

Editorial: Completely Blinding an Online Innovations Manuscript Submission

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As inaugural editors of the *Innovations in Science Teacher Education* journal, the most frequent occurring issue we see regarding online manuscript submissions is incomplete manuscript blinding. Consequently, this slows down the peer-review process since the manuscript must be returned to the primary author for revision before it can be sent to reviewers. Additionally, we commonly receive documents with tracked changes. Track changes can be helpful in the review process by providing authors with direct comments, suggestions, and edits. Likewise, authors can track the revisions made in response to reviewer feedback. However, the track changes feature often reveals the identity of both authors and reviewers, which must also be omitted. Thus, to help inform potential authors and reviewers, we provide the following guidelines to ensure that a manuscript is completely blinded and ready for anonymous review:

Grant-funded Programs

The manuscript should not include references to grant-funding sources. Additionally, the manuscript should not include the title (or acronym) of a grant-funded program or the grant number.

Institutional Names

The manuscript should not include the institutional name of the author(s).

Title Page, Running Headers, Footnotes, Figures and Tables

The manuscript should not include any title page, running headers, footnotes, figures, or tables that contain author identifying information.

Acknowledgements

The manuscript should not include any acknowledgements. Acknowledgements can be added to the manuscript after it is formally accepted for publication in the journal.

Self-Citations

If you refer to your work, or the work of your co-authors within the text of the manuscript, please replace all author identifying information with: (Author citation, Year). For entry of your work in a references list, all bibliographic information (e.g. title, journal name, proceedings, volume, pages, location, publishers, etc.) must be omitted and replaced with only the words

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Revisions with Tracked Changes

If you are submitting a manuscript revision with tracked changes online, please be sure to completely blind your edits and comments. The following link from Microsoft provides step-by-step directions for blinding your Word document using the track changes feature:

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Because hidden information can reveal author or reviewer identifying information, please be sure to completely remove all hidden data and personal information in your Word documents before you submit your manuscript online by using the following steps:

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File/Info/Check for Issues/Inspect Document. Click the “Inspect Document” button. To the right of “Document Properties and Personal Information” click the “Remove All” button. Close. Save the document.

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Additionally, the following support document from Microsoft helps to ensure author and reviewer anonymity when submitting a new or revised online manuscript by describing how the “Document Inspector” feature in Word can help you find and remove hidden data and personal information in your document: https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Remove-hidden-data-and-personal-information-by-inspecting-documents-356b7b5d-77af-44fe-a07f-9aa4d085966f#_toc312143397

To ensure the anonymity of authors and reviewers, manuscripts and reviews of manuscripts should be fully blinded. By doing so, both parties can engage in an open and honest dialogue aimed at producing an engaging and informative article for *Innovations* readers. Double blind reviews are a powerful way to reduce bias in publications and protect the integrity of the literature (Vaux, 2011). Gender, familiarity and country of origin have been shown to affect reviewer behavior (Link, 1998; Wenneras & Wold, 1997). For these reasons the greater scientific community largely favors double blinded review (Mainguy, Motamedi & Mietchen, 2005; Regehr & Bordage, 2006; Stenrud & Brooks, 2005). Double blind reviews have also been shown to increase the representation of first-authored papers by females (Budden, Tregenza, Aarssen, Koricheva, Leimu, & Lortie, 2008). Though blinding a manuscript and the reviews of that manuscript require additional time and create logistical issues for editors, we believe the benefits far outweigh the costs. Please help us to facilitate the efficient review of manuscripts by fully and completely blinding manuscripts and reviews.

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