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Responding to JOE Reviews

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Responding to JOE Reviews

Abstract

"Responding to JOE Reviews" explains that ignoring reviewers' comments and suggestions is not an option and that there are many ways to respond to them. "June JOE" highlights two of the many good articles in this issue, refers to an earlier article, points to one to come, and reiterates their message.

Responding to JOE Reviews

When I have received all of the reviews for a JOE article, I send the corresponding or submitting author an e-mail message summarizing the review results and then mail hard copy of the reviews to the author. Until recently, I asked the author to do the following: "Please include an explanation of how you have responded to your reviewers' comments and suggestions in the e-mail message accompanying your revised submission."

That has apparently not been clear enough in some cases.

I have been receiving some e-mail messages accompanying revisions that explain (sometimes at considerable length) why the author disagrees with certain reviewer suggestions or comments (usually the most negative) and has chosen to ignore them.

I'm afraid that's not really an option, and I have been rejecting revisions that simply argue with their reviewers in their messages to me. Their reasoning belongs in their articles.

My review results summary now includes the following: "In the e-mail message accompanying your revised submission, please include an explanation of how you have revised your article to respond to your reviewers' comments and suggestions."

JOE reviewers are selected for their expertise and publishing experience. They are very good at what they do, and I have received numerous messages from authors of revisions expressing thanks and appreciation for their reviews and acknowledging that their articles are stronger because of them. JOE authors would be well advised to take their reviewers' suggestions and comments seriously and revise accordingly.

Note that this does *not* mean slavishly following every single reviewer suggestion or doing so even when an author disagrees with a reviewer and has good reason to.

Perhaps an author chose a particular methodology, although not "cutting edge," because it is "tried and true" or part of an attempt to gather baseline data. Perhaps an area is so new that the necessary first step is to establish a typology even though that seemed a bit unsophisticated to a reviewer who didn't recognize the "newness" of the area. Perhaps an author just didn't make something sufficiently clear.

But, chances are, if a reviewer reacted in a particular way to something in an article or misunderstood it, many JOE readers would, as well. Authors should revise to make sure that readers don't. They should make clear in their articles why they chose a particular methodology, the degree to which an area is "uncharted territory," or the limitations of their study.

They should *all* do what most authors do already: use their reviewers' comments and suggestions to improve their articles. That's the whole idea.

I could say a great deal about the June issue of *JOE*--if I had not already used up most of the space I allot myself.

So I will be exceedingly selective and call attention to the first two Features: "[Decision-Making Styles: A Comparison of Extension Faculty and the Public](#)" and "[Invisible Force: Farmers' Mental Models and How They Influence Learning and Actions](#)." The former is a follow-up to an excellent 2003 article, "[Decision-Making Styles: An Exploration of Preferences of On- and Off-Campus Faculty](#)." The latter is the first of two articles on "mental models."

Both articles remind us that, in our Extension work, we should strive to see the world as our clients see it.

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