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Advice on reviewing a manuscript

- 1) Ascertain that you have the subject matter knowledge to review the paper. Most journals, including *IJT*, include the abstract of the paper in the letter inviting you to review a manuscript to help a potential reviewer make this decision.
- 2) Assess whether you have a conflict of interest in reviewing the paper. This could include being asked to review the work of a collaborator OR having a vested interest in promoting or preventing the publication of the paper.
- 3) Do you have the time to review the manuscript in the expected time frame? Do not accept the invitation if you will not be able to do a thorough and fair review in a timely fashion. Most reviews should take about 4 hr depending on the complexity of the manuscript.
- 3) Be constructive in your comments. Do not demean the authors if the work is sub-standard. Address your comments such that the flaws in the manuscript are the topic of the review, not the ineptness of the authors.
- 4) Suggested structure of your review:
 - a) Begin by reiterating the title of the paper, and state in your own words what you believe to be the rationale or goals for the paper. What are the general constructive comments, e.g., formatting, excessive typographical errors or poor grammar, non-compliance with the *IJT* guidelines?
 - b) Determine the appropriateness of the background information provided in the introduction. A comprehensive review of the literature is generally not needed; instead, does the background provided provide justification for the studies presented in the manuscript?
 - c) Assess the methods section carefully. Are the methods appropriate to answer the specified questions, and are they presented in enough detail that the experiments could be independently replicated? Inform the authors that an alternate method might have been more appropriate to answer their question, if appropriate. Assure that appropriate statistical analyses have been conducted.
 - d) Evaluate the results. Are results sufficiently presented? If tables and figures are used, ensure the data are not presented in both formats. Are tables and figures labeled in enough detail that they make sense when evaluated without referring to the text of the manuscript? Are photomicrographs labeled with arrows/arrowheads/ lettering to show important features? Are photomicrographs crisp, in focus, and color balanced?
 - e) The discussion section should put the current findings in context with what is already known on the topic. The discussion should not be a re-presentation of the results, but should explain how the findings presented advance the field. Have the authors correctly interpreted their results in the context of prior findings?
- 5) Reviewers are NOT expected to re-write papers to improve grammar, spelling, etc. If there are deficiencies, these should be pointed out to the editor. Most journals, including *IJT*, provided space for confidential comments to the editor. The comment that a reviewer might provide to the authors is that the manuscript would benefit from revision by a native English speaker.
- 6) It is practically unheard of to accept a manuscript without some revision. Reviewers may conclude that a manuscript requires one of the following:
 - **minor revisions:** some re-writing is needed, data re-analysis is needed, but no further experiments are needed;
 - **major revisions:** additional experiments are needed; major rewriting is needed to improve English presentation or remove or add literature citations; perhaps re-interpretation of data is required; or
 - **rejection:** manuscript is so flawed that even substantial re-writing or additional experiments can rescue the studies presented.