareness of diversity and how social biases can become reflected in the review process*
- *Develop others' work – it is not our own work*
- *Exercise ongoing vigilance so that one's own academic preferences – such as favourite theorists- do not become imposed on the paper*
- *Search for the ideas and what they could offer to different communities – academic and beyond*

