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Reviewer Essay: What Makes a Great Article for IJ-SoTL

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Abstract

Excerpt: First, Happy Fifth Anniversary to the International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning! In this anniversary issue, Dr. Altany's request to have the review board members reflect on what makes a great article for IJ-SoTL gives our readers insight on why this journal is so successful: in short, we have high expectations and standards that have provided authors with a high-quality international forum for meaningful contributions to the educational research community.

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What Makes a Great Article for IJ-SoTL

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First, Happy Fifth Anniversary to the *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*! In this anniversary issue, Dr. Altany's request to have the review board members reflect on what makes a great article for **IJ-SoTL** gives our readers insight on why this journal is so successful: in short, we have high expectations and standards that have provided authors with a high-quality international forum for meaningful contributions to the educational research community.

My approach to determining the most important features of a solid and high-level article for this journal relates to the journal's title itself: the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Manuscripts that stray too far from a focus on contributing to new understanding, new strategies, and new practices in teaching are less likely to be included. There are many fine topics and intriguing questions in educational research, but unless those studies and articles contribute to our understanding of how learners learn and how teachers must use that understanding to teach, reviewers for **IJ-SoTL** will likely suggest they be published in another journal.

I look for articles and studies that also have application to a wider audience than those in any particular country or region. While that is not an absolute rule, I do find that solid practices arising from a sound research foundation are fairly easily generalized across cultures. I seriously take into account the criteria for review (<http://academics.georgiasouthern.edu/ijstl/rp.htm>) and suggest that aspiring authors for this journal use this list of questions as a basis for reviewing a manuscript before submitting. In fact, I suggest that authors have one or two colleagues read the manuscript and use the criteria before submitting to the journal.

Finally, I look for some sort of "ah-HA" revelation, interpretation, or observation on teaching and learning scholarship. Quasi-experimental studies, qualitative studies, or insightful literature reviews are all possible avenues to provide readers with new connections and ideas. In other words, you do not have to conduct original research to be included in this journal, but you will want to make certain your work contributes to new understandings in the growing body of educational research on teaching and learning.