Team-Based Coaching Approach to Peer Review: Sharing Service and Scholarship

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The Challenge

Peer review has traditionally been considered an individual activity. While educators are skilled at critical appraisal, many will conduct their first review as a solitary venture, often without formal reviewer training or advice from a mentor. For novice reviewers, this independent approach to peer review misses valuable opportunities for feedback and mentorship that could grow reviewers' skills and improve the overall quality of peer review.[1,2] We are reimagining the review process of peer-review performance through a community of practice, and are discussing how this may benefit junior scholars seeking mentorship and improve the peer review processes overall.

Rip Out Action Items

1. Reframe peer review as an opportunity to create an environment of scholarly inquiry.
2. Collaborate with journals to determine approaches to team-based peer review, and continuously improve the process and associated recognition.
3. Create and sustain peer-review teams as a local community of practice; use virtual platforms to cross institutions.
4. Advocate institutionally to support and recognize the scholarship inherent in team peer-review processes.

What Is Known

Scholarship occurs within communities of practice, yet independent, confidential peer review is considered the gold standard in journal publication and scholarship. However, this traditional peer-review model does not always detect incidents of academic fraud, and can reinforce a culture perceived by authors as intimidating and overly critical. In contrast, we have used a team-based coaching approach to peer review with trainees and colleagues, in face-to-face settings and nontraditional publication venues.[1,3]

Team-based approaches to complex tasks consistently yield higher-quality outcomes and foster a sense of community around shared values.[4] Group peer review encourages scholarly dialogue among members of a community of practice[5] and allows novice members to apprentice within a community of peer reviewers. As in a journal club, a rich discussion of an article's strengths and weaknesses prior to the construction of a review will likely lead to a more measured, nuanced, and refined set of suggestions for how the authors might improve their work.[1,6]

This Rip Out will outline a team-based coaching approach to peer review that emphasizes how to foster social learning and a community of practice. These strategies can be effectively used to organize residency, fellowship, or department journal clubs.

How You Can Start TODAY

1. **Create a Community of Practice Review Team**
   - *If you are a new reviewer,* invite senior colleagues who review for journals in which you are interested to facilitate a team-based peer review (with permission of the journal), within an existing local forum (eg, journal club, longitudinal faculty development program). If your center lacks mentors, reach out to experienced scholars in health professions education, research, or quality improvement at other centers to explore opportunities for team-based reviews.
   - *If you are an experienced reviewer,* contact the journal(s) for which you are an established reviewer and ask if they would allow you to coach a review using a "team-based" review approach. Discuss with the journal how best to assign the "corresponding team reviewer." Invite experienced colleagues with topic and methodological expertise and 4 to 6 interested junior reviewers per paper.
2. **Assemble Your Team and Review:** Two options for structuring the team peer review are outlined (TABLE). Adapt these as needed to ensure that the process yields high-quality reviews and continuous learning.

What You Can Do LONG TERM

Through a community of practice lens, team-based reviews foster a culture of scholarly inquiry—consistent with the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education Common Program Requirements—and provide faculty development. Multiple leadership roles will support a culture of team-based peer reviews.

1. **Experienced Reviewers:** Seek opportunities for team peer reviews. Establish collaboration platforms (eg, Skype, Google Hangouts, telephone conference calls) to increase efficiency and sustain communities. Seek and share feedback from the journal regarding your team review(s). Schedule recurring opportunities

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TABLE
Two Options for Structuring Team Peer Review

Option 1: In-Session Review Team Model	Option 2: Full Review Team Model
1. Provide a brief overview of the review process: key features needed in a review; how to approach reviewing for this journal; review criteria or form 2. Distribute the manuscript and read individually; assign 1 to 2 members to write 3 to 5 points about a section (eg, abstract, introduction, methods, tables/figures) 3. Facilitate team discussion; focus on review content and how to professionally frame the feedback; highlight reviewer differences that can be communicated to the authors 4. Co-construct final review under senior colleague's guidance; assign 1 "corresponding team reviewer" to submit 5. Corresponding team reviewer distributes journal decision letter; discuss at next team peer-review session	1. Distribute manuscript, reviewer guidelines, and sample review(s) 2. Task junior reviewers to read the entire manuscript and draft the review so that it is framed to journal specifications 3. Convene team and discuss junior reviewers' findings section by section 4. Co-construct key review elements into a single document formatted to meet journal specifications 5. Senior review mentor independently "polishes" review draft (critiques, tone); sends review back to the junior reviewers (with changes tracked) and submits review as a team review 6. Senior reviewer distributes journal decision letter; discuss at next team peer-review session

("review parties") to reinforce the practice of shared peer review.

2. **Journal Editors:** Identify and approach experienced reviewers to lead local or virtual team peer reviews. Update your invitation letters to suggest team-based peer review as an acceptable activity and generate resources for team leaders to use (eg, team review templates, guides). Invite successful team reviewers to author commentaries for accepted manuscripts.
3. **Faculty Development Directors:** Implement team reviews involving your program alumni, across programs within your sponsoring organization, or state/region/province-wide to support a community of scholars working in collaboration with major journals of interest. Expand your community to include "friendly" presubmission peer review of members' manuscripts.
4. **Senior Faculty:** Work with academic promotions and graduate medical education offices to determine how to cite and value "team reviews" as a form of scholarship (eg, consider emerging trends in sciences for equal contributions and credit[7]).

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