

The AT Ed Journal: A Rapidly Growing Adolescent

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The Athletic Training Education Journal is entering its 4th year. Although we did not have a party, presents, or cake and ice cream, there is cause for celebration. Our baby is growing rapidly. Evidence for that growth is in Tables 1–3. Kudos to Chad Starkey who conceived the idea, and to the many volunteers who made it happen.

Almost 8000 visitors accessed our website in 2008, and downloaded 22,000 documents, which could have been an individual article or an entire issue (Table 1). This activity represents increases in visitors and downloads of 280% and 310%, respectively. We don't know how much people are reading the material they download, but assume they would do more than just peruse it, since that can easily be done online. But who are those readers? We hope we are reaching scholars, educators, and clinicians (Table 2).

Manuscript submission is growing steadily, which indicates authors share in the vision, mission, and aims of the journal (Table 3). Our peer review is rigorous; only 35% of submitted manuscripts have been published. More importantly, the quality of the published manuscripts is enhanced by peer reviews. Our policy has been to not publish a paper before its time, meaning we work with authors to make sure their ideas are beneficial to AT educators and communicated as clearly and logically as possible.

Like many new journals, our initial volumes were meager in size, not quality. We only had two issues with only 44 pages of content (Table 4). This year we published 4 issues with 154 pages, a doubling of issues and a growth of almost 400% in articles.

Our content has varied, a mixture of art and science, as we had hoped for as we conceptualized the journal. We are publishing the science of our pedagogists, sharing their research on the science and theory of teaching, as well as carefully considered and crafted commentary on educational issues. A favorite of mine is the *Current Literature* column that Carrie Meyer and her team produce each issue. They scour other allied health education journals for articles most relevant to AT education, and then provide an abstract of, and link to, the article for our readers. I personally have found some gems in this column that have enhanced my teaching.

Knowledge Growth Requires Sharing

The essence of scholarship is that we share the efforts of our labors with each other so that we grow on the backs of each other. We labor and toil to collect and organize data and thoughts into a coherent message that brings clarity to an issue. Sharing the results of this labor allows numerous others to build upon it. Sharing

Table 1. ATEJ Website Access and Downloads

| Year | Document Downloads | Unique Visits | 1 st Time Visitors | Returning Visitors |
|--------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 2006 | 6,948 | 3,550 | 2,867 | 683 |
| 2007 | 13,851 | 5,785 | 4,526 | 1,259 |
| 2009 | 22,049 | 9,286 | 7,904 | 1,382 |
| Growth | 313% | 262% | 276% | 202% |

Table 2. Vision, Mission, and Aims of the Athletic Training Education Journal

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| Vision: Enhance health care by advancing athletic training education. |
| Mission: The journal serves as an interface between the theory and practice of athletic training education by providing a forum for scholars, educators, and clinicians to share critical and significant concepts, original research, and innovative ideas. |
| The journal aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advance the field of athletic training education pertaining to didactic and clinical education, athletic training teaching methodologies, curriculum/program development, and educational assessment.• Offer practical information and resources to improve teaching and learning processes for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education.• Facilitate the exchange of information related to program accreditation; educational policy; and faculty, staff, and student educational issues.• Protect the integrity of the athletic training education knowledge base by maintaining rigorous peer review and assisting authors in communicating their ideas |

minimizes duplication of efforts; we can move on to other discovery because a colleague provided a foundation for us to build on. Can you imagine were we would be if each individual was limited to the knowledge they produced themselves? I often reflect on the fact that I spent hundreds of hours on my doctoral dissertation, yet now teach the essence of it in less than a single class period. Granted, there is much more in it for scientists who are interested in the topic, but for the average AT, it can be summed up in 15-20 minutes.

Table 3. Manuscripts Submitted and Published

| Year | Submitted | Published |
|--------------|-----------|-----------------|
| 2004 | 8 | 0 |
| 2005 | 10 | 0 |
| 2006 | 15 | 6 |
| 2007 | 27 | 8 |
| 2008 | 29 | 17 |
| TOTAL | 89 | 31 (35%) |

Table 4. Content by Type of Material (number:pages)

| | Issues | Title/TOC | Editorial Columns | Articles |
|-------------|--------|-----------|-------------------|------------|
| 2006 | 2:44 | 2:2 | 2:4 | 6:333:5 |
| 2007 | 2:61 | 2:2 | 2:2 | 8:473:6 |
| 2008 | 4:154 | 4:12 | 4:9 | 18:1297:14 |
| Growth-# | 200% | 200% | 300% | 233% |
| Growth-pgs. | 350% | 225% | 391% | 280% |

The majority of AT educators are content experts in areas other than pedagogy, such as physiology, biomechanics, epidemiology, pathology, etc. We rely on them to share with us their advancing knowledge of injury occurrence, diagnosis, and intervention. Journals such as the *Journal of Athletic Training* and the *Journal of Sport Rehabilitation* serve as vehicles for the starting of this scholarship. We rely on these scholars to share the *what* and *why* of the profession; they do, and have done so, most excellently.

Here-to-for the *how* of AT education has suffered from lack of attention by the profession. Pedagogical scholars in the profession have had to publish the majority of their research in education journals of other professions. The *Journal of Athletic Training* published some of this research, but only a small part. This was problematic for two reasons. First, the exchange of ideas between AT pedagogists was hindered because they did not have a single, central repository for their scholarship. Secondly, there was no single, central repository for non-pedagogical AT educators to find scholarship concerning how they could enhance their teaching.

The Athletic Training Education Journal is filling the void in the exchange of information between AT “hard” science scholars and pedagogical science scholars. Knowledge is now flowing in both directions. Granted, the flow is very uneven (a tsunami in one direction, a trickle in the other), but it is now bidirectional. We trust that in time it will become more balanced..

More Commentary/Letters Encouraged

We encourage more carefully considered and crafted commentary on educational issues. The 2nd and 3rd aims of the *AT Ed Journal* are to “offer practical information and resources to improve teaching and learning processes for undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education” and “facilitate the exchange of information related to program accreditation; educational policy; and faculty, staff, and student educational issues.” Editorials and commentary are the effective vehicles to supplement research in these areas.

What is the difference between an editorial and a commentary? Little or nothing in composition and aim. The major difference is that editorials are pronouncements by the editor, editorial staff, or one designated by the editor to write an opinion, while a commentary is an unsolicited (but sometimes encouraged) manuscript. Both are typically peer reviewed, although editorials may not always be blindly peer reviewed. The aim of both is the same—to share concerns and possible solutions on contemporary issues.

We must emphasize that commentaries must be more than “here’s how I do it.” As stated previously, commentaries must be carefully considered and crafted. They typically contain references to support or expand the concepts presented. There is more leniency for personal opinion, however, than in typical manuscripts.

A third vehicle for sharing contemporary issues is a *Letter to the Editor*. These typically are shorter than editorials and commentary and do not undergo peer review. They may have a reference or two, but most will not.

Thank You, Thank You, Thank You

We are proud of the growth of the AT Ed Journal during the past 4 years and look forward with anticipation as our adolescence matures into adulthood in the next few years. Such growth could not have occurred without the efforts of many dedicated volunteers. Thank you: René Helfert, Bill Pitney, Abbey Dondanville, Blaine Long, Jason Bennett, Editorial Board members (see page 126), and guest reviewers (see page 152). We couldn’t have done it without you.

We also must acknowledge the contribution of the BYU Harold B. Lee Library and Academic Vice-President’s office for a seminar about online journals, in which we learned of the changing attitude toward online journals. The Association of Research Libraries, the Association of College and Research Libraries, and Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition were recommending that faculty publish more in scholarly open-access journals, serve on editorial boards of open-access journals, and that university tenure and promotion committees accept publications in such journals, if they are peer reviewed, quality controlled publications. (see the *Directory of Open Access Journals* at www.doaj.org).