

## From the Editors

# Raising the Veil: Insights Into *AMLE*'s Review Process

By the time you read this introduction, the current editorial team will be halfway through our term of responsibility for new *AMLE* manuscript submissions. It certainly has been a quick 18 months, and during this time the team has become increasingly comfortable with managing the manuscript decision process. However, in the midst of recent conversations with the editorial team, it became apparent that although we may understand *AMLE*'s submission and review process, we could do a much better job of communicating that process to our readers, authors, and potential authors. Therefore, given the suggestions by the associate editors and the recent use of the From the Editors columns by our sister Academy of Management journals to increase the transparency of their manuscript review and decision processes, I thought it would be appropriate to take this opportunity to provide some insights into *AMLE*'s manuscript review process and inform you of some new additions to the editorial team and editorial board.

Like the Academy's other journals, *AMLE*'s peer-reviewed submissions are managed through the fully electronic system, Manuscript Central (<http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/amle>). Upon receipt of your manuscript you should receive an automated confirmation that the manuscript has been submitted, after which managing editor Mike Malgrande checks to ensure that the manuscript complies with *AMLE* formatting and style guidelines. Manuscripts that egregiously violate the guidelines will be sent back to the authors. *AMLE*'s general guidelines are published in each issue. For more specific guidance regarding a manuscript's organization and wording, we also adhere to *AMJ*'s stylistic guidelines.

### HOW DO I AVOID A DESK REJECTION?

Upon being judged as meeting formatting and style requirements, the manuscript comes to me to determine whether it will be sent out for review. Since prospective authors submit manuscripts to *AMLE* in hopes of getting them published, it seems reasonable that they would want to ensure that the manuscript is not rejected without review. But it happens. *AMLE*'s current desk rejection rate is around 25%, which, based on informal conversations with editors of leading learning and education journals in other disciplines, is relatively low

(for example, the *Journal of Engineering Education*'s desk reject rate is 70%). *AMLE* does not have a target rate for desk rejects; in fact, we seek to send out for review all manuscripts with a chance at publication. However, some manuscripts unfortunately still are desk rejected without review. The reasons tend to fall into one of the following six categories:

1. **Lack of fit with the journal's mission.** This is overwhelmingly the primary reason for desk rejection. *AMLE*'s mission is to advance the knowledge and practice of management learning and education (Bailey, 2006). Manuscripts typically are placed in this category of desk rejects for one of two reasons. First, the manuscript is about higher education in general or an area of learning and education not related to business schools or corporate learning centers. Second, the manuscript's focus is on topics and/or research settings related to the management discipline rather than management learning and education.
2. **Manuscripts for which organizational learning is the primary focus.** *AMLE*'s inaugural issue stated that the journal would not consider manuscripts on organizational learning unless a business school or corporate learning center was the research setting (Lewicki, 2002). The reason for this policy decision is that journals such as *Management Learning (ML)*; Easterby-Smith, Li, & Bartunek, 2009) have a well-established reputation for publishing quality work in this area.
3. **Accounts of author experiences with adopting particular pedagogies.** *AMLE*'s refusal to publish such manuscripts has been chronicled in previous From the Editors columns (Bailey, 2006; Lewicki, 2002). Outlets such as the *Journal of Management Education (JME)* have a long-standing reputation for providing high-quality, engaging articles with this orientation (Schmidt-Wilk, 2009).
4. **Manuscripts on well-established topics in management learning and education that do not build upon prior work from those literatures.** For example, *JME* has an extensive history of publishing work on the study of both student teams and the use of experiential learning in management education (Kalliath & Laiken, 2006; Schmidt-Wilk, 2009), as does *ML* in the area of critical management education (Cunliffe & Linstead, 2009). Also, in its relatively short existence the *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education (DSJIE)* has established itself as a primary home for leading-edge articles on on-line and blended learning in business education (Arbaugh, Godfrey,

Johnson, Leisen Pollack, Niendorf, & Wresch, 2009; Kellogg & Smith, 2009; Nemanich, Banks, & Vera, 2009). Failure to consider work on topics such as these from these journals suggests a general nonconformance with these literatures, and also typically is an indicator of additional significant conceptual, methodological, and/or analytical problems with the manuscript. In other words, make sure to examine this emerging field's major journals as you develop your manuscripts.

5. **Nonprovocative essay submissions.** This is a category unique to *AMLE*'s Essays, Dialogues, & Interviews (EDI) section. These manuscripts may address an important topic, but they are presented in such a way that no one in the management education and development field would disagree with. For example, there likely would be little disagreement among management educators that the use of storytelling can be an effective pedagogical technique. Therefore, an essay on the use of storytelling in management education would be unlikely to generate the level of provocation desired in an *AMLE* essay unless it took a dramatically different perspective on the topic.
6. **Manuscripts in the editor's area(s) of expertise that have fatal flaws.** This is by far the category that has the smallest number of desk rejects, and will vary depending upon the editor's area of research focus. For this editor, that topic would be on-line and blended management education. Given the breadth of topics in the domain of management learning and education, it is at least possible that an editor might miss a flawed manuscript outside of their area of expertise.

One of the first things I did when I assumed the role of *AMLE* editor-select was to ask my predecessor, James Bailey, for copies of the templates he used for desk rejection letters. He replied that he had no such templates, but rather he handled each desk rejection individually with its own letter. Now that I've been in the editor's role for a while, I better understand why he did this. It can be easy to take a desk reject decision personally, but from the categories described here this clearly needn't be the case. As Goodall's (2009) recently published provocative article that argues for the selection of accomplished scholars as senior-level university administrators (that was originally submitted to and desk rejected by *AMLE*) clearly illustrates, desk rejects are about a manuscript's fit with the journal; they are not a commentary on the author's skill or abilities.

### ***AMLE*'s Review Process**

Once the potential fit of a submission has been established, it is then assigned to a decision editor and sent out for review. *AMLE*'s manuscript review

and decision process is similar to that recently described in *AMJ* (Colquitt & Ireland, 2009; Ireland, 2008; Sanders, 2009) with a few minor differences. Authors must indicate whether the manuscript is to be considered as a submission to the Research & Reviews (R&R) section or the EDI section. We send manuscripts out to either two or three reviewers, depending upon factors such as decision editor preference, decision editor expertise with the manuscript's topic, or manuscripts that provide opportunities to develop our pool of ad hoc reviewers. Reviewers are selected on the basis of expertise on the topic in question and, particularly in the case of board members, the number of days since their last completed review. We are grateful that we generally have been spared the challenges of securing reviewers that apparently afflict other major journals (Ketchen, 2008; Trevino, 2008). All manuscripts are reviewed by at least one editorial board member, and our recently completed editorial board reviewer evaluations indicate that the board is doing an outstanding job. In manuscripts sent out for review, we now average 50 days from submission to an initial decision. For those authors invited to revise and resubmit their manuscripts, we generally like to see a revision within 120 days of the initial decision, but we can work with authors on this guideline if they need more time to finalize their work.

### **New Editorial Additions**

We are particularly pleased with the increasingly favorable reactions that *AMLE* has received from the management research and the learning and education research communities. *AMLE*'s 2008 impact factor of 2.889 placed it as 8th among management journals and 2nd among education and educational research journals. With this continued development of *AMLE* has come an increase in submissions, and, by extension, an increased editorial workload. Including special issue manuscripts, *AMLE* finished the 2008–2009 year with 224 submissions, and with over 240 submissions for the 2009 calendar year to date (as of October 20), our editorial workload is poised to increase dramatically. With this workload increase, we have added a new associate editor and several new editorial board members. I am delighted that Steve Armstrong accepted my invitation to be our newest associate editor. Those of you familiar with the journal know that Steve is one of those extremely rare scholars to have multiple *AMLE* articles in both the R&R (Armstrong, Allinson, & Hayes, 2004; Armstrong & Mahmud, 2008) and EDI (Armstrong, 2005; Armstrong & Sadler-Smith, 2008) sections,

which makes him highly qualified to be both a decision editor for R&R submissions and to support EDI Editor Myrtle Bell with submissions to that section as needed. In the spirit of the other Academy journals, *AMLE* is transitioning to a purely meritocratic approach to making editorial board appointment decisions. Therefore I'm pleased to announce that based upon their prior performance as reviewers and/or authors, Yehuda Baruch, Diane Bolton, Tony Buono, Ann Cunliffe, Jacob Eisenberg, Charles Fornaciari, Deanna Geddes, Tom Hawk, David Jacobs, Jennifer Nahrgang, Gianpiero Petriglieri, Jon Raelin, Anson Seers, Carolyn Wiley, and Yunxia Zhu have earned promotions to *AMLE*'s editorial board. Please join me in congratulating them!

### In This Issue

This issue's Research & Reviews articles feature learner pursuit of and response to learning performance feedback as a common theme, by a variety of means and for a variety of populations. Two articles place particular emphasis on the importance of the role of the instructor/coach in the process. Hooijberg and Lane's article on coaches' use of multisource feedback in executive education contexts raises the possibility that participants in these programs want coaches to be more than simply wise sages who ask them the right questions and help them establish direction for themselves. Perhaps due in large part to the brevity of executive education programs, coaches in such settings may need to take more of an activist role. Geddes' article on on-line gradebook monitoring provides insights on how incoming undergraduate business students use technological advancements to self-monitor and possibly enhance their academic performance. Using a relatively wide range of statistical techniques for management learning and education research, she presents a compelling case for why business school faculty should incorporate such tools and encourage their students to use them. The third article that has links to the feedback theme focuses on learner responses to developmental experiences. Ng, Van Dyne, and Ang profile how cultural intelligence enables some managers to learn experientially from international assignments and how such learning in turn allows these managers to become effective global leaders. Some particularly interesting potential implications of this piece are that an aspiring manager's international assignments could be at least as much about what, how, and why they learned from the experience as it is about their performance in a particular assignment, and that

organizations can be intentional about developing the cultural intelligence of their managers rather than leaving it to chance or individual initiative and self-awareness.

Our other two articles examine topics that warrant further attention in our educational and professional practice. D'Abate, Youndt, and Wenzel provide a foundational piece for the surprisingly understudied topic of internships in management education. If our "in press" pipeline is any indication, this is the first piece of what should be an emerging stream of research. Their study suggests that the nature of the work and the conditions of the workplace, rather than situational factors, predicted internship satisfaction, which suggests that students were seeing the internships as serious learning opportunities rather than a requirement for "checking the box" for graduation or padding a resume. And last, Metz and Harzing examine the composition of editorial boards of 57 management journals, and find that women are underrepresented relative to their contributions as first authors. Of course, an editor cannot read such a piece and not think about the gender distribution of their editorial board and contributors. I'm pleased to say that with women comprising 23.4% of the 2004 editorial board (last year studied in Metz & Harzing's article) and increasing to 33.6% of the current board, and our percentage of female lead authors of articles in our noninvited sections (R&R and EDI) increasing from 24.1% in 2002-2005 to 33.6% in 2006-2009, *AMLE* appears to be a relatively female-friendly journal in the management field.

As always, Jonathan Doh, Myrtle Bell, Ken Brown and Charmine Hartel provide illuminating introductions to the EC, EDI, and B&RR sections. To prevent any potential concerns regarding *AMLE*'s ethical practices (Kacmar, 2009; Schminke, 2009), please note that the Bell, Connerley, and Cocchiarra essay was accepted during Neal Ashkanasy's term as EDI editor.

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