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## Creating a Successful Online Graduate Journal: Mentoring Was the Key

Scholarly and Research  
Communication

VOLUME 2 / ISSUE 2 / 2011

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### Abstract

This article shares the creation and building of a Canadian student-driven academic journal using the Open Journal Systems (OJS). The article outlines the vision of the journal as well as its history, process, performance, challenges, and, most important, mentoring practices. Created to connect and support new scholars in the field of education within Canadian institutions, the foundation of the journal was based entirely on mentoring provided by volunteer graduate students experienced at composing academic publications.

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### Keywords

Open journal; Graduate journal; Graduate publication; Mentoring; Graduate work

CCSP Press

*Scholarly and Research Communication*

Volume 2, Issue 2, Article ID 020501, 17 pages

Journal URL: [www.src-online.ca](http://www.src-online.ca)

Received May 28, 2010, Accepted February 28, 2011, Published October 24, 2011

Edmonds, Kelly Ann. (2011). Creating a Successful Online Graduate Journal: Mentoring Was the Key. *Scholarly and Research Communication*, 2(2): 020501, 17 pp.

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## Introduction

### THE VISION

The vision for this journal was to help graduate students by increasing networking opportunities, improving scholarly writing skills, building and sharing knowledge within the educational field, and having an access point to contribute as scholars. Following the thought of John Willinsky (2006), it was considered essential for researchers and scholars to learn from each other and to contribute their ideas through openly accessible literature.

In 2007, a national peer-reviewed journal for graduate students was created: the *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education/Revue canadienne des jeunes chercheures et chercheurs en éducation (CJNSE/RCJCE)*. The publication was sponsored by the Canadian Committee of Graduate Students in Education/Le Comité canadien des étudiants diplômés en éducation (CCGSE/CCÉDÉ), a division of the national Canadian Society for the Study of Education/La société canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation (CSSE/SCÉÉ). Graduate students attending Canadian universities were encouraged to submit work on any area within the field of education. Overall, the journal was developed as a teaching journal and continues today to mentor graduates who are publishing. Figure 1 shows the home page of the journal's website.

Figure 1. The home page of the graduate journal within OJS at <http://www.cjnse-rcjce.ca>



### JOURNAL HISTORY

Kelly Edmonds, the founding editor of *CJNSE/RCJCE*, was searching for a way to bring together graduate students from across Canada and abroad to network and share ideas. She found not everyone was able to attend or afford the travel costs to annual CSSE (the supporting organization) conferences, and thought another venue was required. The idea of meeting and conversing online was discussed as a viable way to meet, which turned into the idea of a virtual publication. This was well accepted by the main organizations (CCGSE and CSSE). In turn, the journal editor became an executive board member of the graduate student caucus to support and guide the operation of

the publication and ensure its quality, fairness, and continuity. Dr. Ingrid Johnston, an advisory editorial member, stated that “the link with the journal to CSSE was helpful in establishing its status and value.”<sup>1</sup>

Over the subsequent two years, the *CJNSE/RCJCÉ* was built by an incredible team of people who helped publish three issues during that time. On average, approximately 50 people volunteered for the various editorial positions, with about 55 initially helping to establish the journal and launch the first issues. Of these volunteers, nearly 80% remained with the journal for two or more years, and their long-term commitment provided stability and continuity. Those who stepped down were most likely near the end of their degree and needed to focus on finishing their programs or had other commitments. The initial team of volunteers at the journal is listed in the appendix.

In the beginning, a number of structures were established, such as the organizational structure, editorial board, team members, communication lines, team processes, and promotional plans. Next, policies were established for ethical considerations, copyrights, and privacy of data. As well, guidelines for submitting manuscripts, reviewing articles, editing and copy-editing, and managing the Web-based platform were created. This entailed many hours’ work for the lead editorial team. Additionally, the guidelines had to be translated into French as the journal was established as bilingual, and had French-speaking team members and authors. The various Web pages on the journal’s website (placed in the OJS platform) were translated into French, and could be accessed through the language tool on the home page. Translating much of the journal’s website into French was a large undertaking, and the team was grateful to the francophone volunteers for their contribution in this area.

### **Other Supportive Journals**

While some graduate students are guided in their publication efforts by supportive faculty members, others are not. Thankfully, other faculty members and graduate students are creating supportive publishing venues to support graduate students in Canada and the United States. For instance, a number of universities and faculties publish graduate student work through internally created journals, and use either an editor- or peer-review process. Canadian examples of these journals are the *SFU Educational Review* at Simon Fraser University, British Columbia; the Canadian Graduate Student Journal of Folklore and Ethnology, labelled *Culture & Tradition*, at Memorial University of Newfoundland; *Symposia*, the Graduate Student Journal of the Centre for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto in Ontario; and *Eidos*, the Canadian Graduate Journal of Philosophy at the University of Waterloo also in Ontario. External organizations are also publishing graduate work; for instance, *Potentia*, which is edited by the Canadian Centre for International Policy Studies in Ottawa, Ontario.

U.S. examples of these journals are the *Braniff Graduate Student Journal* at the University of Dallas in Texas, and the *Graduate Student Journal of Psychology* at Columbia University in New York. As well, UCLA’s Graduate Student Association extends help to a number of internal graduate publications by, for example, providing production space, funding, digitized work, and open access.

Some international journals support graduate student publications; for example, *Explorations*, associated with the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at the University of Hawaii, and *Hortulus*, the Online Graduate Journal of Medieval Studies led by scholars in the United States and United Kingdom. Though the above journals offer an opportunity for students' work to be reviewed and published, very few seem to offer direct mentoring or editing support for authors as with the *CJNSE/RCJCÉ*.

## Journal Structure, Process, and Performance

### ONLINE PRESENCE

The journal was placed online and made openly accessible to readers through a Web-based software platform called the Open Journal System (OJS). Willinsky (2005) and a team at the University of British Columbia in Canada established the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) and subsequently created the OJS. The Simon Fraser University Library now manages the technical development and user support for the platform. The OJS was developed as a free and user-friendly platform to encourage the distribution of journals online with hopes they would be openly accessible, thus creating shareable knowledge and research. Using OJS provided a mechanism to present graduate student publications online as well as to organize journal content and communicate with authors and team members. Thus, OJS gave the journal a functional online database, communication and management system, and, more importantly, a sophisticated Web-based look. It provided a means for an emerging journal to build a distinguished product.

In the beginning, the journal software (OJS) was hosted by the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières (UQTR), and accessed through a domain name provided by WebDomain and authorized by the Canadian Internet Registration Authority. At the time, the Web manager of the journal, Denis Lamy, arranged for the publication to be placed on the UQTR's server cost-free. The support and generosity of the university technical team, namely Dany Milot, will be remembered as instrumental and crucial in launching the journal. In 2009, it was thought best to find a more central server as the Web manager was nearing the end of his degree program, and would probably retire his volunteer position at *CJNSE/RCJCÉ*. In turn, *Synergies Canada*, a government initiative through the Canadian Information Network for Research in the Social Sciences and Humanities, was seeking academic publications in the social science and humanities field with intentions to digitize past and current work. Their mandate was to collect and make works in their field available on a global scale. The *CJNSE/RCJCÉ* was then moved to the server at the University of Calgary, which was the Prairie partner in the Synergies project. It remains there today with an option to be represented under the University of Calgary Press. In 2012 the Synergies project will charge a nominal annual fee of \$750. The fee comes with a promise of global distribution, preserved digital formatting, revenues from group sales, and technical support and training. More important, it places the journal alongside other social science and humanities peer-reviewed journals, providing more recognition for graduate student work.

Team members helped design the logo for the journal, which is displayed on the website and in Figure 1. A Web editor named Mingzhu Qiu was instrumental in recruiting a peer in China to design the logo to reflect the journal's vision. In an email to the journal editor, Mingzhu shared her and the graphic designer's vision for the logo as a budding bamboo shoot:

The bamboo sprout is a symbol of new life, which grows very fast. Before [the] bamboo comes out of the earth (graduate students), it has joints already, which symbolizes strong confidence in [one's] progress ... and high moral integrity of the spirit of dedication to a noble profession "Education". When [the] Bamboo grows up to touch the sky (becoming an educator), it is [empty] inside, which symbolizes an open-mind that will always be willing to learn modestly with a receptive mind.

The *CJNSE/RCJCÉ* encouraged multilingual work, so the editor used a graphics program to add red maple leaves to the logo to denote a fresh new Canadian journal that embraced all cultures. The final design became an inspirational symbol for those working at the journal.

### **ONLINE REVIEW PROCESS**

Major parts of the *CJNSE/RCJCÉ* process, such as communication, information sharing, manuscript submissions, and document management, were conducted online using OJS. After the first issue of the journal, authors were asked to submit their manuscripts online, as opposed to emailing the journal editor directly. The journal editor was automatically notified when a manuscript was submitted and could retrieve it from the online database. After downloading the new submission onto a personal computer, the journal editor would review the work and make a decision based on the established criteria on whether to forward it for a second review. If the manuscript was declined, the author was notified through standardized email messages created within the online platform, which could also be changed before sending. The declined submissions were archived, leaving the online work area with only accepted manuscripts, thus making document management more effective.

*CJNSE/RCJCÉ* team members were also asked to register in the online database to receive manuscripts for review or copy-editing. The journal editor and Web manager could assign team members many different roles and levels of access to the internal database, but most were assigned the role of reviewer or copy editor. The journal editor, who performed the first review, would select the appropriate reviewer to perform a second review based on the volunteer's availability, area of study, language proficiency, and publication experience. The names, contact information, and skills of volunteers were stored in an Excel spreadsheet by the journal editor and shared with the team. Also, if a manuscript was accepted by both the editor and reviewer, the latter was asked to work as a mentor with the author during the editing process. As such, the process became a non-blind peer-reviewed process where the author and reviewers were known to each other. This created a transparency and the beginning of a working relationship. The review approach was recognized by Dr. Ingrid Johnston, an advisory editor, who found it critical in having "a range of reviewers/mentors with expertise in a variety of research areas, methodologies and theoretical frameworks to offer feedback and advice." To sustain a credible peer-review process, reviewers were asked to declare a conflict of interest if they knew the author.

The team members selected to be mentors to authors received a predesigned OJS email message, at times amended with specific instructions, and were given access to the online manuscript. Mentors were assigned a manuscript and author, and once they had indicated online that they agreed to accept the work, they were asked to work outside

of OJS to communicate with the author and edit the work. The platform did not accommodate frequent or threaded discussions between parties, leaving mentors and authors to work through other communication technologies, such as email or Skype.

Once a final edited version of the manuscript was created, mentors would upload the article online and email the journal editor to continue with the next steps in the mentoring process. The journal editor reviewed the revised manuscript and then assigned a copy editor in the same manner as an editing mentor. In essence, the uploaded manuscript moved through the stages of submission, review, editing, and copy-editing, and was finally presented online. The OJS platform separated these stages.

The *CJNSE/RCJCÉ* accepted research studies, position papers, literature reviews, and book reviews, and was open to various topics for submission. For instance, manuscripts could present an investigation into an issue in education, or offer a reflection on aspects of educational theory and research. Furthermore, it was important to create comprehensive review forms for each submission type in order to provide consistent and helpful feedback to authors, and inform reviewers of essential manuscript criteria. The review forms were placed on the website near the submission guidelines so authors could understand the evaluative criteria before submitting a manuscript. Leanne Madill, an author, reviewer, and editing mentor shared her reflections on the review process:

I was impressed with the in-depth review questions I needed to answer. This opportunity to review would certainly help other new authors who were considering submitting a paper, and I found myself renewing my understanding of what academic journal reviewers would be thinking as they read any future papers of mine!

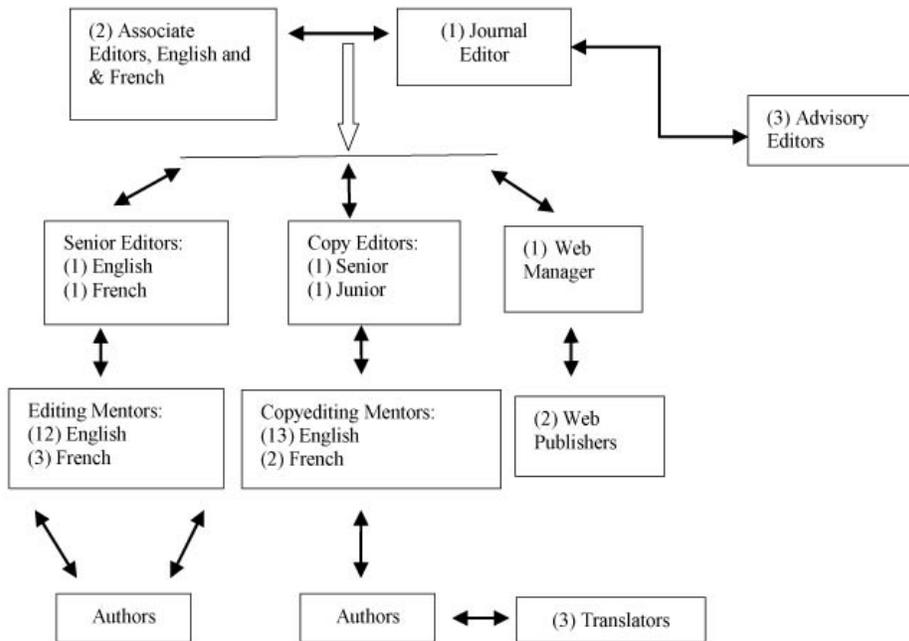
The need to share information about manuscript criteria became evident after the first round of submissions as a number of articles were lacking essential sections and components of a manuscript, such as detailed research methodologies, supportive literature reviews, or articulate conclusions. It became obvious that more upfront support and guidance was needed for authors. The online review forms served as the initial step in helping graduate students compose comprehensive and scholarly-type articles. All the information for authors and team members were posted online, and authors could access the journal intent, submission requirements, review process, policies, guidelines, team member names and contact information, and previous issues through the OJS platform; additionally, team members could access confidential information, such as operation guidelines, internal forms, and personal data about team members through Google Groups. A mixture of information and communications technology supported the management of the virtual journal.

#### TEAM BUILDING AT A DISTANCE

Supporting graduate students at *CJNSE/RCJCÉ* through mentorship required an immense amount of effort and commitment from a large team of people. Within the first year of the journal being established, about 55 graduate students from across Canada and abroad willingly joined as volunteers. Some helped to review submissions and work with authors to edit and copy-edit manuscripts, while others volunteered

to manage the journal and handle technical aspects, such as the digital content and OJS. Furthermore, three academics from Canadian universities became advisors to the journal editor, providing valuable advice on establishing and managing the publication. Figure 2 presents the organizational chart showing the various editorial roles and levels of mentorship.

Figure 2. CJNSE/RCJCÉ Organizational Chart and Levels of Mentoring



The student volunteers for the journal were hand-picked to ensure they had the appropriate skills to properly guide authors. For instance, they were expected to be exceptional graduate students who had published in distinguished journals, had developed competent writing skills, and had the compassion to help. These students volunteered many hours' reviewing, editing, and copyediting manuscripts while communicating and working at a distance with authors and team leaders, all the while completing their graduate work and handling their other life responsibilities. Editing mentors, for example, were advised to work with a maximum of three drafts of a manuscript, therefore placing the onus on the author to make the required changes. Over a six-week schedule, this might amount to approximately 15 hours of work for the mentor, with the same applying to copy-editing work. However, manuscripts requiring more editing consumed more volunteer time for all team member as well as the journal editor. The journal editor volunteered up to 10 hours weekly, managing the publication, and reviewing and editing manuscripts.

### PUBLICATION PERFORMANCE

As of January 2010, the *CJNSE/RCJCÉ* online journal (OJS) had 336 registered users, 281 of whom were readers and 55 of whom were team members. Anyone who wanted to submit a manuscript, work as a team member, or add comments to online manuscripts had to register to gain free access to these features. However, all articles were openly accessible and did not require readers to log into the online journal.

A manuscript could be accepted, require minor or major revisions, or be declined. The authors of manuscripts requiring major revisions were asked to amend and resubmit their work for further review, with hopes they would be published in the following issue. Table 1 shows the progress of the journal in its first two years.

**Table 1. Journal Progress in the Initial Two Years**

Call for Articles	Published	Submitted Manuscripts	Reviewers	Accepted	Request for Editing and Resubmission	Declined
January 2008	July 2008 Vol. 1, No. 1	43	4	42%	53%	5%
July 2008	March 2009 Vol. 1, No. 2	19 (8 re-submitted)	15	42%	37%	21%
February 2009	August 2009 Vol. 2, No. 1	27	20	48%	26%	26%

Though the initial vision for *CJNSE/RCJCE* was that it would have a high acceptance rate to serve as many graduate students as possible, this was subject to the capacity of mentors and number of volunteers. Reviewers, as well as editing and copy-editing mentors, were only expected to work with one manuscript and one author per issue, with two issues being published a year. The mentoring process proved to be labour-intensive and required each team member to work for up to six weeks on one manuscript. Thus, the availability of reviewers and mentors limited the number of accepted manuscripts. Xiaoxiao Du, a doctoral student at Western University in Ontario and a senior copy editor, recalled:

Getting people involved in [the] working process of [the] publication needs a lot of effort. Since it is volunteer-based, sometimes it is difficult to find enough people to do the review or editing [work]; sometimes there are people who could not do editing as planned due to various reasons.

As such, the initial reviews and feedback on submitted manuscripts written by the journal editor and reviewers needed to be detailed enough to give support to authors who might resubmit or submit their manuscripts to another publication. This was seen as the first step in the teaching process. As well, reviewers were advised to look for manuscripts described as “diamonds in the rough” as the mentoring process would provide the editing and copy-editing support to help “polish” the work. This intent increased the number of accepted manuscripts with the potential to be quality pieces and of interest to readers. In short, the journal had high standards for finished products, outlined in the online review forms, and manuscripts needed to be at a certain level of quality to be edited within the limited timeframe. Dr. Ingrid Johnston recognizes that:

One of the difficulties in mentoring students writing for publication is the balance between maintaining standards for the journal and the desire to be helpful and kind to authors who are learning what these standards entail. The role of [advisory] editors was helpful as they could advise about ways to deal with authors who were reluctant to adhere to these standards or to take the advice of reviewers.

## The Mentoring Process

Mentoring was the key element in the purpose and success of the *CJNSE/RCJCE*, and was provided to both authors and team members. It has been found that peer mentoring promotes the scholastic development of authors, improves writing skills, and provides personal support (Webb, Wangmo, Ewen, Teaster, & Hatch, 2009). As well, peer mentoring addresses not only task-based functions but also psychosocial ones (Terrion & Leonard, 2007) when authors are guided by experienced writers and peers who understand the challenges of graduate work and academic publishing. The main results from mentoring are that mentees are coached, encouraged, and supported as well as exposed to different perspectives and potentially gain self-confidence through the generosity and collaboration of mentors (Sims-Giddens, Helton, & Hope, 2010). Mentors also benefit. Zheng Zhang, a doctoral student at OISE at the University of Toronto in Ontario and a senior copy editor with the journal, noted the value of being a mentor:

Academically, reading what other graduate students have been researching and writing about education is another eye-opening experience for me.

I am especially impressed by *CJNSE*'s openness to a diversity of writing styles and topics. There were also aha moments when I saw some authors' creativeness in writing up educational journal articles.

However, developing mentoring relationships from a distance through Web-based technologies, termed e-mentoring, increases the difficulties of establishing effective relationships (McLoughlin, Brady, Lee, & Russell, 2007). Though electronic communication venues allow for flexibility in terms of time, space, and communication style, e-mentoring challenges can impede the development of relationships, inhibit good communication, and create technical and privacy issues. However, through the process of mentoring, knowledge building occurs across disciplines and is enhanced by networked contacts engaging in scholarly communication. Hahn (2008) stated, "The goal of effective and useful dialogue is the discovery of new knowledge, new perspectives, and new strategies for action. Its object ultimately is action by all stakeholders." In this sense, graduate students as emerging scholars need a place within their field to contribute ideas and questions, and join the ongoing discourse.

## MENTORING AUTHORS

As mentioned previously, authors were mentored throughout the review, editing, and copy-editing processes. Due to the potential sensitivity of such collaborations and authors' passion for their own compositions, mentors were encouraged to work carefully and respectfully with authors. For instance, it was understood that the author was the sole owner of the written work, and this was reflected in the journal's copyright policy. That is, the copyright for submitted articles remained with the authors, but first publication rights were granted to the journal. This policy and approach to mentoring implied a great respect for the author and his or her work. Larisa Segida, an author from the third issue, remembered her experience with the journal:

[The] journal has played a vital role in my academic life, as my first peer-reviewed publication occurred on its pages. From the very beginning, I was charmed by [the] gentleness and nobleness of the journal staff that were cherishing my original manuscript during the

poignant process of its perfection, which I believe is more complex for a non-native English writer that I am. ... I [was] immersed in the atmosphere of love, respect, mutual understanding, and professionalism that saturated *CJNSE's* revisers', editors', and copy-editors' correspondence with me.

Among themselves, the mentors and authors would determine the most effective communication process to use. It was highly recommended for mentors to communicate with authors initially through voice (i.e., via telephone or a voice-over-Internet-protocol (VoIP), such as Skype) in order to introduce themselves, get acquainted, and discuss review feedback rather than relying on text messages. Contacting authors by voice established a personal working relationship, decreased misunderstandings, and provided a better means to openly discuss goals, gain clarification, and share frustrations. The first task for the editing mentor was to review and discuss with the author the initial feedback given on the manuscript, and devise a plan for changes agreeable to both parties. Connie Morrison, an author from the second issue, recalled her reaction to the feedback:

I remember initially getting the review results wondering how two reviews could be so different. One review gave the piece a high rating, the other was much more demanding. The piece was not accepted for the first issue, but I was given an opportunity to make revisions for the second issue. My first gut reaction was disappointment, but from the clarity that can only arrive with hindsight I can see the silver lining that was at first hidden. ... In the end, the piece that was published was far better than I could have produced without the encouragement that was ever-present in the comments, along with the respectful academic challenges that I was called to answer.

The editing work included addressing issues and gaps in the manuscript and tightening the writing. More important, the purpose of the mentoring was to support the author during a potentially lonely and difficult period of rewriting. As well, the policy was to limit the number of drafts the editing mentor received, putting more onus on the author to address as many issues and suggestions as possible before sending for another review. It was advised that editing comments should be made on the side, as in the tracking feature of a document or through separate notes, versus writing over the work. This action respected the work and input of the author. However, minor changes could be made in the text to improve writing. Overall, changes were to be discussed and agreed upon between author and editor at each draft. It was expected that not every suggestion for change would be addressed by authors, allowing them some ownership over their work and ideas.

Once a final edited copy of the manuscript was completed, it was sent along with noted changes to the journal editor. The journal editor and a senior editor reviewed the updated manuscript while considering the initial feedback written during the review process. At this stage, further minor changes might be required. Once changes were made, the manuscript was assigned to a copy-editing mentor. The copy-editing mentor was requested to work with the author in the same manner as the editing mentor.

Copy-editing tasks included making suggestions for improving grammar, correcting spelling and punctuation, and ensuring the use of a proper publication citation and formatting, which was a combination of the American Psychological Association (APA) and in-house style. It was expected that the previous process of editing a manuscript would have resolved all content and cohesive writing issues before reaching the copy-editing phase.

The experience of authors varied during the editing and copy-editing processes. For instance, Bruce Fowler, an author published in the first issue of the journal, shared how the process helped his writing:

My experience as a contributor... in the first issue of *CJNSE* was a very positive one. The process from first draft to finished product is laborious, time consuming and meticulous, and it is not for the feint of heart. This process is only invaluable to those who can accept and make use of constructive criticism. Authors have many discussions about content and format with their advisors, and they go through several drafts. Once authors have made or at least have discussed all the suggested content and style changes to flow, logic, and readability, then the work begins on references, grammar and other formatting issues. I highly recommend this exercise to new authors; even to old ones provided they can withstand the criticism and are looking for a refresher exercise in their journal writing. There is no question that writing quality improves markedly during this collaboration between writers and their advisors. That is what I experienced, and that is what I have heard from others.

#### **MENTORING TEAM MEMBERS**

The volunteers at *CJNSE/RCJCE* were considered team members who played equally important roles in the journal process. As outlined previously, some volunteered as leaders in roles such as journal editor, advisory editor, associate editor, senior editor, senior copy editor, and Web manager. As well, there were those who had the very important role of working with authors, such as the editors and copy editors, and those working in more technical areas, such as Web publishing and translating. The development and synergy of working relationships were considered vital and established from the beginning; in essence, team members mentored each other.

To establish the journal, the initial leaders formulated the publication's intent, structure, processes, and communication lines. They met and communicated virtually through electronic venues as all leaders lived at a distance across Canada. They had constant online synchronous meetings through Skype or Elluminate, telephone calls, and email communications that addressed current journal business. Brenton Faubert, a doctoral student at OISE, University of Toronto in Ontario, and a founding associated editor, noted that:

Having committee members living across several different time zones, each with their own work schedules, various access and capacities around technology, and language challenges (French and English),

I was surprised at how little these factors impacted our ability to coordinate the journal. Technology had developed by that time to such a point that online meetings (audio and visual) [were] made easy.

### **Challenges and Issues**

Establishing a journal that is respected within the academic field of education is a challenge for any publication. Best practices include peer-reviewed work, quality writing, useful content, critical thinking, and rigorous research methods. However, with a publication managed by graduate students there needed to be a realistic expectation for these practices. Thus, it was decided to create a journal that did not compete with the top publications, but instead honoured academic writing standards that could be upheld by emerging scholars. Submission and quality writing criteria were therefore gathered from reputable publications and customized for the journal.

Also, understanding the capacity of the journal became a learning journey. Though the initial goal was to accept and help as many graduate authors as possible, the ability to recruit and manage volunteers became more difficult than anticipated. The current structure of the organization, as shown in Figure 2, allowed for no more than 50 team members. Beyond that, more leadership would be needed. The founding journal editor found communicating and managing the journal with the initial 55 volunteers laborious and inefficient at times. Communication problems emerged, as did quality issues with the manuscripts. Furthermore, the journal editor needed to review newly submitted work and all edited manuscripts before copy-editing took place. Working with 15 manuscripts and two annual issues became the capacity limit for that position.

Additionally, working with authors became a tenuous process. For the most part, authors were eager to have their work published while accepting the responsibility to improve their articles. However, at times the review feedback and mentor suggestions for change were not accepted. This created a tension that required dialogue and negotiation between the mentor and author. For instance, Alyson Hoy Price, an author from the first issue, recalled the tension:

In fine-tuning the article for publication, for example, I worked through the editing process with a mentoring graduate student upon whom I felt my most critical questions were lost. My efforts to voice those issues, barely heard and yet still so deeply encrypted in education's social imagination, felt quashed under the weight of education's empiricism. ... In a sense, it was as if my efforts at writing critically and resolutely against convention were defeated by a reader for whom convention was all.

During such occurrences, mentors had to find a way to understand an author's intent and establish a compromise that resulted in a quality manuscript. If agreements did not materialize, other leaders and finally the journal editor were asked to manage the situation. Only two authors over three issues removed, or were asked to remove, their articles from the publication process as an agreement could not be reached on the final outcome of the manuscripts. The two particular incidences included having one author provide evidence to support claims made in the article, and another to add further

explanation on presented ideas. While disagreements can cause tensions between a journal and its authors, they can also become learning opportunities for everyone. For instance, Pasco (2009) offered advice to student authors, stating,

Publication requires not just good work but also the humility to accept appropriate suggestions, the courage to reject wrong-headed commentary, and, especially, the persistence and courage to continue trying. (p. 235)

Those working at a publication can follow this advice as well.

Another issue became the over-editing of manuscripts. By the time a manuscript was published, approximately four or five team members had handled the article and provided feedback and suggestions for change. For instance, during the initial review period the journal editor and one or two reviewers provided detailed feedback. Within two weeks of a manuscript being accepted, an editor was assigned to help edit the work over six weeks and provide more input. Once the manuscript was edited, the journal editor and a senior reviewer reviewed it again and submitted requests for minor changes before forwarding it to a copy editor for six more weeks of editing. This caused problems at times, mostly confusion for the author. Within this journal process, the author seemed to serve many masters and was additionally burdened by addressing conflicting views and suggestions. Leanna Madill, an author from the third issue, reflected on this issue:

The authoring process was rigorous [*sic*]! I was surprised by how many editors read and commented on my paper (I think 4 different editors before it was published!). All the editors were extremely supportive and positive all the way through, which is much different than other journal editors. I had two reviewers provide me with commentary. These edits were challenging because it was hard to know which reviewer's comments to focus on most.

Therefore, the problem created by multiple editors and feedback is something the journal will need to re-examine. In many ways, the review and editing process ensures quality composition and shared workload; however, a basic plan for making changes to manuscripts might need to be established between all parties before any work begins. An effective plan could include communication and negotiation between the journal editor, senior editors, mentors, and authors before editing has started on the manuscript. In this manner, each person involved in the process would work through similar guidelines and goals for the article.

Originally, there was a goal to increase dialogue between graduate students studying in the field of education in Canada. The purpose was to engage emerging scholars in discussions about research, publishing, and graduate studies. There is a commentary feature within the OJS platform for readers to post comments about articles, but this was not well used and was not designed for ongoing discussion. It was thought a blog could perhaps present the abstract of each article for readers to post questions or

comments, but team members felt too burdened with other chores to manage this added component. However, the idea of increasing dialogue between authors and readers has potential and should be explored further.

The journal is presently run with little financial support and no budget. It is operated by many volunteers and freely placed on the University of Calgary server. However, sources of financial support will need to be sought as the cost for housing the journal with the Synergies group and the University of Calgary will cost approximately \$750 per year. The fee will cover server costs and other related expenses. The journal team will need to initiate fundraising before the costs are introduced. In the past, the graduate caucus supporting the journal, CCGSE/CCÉDÉ, supplied funds to cover annual Web domain fees and advertising materials, such as bookmarks and conference posters; however, they would not be expected to cover the \$750 server fees. Future journal teams will need to re-evaluate costs for the journal to determine what will be required financially. Perhaps pursuing grants or education faculty donations, or contacting organizations that support graduate student and/or bilingual publications are options.

### **Conclusion**

The *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education/Revue canadienne des jeunes chercheures et chercheurs en éducation* has interesting and humble beginnings. Being inspired and developed by strong leaders, committed graduate students, and supportive faculty members proved to be a major factor in the journal's success. Connie Morrison, an author from the second issue, shared her experience of publishing with the journal. Her statement confirms that the intentions and goals of the journal—such as supporting emerging writers, building collegial relationships, connecting graduate students, and easing the academic journey—were reached.

The journey though [*sic*]doctoral studies is much more than course work and research. It's also about the collegial relationships we make, and about the lessons we learn that we will carry forward into our work in the academy. Having this opportunity has made me a better writer, thinker and dare I say it...scholar. I hope that one day I can provide to other students the same kind of pivotal academic support that Kelly, her team and this project has [*sic*] given me in this one.

### **Acknowledgment**

This article was sponsored by the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) and John Willinsky of Stanford University. Willinsky's encouragement to share the story of building a graduate-operated journal was the catalyst for its creation. With this article, we hope others will be inspired and have the courage and determination to create a similar venue to support and openly present graduate student work.

### **Note**

1. I sent out an email to many editorial members who wrote back with their messages. The same applies to all other personal quotes (email messages: January 12, 2010).

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## Appendix

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