

Continuous Publication Offers Faster Access to Journal Articles

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INTRODUCTION

Traditional publishing is a serial process. Authors, who have spent months researching and writing their manuscripts, submit their work to the *Athletic Training Education Journal (ATEJ)*. Manuscripts are reviewed for compliance with the Authors' Guide by the editorial staff and then assigned to an editor who selects peer reviewers. In the best of circumstances, the reviews are received in 14 to 21 days, and the time from submission to first decision is 30 days or less. Most manuscripts require some level of revision (ie, major or minor) and must be resubmitted and rereviewed. If a paper is ultimately accepted, the time from submission to acceptance may have required 90 to 180 days or more.

Once accepted, *ATEJ* manuscripts and support documents are prepared and then transferred to Allen Press for technical editing. The edited manuscript, and later the final proofs, are reviewed by the corresponding author and *ATEJ* Editor-in-Chief. Any necessary changes are made, and the article is readied for publication. However, production schedules, special issues, and articles already in the publication queue may impose a delay of 3 to 6 months. For example, the *ATEJ* is published quarterly, so even though a manuscript is accepted in December, the next available issue may not be until June. This delay has been a concern for both authors, who are often on tenure and promotion timelines, and editors. Most importantly, it slows the sharing of timely knowledge that may affect how educators, preceptors, and clinicians pursue professional development and engage students in the classroom and clinical education environment.

We at *ATEJ* have long recognized this limitation and its effects on end users. Therefore, it is my great pleasure to announce that, thanks to the financial and human resources support of the National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) Board of Directors and staff and Allen Press, our journal is moving to continuous publication in 2020. We believe the decision to move to continuous publication will advance the field of athletic training education in the areas of athletic training pedagogy, clinical education, curriculum and program development, educational assessment, educational policy, and continuing education.

What Is Continuous Publishing?

Continuous publishing is an ongoing process in which an article is posted online as soon as it is finalized rather than being held for an issue or maybe two or three. As a result, the information is available to readers up to several months before the article is assigned to an issue.

The most recent manuscripts will appear on the table of contents. After 3 months, we will close the issue, and the issue will be officially published. Newly accepted articles will be posted as soon as they are ready and placed in the next available issue.

Frequently Asked Questions

Continuous publishing is not new to Allen Press, but it is new to the NATA, and as such, we anticipate authors and readers will have questions:

Why are we introducing continuous publication?

The *ATEJ* leadership team is committed to making research available to the educational community as quickly as possible, which is beneficial for both authors and readers.

What is the difference between continuous publication and the posting of preprints?

In our continuous publication model, once an accepted manuscript is edited, typeset, and proofread, the final version is placed online. This is different from a preprint, which is an in-progress manuscript or proof that is posted and eventually replaced by the final article.

Will the posted article have a digital object identifier (DOI)?

Yes, each article will have a DOI because this is a unique identifier that provides a permanent link.

Will the journal still have traditional page numbering?

Yes, page numbers will be assigned when the issue is compiled.

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Will there be any changes to the way articles are cited?

No. The DOI provides a permanent link. Page numbers will be immediately available for citation, if readers need it.

Will continuous publication affect the number of issues and pages published?

Our current schedule of 4 issues per annum, with a total allocation of 400 pages, will remain in place. If the number of high-quality submission increases, we will consider requesting funding from the NATA Board of Directors for additional pages in the future.

What does continuous publication mean for the email alerts I receive from the NATA Journals Web site?

Continuous publication will offer even more flexibility in the alerts you receive. You will be able to choose updates daily, weekly, or when an issue is published. You can also sign up for alerts on specific topics.

Does the journal intend to still publish occasional special issues?

Yes, we have special issues slotted for 2020 and 2021 and are looking toward 2022 and beyond. Special issues will typically appear in December.

Does the ATEJ intend to offer continuing education units (CEUs)?

Yes, CEUs for the December 2019 issue are now available. With the move to continuous publication, CEUs will become available once an issue is published.

If an error is spotted in the published article, can it be corrected?

Because the published article is the final version of record, minor corrections or typographic errors cannot be corrected. Should an error in a published article affect the scientific meaning or authors' credibility but not the overall results or conclusions, our policy is to publish a correction. If, after an investigation, an error is determined to have been introduced by the editorial staff during editing or proofreading, we take responsibility and publish a correction with appropriate apologies to authors and readers.

Final Thoughts

The ATEJ senior leadership team and editorial staff have sought to improve our process metrics at all levels and have largely succeeded, except for the time to publication. We believe that continuous publishing is the next step in the evolution of the journal. This strategic move will help to disseminate the research more quickly and enhance the educational community's perception of the ATEJ as a publication at the leading edge. With your support, we can achieve these goals.

Please understand this is a new process, and with all new processes, growing pains and hiccups are to be expected. As we work through the first months of this process, we ask authors and readers to be patient and share your feedback with us. The ATEJ editors and staff will aim to answer questions in a timely fashion and to address and correct any concerns that arise. Any questions or concerns can be directed to Editor-in-Chief David Berry and Managing Editor Leslie Neistadt at atej@slu.edu.

Thank you for your ongoing support of the *Athletic Training Education Journal*.