

Review Guidelines

Jennifer Johnson, Review Editor

Selecting Materials to Review

When choosing books, software, or audio materials to review, consider what makes them worthy of review: What are their important features? Stated objectives? Any limitations? How well did the texts work for you and your class? Try not to choose texts that have more negatives than positives—there are too many good ones out there!

Format

1. Length: Approximately 500 to 1,000 words (maximum)
2. Page format: Typed, double-spaced, at least 1" margins; please keep paragraphs under 100 words
3. At the top of the first page include:
 - complete title of the text, with edition number
 - complete name(s) of author(s)
 - publisher, publisher's address (city and state), date of publication
 - your name, title, school, address, and phone number

Keep references to a minimum, but be consistent; see the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for guidelines.

Writing the Review

Before you write your review, read some of those that have appeared recently in *The CATESOL Journal*.

Pay careful attention to your organization: Work out a plan before you begin; for some writers a prewriting activity such as outlining can help sort out ideas and identify main points. If you dislike outlining at the start, write a rough draft and then make an outline from it; if the draft refuses to resolve itself into a structure, perhaps it needs reorganizing.

Please contact the Book Review editor to get your title approved before beginning writing, mostly to ensure another writer is not already reviewing the same text and that the publication date is recent enough.

Publication dates of books reviewed must be within the last three years, for example 2011 and later for the 2014 edition.

The way a review is written can vary a great deal, of course, but it should contain:

1. A brief (50 words or less), provocative opening paragraph that contains new information, mention of some salient feature of the materials, or perhaps a strong opinion. The purpose of the first paragraph is to inform readers while enticing them to read further.
2. A brief description of the text, including a statement about the intended audience.
3. If relevant, a description of the students with whom you used the materials.
4. The things you liked best.
5. The things you didn't like or that you think could be improved (identifying a few shortcomings will give your opinions credibility; no materials are perfect).

For even more specific details on writing your review, click for the tip sheet [Writing a Book Review](#).

Editing

1. Edit for sentence structure, grammar, and spelling; proofread carefully: Use a spell-check if you have one and a grammar handbook; have someone else read the review for clarity, assumptions, or unclear ideas that you may be too close to observe.
2. Buzz words: Explain buzz words (e.g., “comprehensible input”)—not all readers will be familiar with concepts discussed.
3. Gender usage and names:
 - Avoid using he/she, his/her, him/her; instead use plural nouns, rearrange the sentence, or try omitting the possessive pronoun and see if the meaning is preserved.
 - Refer to individuals by first and last names on first mention and by last name subsequently: Jennifer Johnson is editor of the Review section. Johnson took over the section from Netta Avineri.
 - Do not use titles; say June McKay as opposed to Mrs. June McKay or Dr. June McKay.

FAQs

Q: Why should I publish a book review for The CATESOL Journal?

A: The Book Review section is a great way to share your expertise and experience with others in the field. It is also a great way for novices to gain publishing experience and for seasoned educators to publish without the investment required of longer, more research-intensive endeavors.

Q: What are the requirements?

A: Book reviews are 500-1,000 words in length and evaluate textbooks (and other teaching media), teacher-training books and reference materials; publication dates must be within the last three years—for example 2015 and later for the 2018 edition.

Q: What is the deadline?

A: *The CATESOL Journal* publishes twice a year, in early spring and early fall. The deadline for

submissions is January 1 for the spring issue and July 1 for the fall issue.

Q: When will writers find out if their reviews have been accepted?

A: Final decisions are typically made within a month of the submission deadline.

Q: What if I have a text worth reviewing but do not want to/have the time to review it myself?

A: Please contact the Book Review editor with your suggestion, and the editor may be able to find a writer if you are unable to write the review yourself. Or, you might encourage a colleague to submit a book review.

Q: What if I've never written something for publication before?

A: Do not let that stop you. The Book Review section of *The CATESOL Journal* is a great place to start! Email the Book Review editor your idea to discuss it.

Q: What if I have other questions?

A: Please contact the Book Review editor at catesolreviews@gmail.com if you have any questions, queries, or submissions. In most cases, you will receive a response within a week; in some instances, it may take several weeks, especially during school holidays, for a response.

Articles that appear in *The CATESOL Journal* may be revised by the editor for clarity, style, and length.

Finally, do not be discouraged if your review is rejected. Some interesting, well-written contributions are returned because of time and space limitations or because they were not appropriate for *The CATESOL Journal*. But what one publication rejects may be exactly what another is seeking. After each return, however, improve your material if you can, and always feel free to submit another review to our journal or newsletter.

Submit completed reviews to:

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