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Striving for Diversity, Accessibility and Quality: Evaluating SiSAL Journal

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Abstract

After establishing a journal, it is important to evaluate its progress to ensure that the principles that underpin its existence continue to be a priority. In this article, the author reports on measures that were used to evaluate Studies in Self-Access Learning (SiSAL) Journal. The research was designed to investigate the three principles that the journal values: diversity, accessibility and quality. The results identified some successful factors such as accessibility and favourable perceptions of SiSAL Journal's quality. However, the results also identified areas that could be improved to further increase diversity and to encourage submissions from more authors based in different locations.

Keywords: peer-reviewed journal, open-access, evaluation of success, diversity, accessibility

The purpose of this paper is to report on ongoing efforts to monitor the success of Studies in Self-Access Learning (SiSAL) Journal, an open-access, peer-reviewed journal established and published at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) in Japan. SiSAL Journal was formed in 2010 and has been the subject of two institutional projects funded by the Research Institute of Language Studies and Language Education (RILS&LE) at KUIS. The first RILS&LE project (2010-2012) investigated the editorial strategies of two peer review journals published at KUIS - *SiSAL Journal* and *PeerSpectives*. The authors also proposed an instrument designed to promote professional collaboration and diversity (Murphey, Mynard, & Shanley, 2012). The second project (2012-2014) evaluated the success of the same two peer review journals (Murphey & Mynard, 2014) and this research forms the basis of the present article.

In this article, I will give a brief overview of SiSAL Journal before explaining some measures that are often applied to academic journals in order to evaluate a publication's success. I will show how the research focussed on some of the factors related to the principles of the publication in an attempt to show how the editorial team currently views the success of the journal and what we might focus on in coming years in order to continue to improve it.

Overview of SiSAL Journal

SiSAL Journal was formed in 2010 to address a practical need. The journal was

originally designed to be an in-house publication which provided publishing opportunities for colleagues working at KUIS along with a system to archive and share ongoing work. However, once the idea for establishing a journal was shared with colleagues in other institutions, it became clear that there was need for an international publication dedicated to self-access learning. Since its inception, *SiSAL Journal* has published quarterly issues containing a range of article types from full research papers, to summaries and book reviews. There have been a number of special issues, many of which have been guest-edited by international colleagues.

Factors which Typically Measure Success in a Journal

There are various ways of measuring the success of a journal, some numerical and some descriptive. In terms of numerical measures, a commonly used tool is a citation index. A citation index shows how frequently articles from particular journals are cited. One example is the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) which is an interdisciplinary citation index provided by Thomson Reuters. Closely related to this is the Impact Factor (IF) which is calculated by dividing the number of citations in a two-year period by the number of citable articles published the following year. The figure is usually published the subsequent year, so a journal needs to have existed for three to four years before the IF is available. This measure is particularly useful for scientific and scholarly journals when gauging the impact that a journal has within a field. However, there is the possibility that some editorial policies artificially affect the IF. Another drawback is that this measure is less applicable to journals which have a focus on practical applications as the articles may have a big impact on the field yet be of practical rather than scholarly benefit to its readers.

Rejection rate is another commonly used measure and is the percentage of total submissions which are rejected in a year. Some journals boast a high rejection rate as this may indicate high standards. However, this measure might not be an accurate way to show quality as it is possible that a quality journal might have a low rejection rate as it only receives high quality submissions (Egbert, 2007).

Timeliness and time to publication may be further quality indicators. If a journal publishes regularly and on time, this suggests that the editorial board are dedicated and efficient (Egbert, 2007). It also implies that there are enough submissions to make the publication viable.

Availability and accessibility might also be meaningfully used as success indicators

(Polonksy, Jones, & Kearsley, 1999) as the implication is that the journal will be read widely. However, this indicator might be very hard to evaluate if a journal is freely distributed.

There are also non-numerical, descriptive measures that might be used to gauge success of a publication. One example is the inclusion in databases and indexes which not only increases access for readers, but is often evidence that the journal has passed the necessary evaluation procedure for inclusion.

Another measure is the type of article that a journal publishes. A journal which publishes a high proportion of research papers may be an indication of high levels of scholarship, however, if the purpose of the journal is to influence practice, these kinds of articles may not necessarily be an indication of successfully reaching the target readers.

Quality and originality of articles might be another way to evaluate the success of a journal, along with perceived reputation of the publisher, editor, editorial board and authors. These measures may be highly subjective.

To summarise, there may be numerous ways to evaluate a publication but, as Egbert (2007) notes, “a single method, regardless of the number of components included, could not account for important differences among journals” (p. 157), so editorial boards might adopt a variety of different measures depending on the scope and purpose of the publication. For the evaluation of *SiSAL Journal*, we adopted the methods that were most relevant to our research questions and philosophy, but we may consider using some of the other methods in the future.

Journal Values: Diversity, Accessibility and Quality

The research design was constructed based on the desire to achieve three important values associated with the journal: diversity, accessibility and quality. Diversity can be defined as the way in which different perspectives are purposefully brought together in order to improve empathy and broaden our thinking (e.g., Lugones, 2003; Murphey, 2013; Ortega, 2005; 2011).

Accessibility is ensuring that something is widely and freely available and this will have an impact on diversity. For example, diversity depends greatly on accessibility by both contributors and readers and online publishing has allowed both diversity and accessibility to blossom.

It is probably true to say that all publications strive to ensure quality and this is attempted in *SiSAL Journal* by ensuring a rigorous review and editing process involving multiple readers.

In addition, invitations to leaders in the field and special issues of publications also increase the quality of a journal. Angeles Arrien said, “I think the human spirit always wants to make a contribution. And I don’t think there are enough invitations” (cited in Briskin, Erickson, Ott, & Callanan, 2009, p. 156). The job of journal editors is to make those invitations wide and far in order to work towards the multiple aims of increasing diversity, accessibility and quality.

Monitoring Success: Research Questions and Data Collection

For the purposes of this project, our success measurements were closely aligned to the values of the journal. As three of the main values of the publication are diversity, accessibility and quality, research questions for this project were formulated based on evaluating these values. Data were collected up until November 2013 when the results were submitted for publication in the RILSE&LE Journal (Murphey & Mynard, 2014).

Diversity

One way to measure diversity is to look at location of the contributors, readers, and the editorial team members. This assumes that location allows for representation of people in diverse areas of the globe. While this is desirable it does not mean there is diversity in other categories (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity). Still, this is the least intrusive and most easily calculated criteria for a journal to document. The research questions related to location diversity were:

1. How diverse are the contributors in terms of location?
2. How diverse are the readers of the journal in terms of location?
3. How diverse are the reviewers and editorial team members in terms of location?

These questions could be answered by examining the records related to submissions and reviewers and tabulated.

Accessibility

SiSAL Journal is open access, but it is important to be aware of how widely the journals are accessed in order to ensure that we are reaching worldwide audiences. The research questions related to accessibility were:

4. How many views are the online articles receiving and from where?
5. How many people subscribe to the journal or follow it on Facebook and where are they

from?

6. Which databases and links bring the most readers to the journal?

These questions could be answered by accessing Facebook and the journal statistics automatically logged by the website provider (Wordpress) and recording the data.

Quality

In addition to aiming to provide easy access to the journals and to promote diversity, we also strive to publish quality content and provide a positive experience to contributors. The research questions related to quality were:

7. How widely are the articles cited in other work?
8. How do authors view the publication process?
9. How do readers view the quality of the journal?

A measurement of the first question could be attempted with some assistance from online sources, for example citation reports and universal factor evaluators. *SiSAL Journal* was evaluated by Universal Impact Factor and included in its Master List. However, although *SiSAL Journal* submitted an application to be included in the more widely recognised SSCI in 2012, it does not yet feature in its list.

The second and third questions related to quality were investigated for *SiSAL Journal* by administering an optional online survey to a targeted population of participants. The survey (Appendix A) contained nine multiple-choice questions (each with an optional open-ended follow up question), and one open-ended question. The survey was administered using the online tool SurveyMonkey to potential respondents as follows:

- By email to reviewers, members of the editorial team and authors (contact person only) who had submitted a paper for consideration since 2010 (n=147)
- Via a Facebook post to Facebook subscribers (n=53)
- Via an RSS post to *SiSAL Journal* to website subscribers (n=212)
- Via a link on *SiSAL Journal* front page

Some of the potential respondents may have been contacted in two or more of these ways over the two-week data collection period, but were limited to one response each. A total of 85 respondents began the survey, 71 (84%) of whom completed it. In order to analyse the data, the

multiple choice responses were simply tallied and the open-ended responses were grouped thematically. Incomplete submissions were included in the data.

Results

Diversity

Research Question 1 was concerned with how diverse the *contributors* are in terms of location. Since the first issue, SiSAL Journal has featured more diverse authors. For example, Issue 1 (June, 2010) contained contributions from authors based in just two locations: Japan and the UK. At the time of the data collection, the most recent issue (September, 2013) contained six articles by contributors based in five different countries: Jamaica, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand and Turkey. This snapshot report appears to indicate that contributors are based in more diverse locations. However, when we counted the number of authors (not the number of articles) based in each country over the 14 issues of SiSAL Journal published between June 2010 and September 2013, we noticed a disproportionately high number of contributors based in Japan. Table 1 shows a summary of the location of the authors. Perhaps this is not surprising given that the journal is published in Japan and almost all of the editorial team members are based there.

Table 1. Summary of where SiSAL Journal Contributors are Based (June 2010 - November 2013)

1	Japan	59
2	USA	14
3	Mexico	9
4	UK	6
5	Hong Kong	5
6	Iran	5
7	New Zealand	5
8	Ireland	3
9	Germany	2
10	Malaysia	2
11	Turkey	2
12	Australia	1
13	Bahrain	1
14	Canada	1
15	Cyprus	1
16	Egypt	1
17	Estonia	1
18	Greece	1
19	Jamaica	1
20	Taiwan	1
21	Thailand	1

Research Question 2 asked how diverse the *readers* of the journal was in terms of location. Readers of *SiSAL Journal* in a one-year period (from November 1 2012 to October 31 2013) were based in 169 different countries. The 20 countries from which the journal was accessed most often during this time are listed in Figure 1.

Country	Views
 United States	8,145
 Japan	4,248
 United Kingdom	3,548
 Indonesia	2,555
 Malaysia	1,901
 Mexico	1,714
 Philippines	1,561
 Australia	1,503
 Canada	1,451
 India	1,347
 Thailand	1,337
 Viet Nam	973
 Hong Kong	966
 Turkey	957
 Taiwan	782
 Colombia	758
 New Zealand	689
 Brazil	629
 Germany	593
 Egypt	575

Figure 1. Number of Views in One Year by the Top 20 Countries (from November 1 2012 to October 31 2013)

Research Question 3 was concerned with how diverse the reviewers and editorial team members of the journals were. The statistics showed a high number of members based in Japan (Table 2). We also noticed that there were more than twice as many males as females on the editorial and review boards (Table 3). In terms of the reviewers, they were based in 24 different locations which seems reasonably diverse. However, the majority (29 out of 73, which is 40%) were based in Japan (see Table 4).

Table 2. Advisory and Editorial Boards

Countries
Japan (11)
Australia (4)
Greece (1)
Hong Kong (1)
Ireland (1)
New Zealand (1)
UAE (1)
UK (1)
USA (1)

Table 3. Gender of Advisory and Editorial Boards

Male	15
Female	7

Table 4. Location of Reviewers

Japan	29	Brazil	1
UAE	6	China	1
USA	6	Germany	1
Mexico	3	Greece	1
UK	3	India	1
Thailand	3	Macau	1
Canada	2	Oman	1
Egypt	2	Pakistan	1
Finland	2	Singapore	1

Hong Kong	2	Sudan	1
Spain	2	Taiwan	1
Australia	1	Turkey	1

Other measures of diversity to research in the future could include whether the articles are single-authored or co-authored, whether the authors are male or female, whether the authors are based at our institution, in another institution in Japan, and whether the authors are students. For example, we know many of the reviewers may be located in Japan, but are not Japanese and thus location data alone can be misleading.

Accessibility

Research Question 4 asked how many views the online articles are receiving. Total views from 1st March 2010 to 1st November 2013 for *SiSAL Journal* was 118,585. The statistics for a one-year period are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. *SiSAL Journal* Access Figures in One Year (from November 1 2012 to October 31 2013)

Total page views in one year	47,5583
Average page views per month	3,965
Average page views per week	915
Average page views per day	130

In order to highlight the amount of access that individual contributions might get, a summary of the articles that received the most views in a one-year period and the number of views is shown in Table 6. The least frequently accessed articles are the editorials, some receiving just one or two views - or no views at all.

Table 6. The Top Ten Most Accessed Articles in a One-year Period (from November 1 2012 to October 31 2013)

	Views
“Learning to Foster Autonomy: The Role of Teacher Education Materials” by Hayo Reinders and Cem Balcikanli. Issue 2(1)	3,377
“English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Modules” by Kevin Knight, Issue 1(2)	2,761
“Principles and Procedures for Self-Access Materials” by Brian Tomlinson. Issue 1(2)	1,880
“Review of the Open Culture Website” by Anna Taylor (Gorevanova). Issue 1(2)	1,343
“Internet-Based Resources for Developing Listening” by Ene Peterson. Issue 1(2)	1,225
“Fostering Self-directed Learning through Guided Tasks and Learner Reflection” by Chris King. Issue 2(4)	1,218
“EFL Students’ Writing Strategies in Saudi Arabian ESP Writing Classes” by Mohammad Alnufaie and Michael Grenfell. Issue 3(4)	1,039
“Evaluating Learner Autonomy: A Dynamic Model with Descriptors” by Maria Giovanna Tassinari. Issue 3(1)	1,024
“The Importance of Affective Factors in Self-Access Language Learning Courses” by Sergio Valdivia, David McLoughlin, and Jo Mynard. Issue 2(2)	1,011
“Language Learning Strategy Research: Where do we go from Here?” by Heath Rose. Issue 3(2)	932

Question 5 asked how many people subscribed to the online journals or followed them on Facebook. A summary is given in Table 7.

Table 7. Subscribers to SiSAL Journal

	Subscribers
Subscribers to the RSS feed	212
Facebook followers	53

Question 6 was concerned with which databases and links bring the most readers to the online journals. The statistics were calculated for the same one-year period as above for SiSAL Journal and are shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Top Referrers in a One-year Period (from November 1 2012 to October 31 2013)

Google search engine	23,773
Google images	1,633
Other search engines (combined)	1,279
Facebook	461
DOAJ (Directory of Open-Access Journals)	418
Kanda University websites (combined)	99
Yahoo Mail	98
Twitter	97
Academia.edu	85

Quality

Research Question 7, concerning how widely the articles are cited, was evaluated through inclusion on the Universal Impact Factor Master List and was calculated to be as follows (according to the website <http://www.uifactor.org/JournalMasterList.aspx>):

SiSAL Journal Impact Factor for year 2012 = 1.0052

By way of comparison, *Language Learning and Technology Journal*, a highly respected and well-established, online, open-access journal had an impact factor of 1.38 in 2012.

Questions 8 and 9 were investigated through the survey (Appendix A). Appendix B summarizes how the respondents answered the questions by indicating the number of respondents and, where relevant, the associated open-ended comments.

Research Question 8 was concerned with how authors view the publication process and this was found to be generally positive. Out of the 33 respondents who had published in SiSAL Journal, 29 had had a good experience, three an acceptable experience and one a bad experience. The percentages are shown in Figure 2.

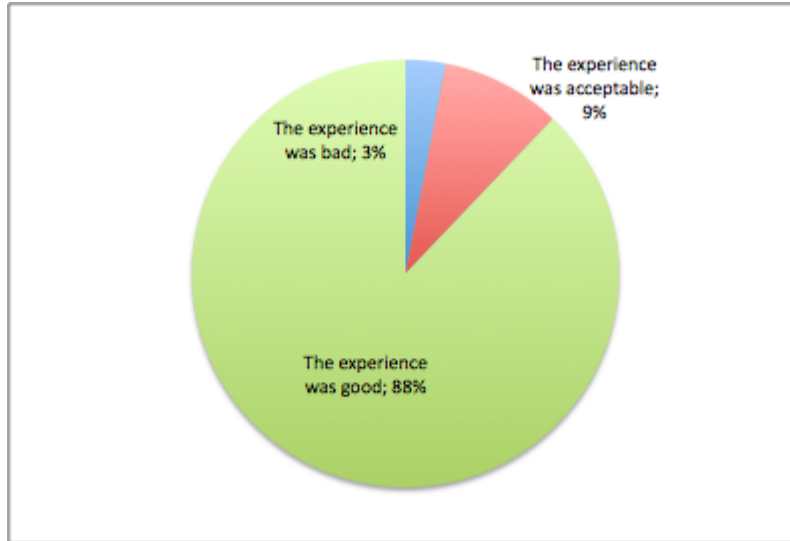


Figure 2. How Authors Viewed the Publication Process

The respondents who had published an article in SiSAL Journal and had had a bad experience unfortunately did not give details. In fact, those who responded to the open-ended question (n=11) were those who had all had a good experience. The raw data is given in Appendix B, but the main reasons cited were:

- reviewer/editor suggestions were helpful (n=6)
- fast turnaround (n=3)
- the reviewers/editors were very supportive (n=2)
- the editorial team were very professional (n=1)
- non-native speakers appreciated the help (n=1)

Out of the respondents who had submitted papers that had been rejected, two reported that the experience was “acceptable” and one reported that the experience was “poor”. Unfortunately, the open-ended follow-up question was not completed so we are unable to pinpoint the reason for the responses.

Research Question 9 was concerned with how readers viewed the quality of the journal. One question which sheds light on reader perceptions is Question 3 on the survey (see Appendix B) and respondents were asked to choose between “good standard” “acceptable standard” and “poor standard”. Out of 68 respondents, 42 (62%) viewed it to be “good standard” and 26 (38%) judged the journal to be of an “acceptable standard”. Nobody viewed the journal as “poor standard”. Question 10 was an open-ended question which asked the respondents to make suggestions for improvement. The raw data has been included in Appendix C, but a few general

observations were made (unless indicated, these suggestions were made by only one respondent):

- Request for services that already exist (email alerts, downloadable articles, indexing) (n=5)
- Suggestions to broaden the geographical scope (n=2)
- Suggestion for the inclusion of practical ideas (n=2)
- Suggestion to pay attention to quality of scholarship (n=2)
- Request for a printed version
- Suggestion for better classification of articles
- Request for translations
- Suggestion to commission more articles by qualified colleagues
- Request for materials reviews
- Request for articles on technology

Limitations

There are certainly many limitations associated with this research. As Egbert (2007) pointed out, it is likely that journals should be evaluated using different measures and establishing the appropriate measures might be the first step. Whereas the measures described in this article are helpful, it would have been useful to further expand them to investigate some of the factors in more detail. For example, the notion of diversity was almost exclusively restricted to location for the purposes of this research whereas we know that diversity may encompass many different factors and we look forward to researching how we might get such information in the future. There were few cases where authors did not have a positive experience and it would be useful for the editorial teams to know what the reasons were in order to prevent negative experiences for prospective authors in the future.

Conclusions and Implications

The editorial team members intend to use the results to set goals to increase the quality, diversity and accessibility over the next two years. Some specific goals are as follows:

- Increase diversity on the editorial and advisory boards and also among authors in terms of gender, location and ethnicity
- Increase awareness of SiSAL journal's availability and accessibility
- Develop ecological routines among our editors and readers to assure quality service

In addition to attention to these areas, it is worth noting that there were some very

positive aspects of the journal. For example, one of the greatest services we have found that we are giving is the “quick turnaround” of innovative information for teachers and researchers. Whereas many journals take may take a year or more to get creative ideas out to their readers, we are doing it in a matter of months. In addition, the publication experience was generally viewed as a positive one whereas this is often viewed as a frustrating process with other journals.

Notes on the contributor

Jo Mynard is the founding editor of *SiSAL Journal*. She is an Associate Professor and the Director of the Self-Access Learning Centre at Kanda University of International Studies in Japan. Her research interests include self-access, affect, advising and motivation.

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Appendices

Appendix A

1. We aim to gather input that will help us to improve SiSAL Journal. This anonymous survey is designed to gather views from readers on the quality of SiSAL Journal. We are also gathering feedback from authors on the publication process. The whole survey should take less than 5 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation. The results will be published in a future issue of SiSAL Journal.

The Editorial Team

- I agree to participate in the research and I am happy for my responses to be used in associated publications
- I would prefer not to take the survey

2. How often do you read articles in SiSAL Journal?

- I never read articles in SiSAL Journal (SKIP TO 6)
- Less than once per year
- Around 1--6 times per year
- 12 times per year
- More than 12 times per year

3. In general, how would you rate the quality of the journal?

- Poor standard
- Acceptable standard
- Good standard

Optional comments

4. How likely are you to cite or refer to SiSAL Journal articles in your work?

- Not likely
- Reasonably likely
- Very likely

Optional comments:

5. Why do you read articles from SiSAL Journal? (check all that apply)

- I am new to the field and I need to learn as much as I can about self--access
- I am interested in keeping current in the field
- I am looking for practical ideas
- I need to cite research in my own work

Other (please specify)

6. Have you ever submitted a paper for publication in SiSAL Journal?

- No (SKIP TO 9)
- Yes, it was published
- Yes, it was rejected (SKIP TO 8)

7. How would you rate your experience of publishing your paper in *SiSAL Journal*?

- The experience was bad
- The experience was acceptable
- The experience was good

Please give details

8. How was your experience with submitting a paper that was subsequently rejected?

- The experience was bad
- The experience was acceptable
- The experience was good

Please explain

9. How likely are you to submit a paper for publication in *SiSAL Journal* in the future?

- Unlikely
- Reasonably likely
- Very likely

Please explain

10. How could *SiSAL Journal* be improved?

11. Which statement best describes you?

- I have no contact with self--access
- I have some contact with self--access
- One of my main activities is connected with self--access

Other (please specify)

12. Are you involved in *SiSAL Journal* in any capacity? (check all that apply)

- I am not involved in the running of the journal
- I am a regular reviewer (reviewing more than one paper per year)
- I am an occasional reviewer (reviewing less than one paper per year)
- I am a member of the advisory board
- I am a member of the editorial team
- I have edited or co-edited an issue
- I was previously a member of the editorial team

Other (please specify)

Thank you. The results will be published in a future issue of *SiSAL Journal*.

Appendix B

1. We aim to gather input that will help us to improve SiSAL Journal. This anonymous survey is designed to gather views from readers on the quality of SiSAL Journal. We are also gathering feedback from authors on the publication process. The whole survey should take less than 5 minutes to complete. Thank you for your participation. The results will be published in a future issue of SiSAL Journal.

The Editorial Team

- I agree to participate in the research and I am happy for my responses to be used in associated publications (n=83)
- I would prefer not to take the survey (n=1)

Skipped question: 1

2. How often do you read articles in SiSAL Journal? (n=77)

- I never read articles in SiSAL Journal (SKIP TO 6) (n=5)
- Less than once per year (n=11)
- Around 1--6 times per year (n=41)
- 12 times per year (n=15)
- More than 12 times per year (n=5)

3. In general, how would you rate the quality of the journal?

- Poor standard (n=0)
- Acceptable standard (n=26)
- Good standard (n=42)

Optional comments (n=3)

“Good standard, but I think that lots of the research themes are a bit superfluous, and not always so independent learning-specific”

“Very relevant and high quality”

“contributors need to collect and report data in their papers”

4. How likely are you to cite or refer to SiSAL Journal articles in your work? (n=68)

- Not likely (n=5)
- Reasonably likely (n=43)
- Very likely (n=20)

Optional comments (n=4)

(Not likely) *“Not working on independent learning so much right now”*

(Reasonably likely) *“if such articles come up in search results”*

(Very likely) *“they are directly related to my area of interest”*

(Not likely) *“I will make comments to other teachers at work.”*

5. Why do you read articles from SiSAL Journal? (check all that apply) (n=65)

- I am new to the field and I need to learn as much as I can about self--access (n=10)
- I am interested in keeping current in the field (n=50)
- I am looking for practical ideas (n=37)
- I need to cite research in my own work (n=37)

Other (please specify)

“Interested and looking for practical ideas”

“I am looking for other research related to mine”

“I have a different reason each time”

“I’m an ILC coordinator and this information is very relevant to me”

“I have contributed”

“I am an author of a few articles”

6. Have you ever submitted a paper for publication in SiSAL Journal? (n=73)

- No (SKIP TO 9) (n=37)
- Yes, it was published (n=33)
- Yes, it was rejected (SKIP TO 8) (n=3)

7. How would you rate your experience of publishing your paper in SiSAL Journal? (n=33)

- The experience was bad (n=1)
- The experience was acceptable (n=3)
- The experience was good (n=29)

Please give details (n=11)

(the experience was good)

Some suggestions were made which helped add to the clarity of the article, so that it was improved.

Really supportive - 3 reviewers and editors really going out of their way.

Fast turnaround

Fantastic turn-around, great editorial team, very professional

Great to get constructive feedback and work on the article until it is published

The editorial team is very helpful in giving ideas to improve the article.

the feedback from editors was extremely helpful

The reviewers were thorough and tough, but ultimately helped us re-shape our paper to meet SiSAL's needs and standards.

Great system for non native speakers. Appreciation.

Supportive reviews which improved my work. Quick turnaround also good.

Helpful comments from the reviewers to improve my article further.

8. How was your experience with submitting a paper that was subsequently rejected? (n=3)

- The experience was bad (n=2)
- The experience was acceptable (n=1)
- The experience was good (n=0)

Please explain (n=0)

9. How likely are you to submit a paper for publication in SiSAL Journal in the future? (n=72)

- Unlikely (n=10)
- Reasonably likely (n=30)
- Very likely (n=32)

Please explain

(Unlikely)

not really my subject area

I'm not involved in self-access any more.

I do not feel that I have enough to say.

I am retired from my previous academic job.

Because I quit working in a self-access learning center

(reasonably likely)

My colleagues and I have one under review at present.

When time permits ;-)

I'd like to submit a paper again if I have a chance

(Very likely)

I still have plenty of material from working with Self-access and teaching it as a subject within Applied Linguistics. As a 'specialist journal', it would be the most appropriate place to publish.

I've recently become interested in the field

As part of my MA studies in Professional Development for Language Education

I'm a language advisor trainer. My practice may interest the journal's readership.

I have submitted one but I don't know if it has been accepted or rejected yet

Recently presented on a topic related to self access and would like to write it up and be able to share with others in the field.

10. How could SiSAL Journal be improved? (n=27)

See Appendix B

11. Which statement best describes you? (n=70)

- I have no contact with self--access (n=8)
- I have some contact with self--access (n=24)
- One of my main activities is connected with self--access (n=28)

Other (please specify)

12. Are you involved in SiSAL Journal in any capacity? (check all that apply) (n=70)

- I am not involved in the running of the journal (n=45)
- I am a regular reviewer (reviewing more than one paper per year) (n=4)
- I am an occasional reviewer (reviewing less than one paper per year) (n=16)
- I am a member of the advisory board (n=3)

- I am a member of the editorial team (n=2)
- I have edited or co-edited an issue (n=6)
- I was previously a member of the editorial team (n=2)

Other (please specify)

Thank you. The results will be published in a future issue of SiSAL Journal.

Appendix C

Responses to the open-ended survey question “How could SiSAL Journal be improved?”
(Question 10)

I'm not sure. I like the current format and presentation. I like the different topics that are covered. It is a source of information for me, so there isn't anything that I can think of that could be improved.

make its articles downloadable

I think that the journal is good as it is.

accept more articles about Latin-America based research

More regular and a printed option

good

Evolve toward higher standards

publishing quality work

I don't think of anything to improve. It is very good.

add more useful articles

Contributors need to take more responsibility for the quality of scholarship. Some SiSAL articles seem to be the product of ad hoc analysis, and often the data is not as complete as it ought to be. My fear is that some people take advantage of the fact that a large number of studies in the field of learner autonomy are qualitative and use publications like SiSAL to report anecdotal findings.

You can give chances to unknown researchers from developing countries who need self-access

learning badly.

I think that a few small practical ideas in each issue would be a good idea, or a readers' forum.

Set up a subscription system where the journal is sent automatically to subscribers. (Perhaps this already exists.)

E-mail me to alert me of articles published in my specific area of interest. (I don't always have time to browse through the whole issue to see whether anything interests me)

no ideas!

accept new members from Brazil

I enjoy it very much. I do not have any comment.

It would be nice if the studies published could be classified according to what they are. Most seem to be teacher reflections, some are case studies, some are opinions pieces. Having a guidepost would make reading far quicker.

No ideas.

I di not care abiut it.

Broad indexing in more standard academic indexes (ERIC, Academic Search Complete etc.)

By undertaking translation as part of this

I like the themed issues. I also like the fact that it's open access. No improvements that I can recommend at this time.

I think there probably has to be more 'commissioning' of articles. By that I mean that there are many people qualified to write and publish, but it is not a requirement within their job description, so they don't. I think more reviews of particular apps or computer programs or things like dictionaries could be included so that readers are kept up-to-date and reflections n the use of particular facilities like language cafes, karaoke, tandem conversation schemes, and the like, would be useful.

Email alerts wehn the journal is published, like Reading in a Foreign Language is twice a year.

I would like to see more articles focusing on technology in autonomy