

Guidelines for Reviewers

The Journal of Physical Therapy Education (JOPTE) considers for publication manuscripts pertaining to all aspects of education in physical therapy. JOPTE is the official quarterly publication of the Education Section of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). Manuscripts are invited describing qualitative and quantitative investigations and descriptions of educational interventions and innovative methods used in academic, clinical, community, or patient education. The author(s) must have methodically examined the outcomes of the educational intervention or innovation and drawn conclusions about its usefulness in physical therapy education and practice.

The *Journal of Physical Therapy Education* endorses the *Uniform Requirements for Manuscripts Submitted to Biomedical Journals* put forth by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE).

Manuscripts submitted to the *Journal of Physical Therapy Education* are reviewed under 1 of 5 categories:

- Research Papers
- Position Papers
- Reviews of the Literature
- Method/Model Presentations
- Case Reports

The following MINIMUM content should be present for the type of manuscript submitted:

Research Reports: Authors should report the results of original experimental or observational research projects.

- **Introduction:** Briefly state the relevance of the study for physical therapy education, the specific purpose of the study, and the research question(s) or hypothesis(es).
- **Review of Literature:** Briefly describe the methodology and findings from published literature germane to the study being presented (eg, justify the variables, hypotheses, sample, or methodology). A summary at the end of the review of literature section should point out the relevance of the review to the study at hand.
- **Subjects:** Describe the sample, including selection criteria and process.
- **Methods:** Describe the research design and procedures; the nature of the data; the data collection instrument(s); and methods of data collection, reduction, and analysis.
- **Results:** Give a verbal summary of the results together with any statistical summary of the data or other representations of the findings and analyses (tables, figures).
- **Discussion and Conclusion:** First state conclusions based directly on the research question/hypothesis and the results of the study, then expand with an explanation of the relationship of the findings to the review of the literature. A discussion of the implications of the findings for physical therapy education and conclusions should be included.

Position Papers: Authors should adopt and defend a position on some issue of current concern and importance to physical therapy educators.

- Background and Purpose: A brief introduction states the purpose of the article.
- Position and Rationale: The position and the author's rationale for taking that position are elucidated. Issues should be stated clearly and theoretical foundations with literature citations for the rationale stated. The logic of the argument and stance on the position should be clear.
- Discussion and Conclusion: A conclusion should summarize the position relative to the concern or issue addressed. An abstract is required (see Manuscript Preparation and Requirements).

Reviews of the Literature: Authors should provide a critical overview of the research on specific topics related to physical therapy education. These reviews may be qualitative in nature, providing a summary of relevant work; they may be systematic reviews following a specific analysis format; they also may be statistically based meta-analyses of relevant literature.

- Background and Purpose: In all cases, the authors should include an introduction.
- Methods: Selection criteria, search strategy description of studies, methodological quality.
- Results: When applicable, they should include tables and figures showing characteristics of the reviewed studies, specification of the interventions that were compared, and the results of studies. Parameters for excluding studies in the review should also be included.
- Discussion and Conclusion: The value of the conclusions in guiding educational policy and practice will be a determining factor in the decision to publish the review.

Method/Model Presentations: Authors should describe the development and implementation of an innovative approach to education used in physical therapy. Evidence of testing the reliability and validity of the method or model to education and a clear description of its elements should be included. Evidence from the literature supporting the use of the method or model should be cited. Educational outcomes related to the implementation of the method or model must be included. Essential in the summary of this method/model presentation should be conclusions about its usefulness and the feasibility and generalizability of the application of the innovation to physical therapy education. Areas for future investigation based on the method/model should be identified.

- Background and Purpose: A brief introduction states the purpose of the paper.
- Method/Model Description and Evaluation: Provide a description of the method or model that can be easily understood or replicated.
- Outcomes: Identify measures used to assess the educational innovation.
- Discussion and Conclusion: Provide a discussion that addresses the value found in the reported innovation.

Case Reports: Authors should submit descriptions of educational practice and interventions not previously described in the literature. Case reports differ from method/model presentations insofar as they may describe an intervention or educational innovation with a smaller sample of individuals (or even an N = 1). Case reports must state the purpose of the case report, citing relevant literature. Case reports should provide a clear and thorough description of the case, including the following: the rationale for and implementation of an educational intervention, methods or instruments used to evaluate the intervention, and outcomes. Since case reports cannot document efficacy, discussion of the case should include recommendations for further study (eg, method/model or research investigations).

- Background and Purpose: A brief introduction states the purpose of the case report.

- **Case Description:** Describe the individuals/institutions involved in the case report in sufficient detail.
- **Outcomes:** Identify measures used to assess the changes identified during the case.
- **Discussion and Conclusion:** Provide a discussion that addresses the educational value found in the case report.

Your Purpose as a Reviewer

The purpose of the review is to provide expert opinion regarding the quality of the manuscript under consideration, and should also supply authors with explicit feedback on how to improve their manuscripts so that they will be acceptable for publication in JOPTTE. Although confidential comments to the Editor are respected, any remarks that might help to strengthen the manuscript should be directed to the authors themselves.

1. **Major Strengths and Weaknesses:** In composing their critique, reviewers are asked to provide a summary of the Major Strengths and Major Weaknesses of the submission based on the following review criteria:

a. **Significance:** Does the manuscript address an important problem or critical barrier to progress in the field of physical therapy education? If this manuscript is published, how will scientific knowledge, the academic, clinical, community or patient education be improved? How will publication of this paper change the theoretical constructs, methods, technologies, innovation, outcomes of the educational intervention, and drawn conclusions that drive the field of physical therapy education?

b. **Approach:** Are the overall strategy, methodology, and analyses well-reasoned and appropriate to accomplish the specific aims of the study? If the study is a pilot study or represents early stages of development, will the strategy used in the study establish feasibility and will particularly risky aspects be managed? If the project involves clinical research, are the plans for 1) protection of human subjects from research risks, and 2) inclusion of minorities and members of both sexes/genders, as well as the inclusion of children, justified in terms of the scientific goals and research strategy proposed?

c. **Novel Contribution to the Literature:** Does the manuscript challenge and seek to shift current research or educational practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions? Are the concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions novel to one field of research or novel in a broad sense?

d. Do you believe your rating would change with revision: Yes / No

2. **Guiding Questions:** To address the major review criteria above, reviewers may find it helpful to consider the following questions:

What are the main claims of the manuscript and how significant and important are they?
Is the manuscript innovative and are these claims novel? If not, please specify publications with similar approaches or claims.

Are the claims properly placed in the context of the previous literature?

Is the approach sound, well-reasoned and appropriate for the study aims? Is the methodology rigorous, adequately described and appropriate to address the stated purpose of the manuscript?

Do the results support the claims? If not, what other evidence is required?

Would any additional information improve the manuscript?

If the manuscript is considered unsuitable for publication in its present form, does the study itself show sufficient potential to warrant a resubmission in a revised version?

Have the authors fully adhered to accepted standards of ethical conduct in human/animal research?

JOPE offers authors the option to publish detailed methods and supplemental digital content as online appendices. Do any particular methods or content used in the manuscript warrant such publication?

3. In the case of manuscripts deemed worthy of consideration for publication, we would appreciate additional guidance from the reviewer on the following:

Is the manuscript written with sufficient clarity that it is understandable to the audience of the *Journal*? If not, how could it be improved?

Have the authors provided evidence of testing of reliability and validity of the method or model as applied to education?

Have the authors clearly described evidence from the literature supporting the use of any new constructs being introduced?

Have the authors provided adequate support for their claims without overselling them?

Have the authors cited the previous literature appropriately?

Does the manuscript offer sufficient methodological detail that its experiments and analyses could be reproduced?

4. In the on-line review submission portal, reviewers will be asked to provide one of the following recommendations:

- Accept the manuscript as submitted
- Revision required, changes required before a final decision is reached
- Reject and resubmit, manuscript is not acceptable as submitted, may be of interest if resubmitted in a different format.
- Reject, manuscript does not meet criteria for originality, importance to the field, or sound methodology and revision is not likely to rectify the flaws.

5. Confidentiality

The review process is strictly confidential and should be treated as such by reviewers. Because the author may have chosen to exclude some people from this process, no one including colleagues or other experts in the field, should be consulted by the reviewer unless such consultations have first been discussed with the Editors.

6. Timely Review

JOPE believes that an efficient editorial process that results in timely publication provides a valuable service both to authors and to the community at large. We therefore request that reviewers respond promptly, usually within 14 days of receipt of a manuscript. If reviewers need more time, we request that they contact us promptly so that we can keep the authors informed and, if necessary, assign alternate reviewers.

7. Anonymity

JOPTÉ practices blinded peer review. We believe that this form of review is most appropriate because of the close-knit readership community we serve. Authors are informed of the assigned Editor at the time of decision notification. Authors may choose to contact the Editor with queries related to the review of their manuscript. We disapprove of any attempt on the part of authors to discover the identity of any reviewer or to contact this person directly. Reviewers are asked to adopt the same policy.

8. Editing Reviewers' Reports

The Editors do not edit any comments made by reviewers that are intended to be read by the authors unless the language is deemed inappropriate for professional communication or the comments contain information considered confidential. Such remarks should be reserved for the Confidential Comments to the Editor section of the review form, which is intended to be read only by the Editor. Reviewers are encouraged to be honest but not offensive in their comments to authors. On the other hand, authors should not confuse frank language with unfair criticism.

9. Competing Interests

To the extent possible we respect requests by authors to exclude reviewers whom they consider to be unsuitable. We also, as much as possible, try to rule out those reviewers who may have an obvious competing interest, such as those who may have been collaborators on other projects with the authors of the manuscript under review, those who may be direct competitors, those who may have a known history of antipathy with the author(s), or those who might profit financially from the work. However it is not possible for all such competing interests to be known by JOPTÉ, so reviewers who recognize a potential competing interest must inform the Editor and recuse themselves if they feel they are unable to offer an impartial review.

On occasion, reviewers may be asked to offer their opinion on a manuscript that they may have previously reviewed for another journal. This is not in itself a competing interest, it does not in any way decrease the validity of that opinion and may perhaps even enhance it.

10. Feedback to Reviewers

We send reviewers' comments along with the decision letter to all reviewers of that manuscript. Reviewers who may have offered an opinion not in accordance with the final decision should not feel that their recommendation was not duly considered or that their service not appreciated. Experts often disagree, and it is the job of the Editors to make a final publication decision.

Thank you!

We offer sincere thanks to all our reviewers. Your contribution of time and expertise are highly valued and we hope you will continue to support JOPTÉ in this way.