Publishing in Q1 Journals

Insider strategies from an Editor-in-Chief

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Charles Darwin University seminar



Outcomes

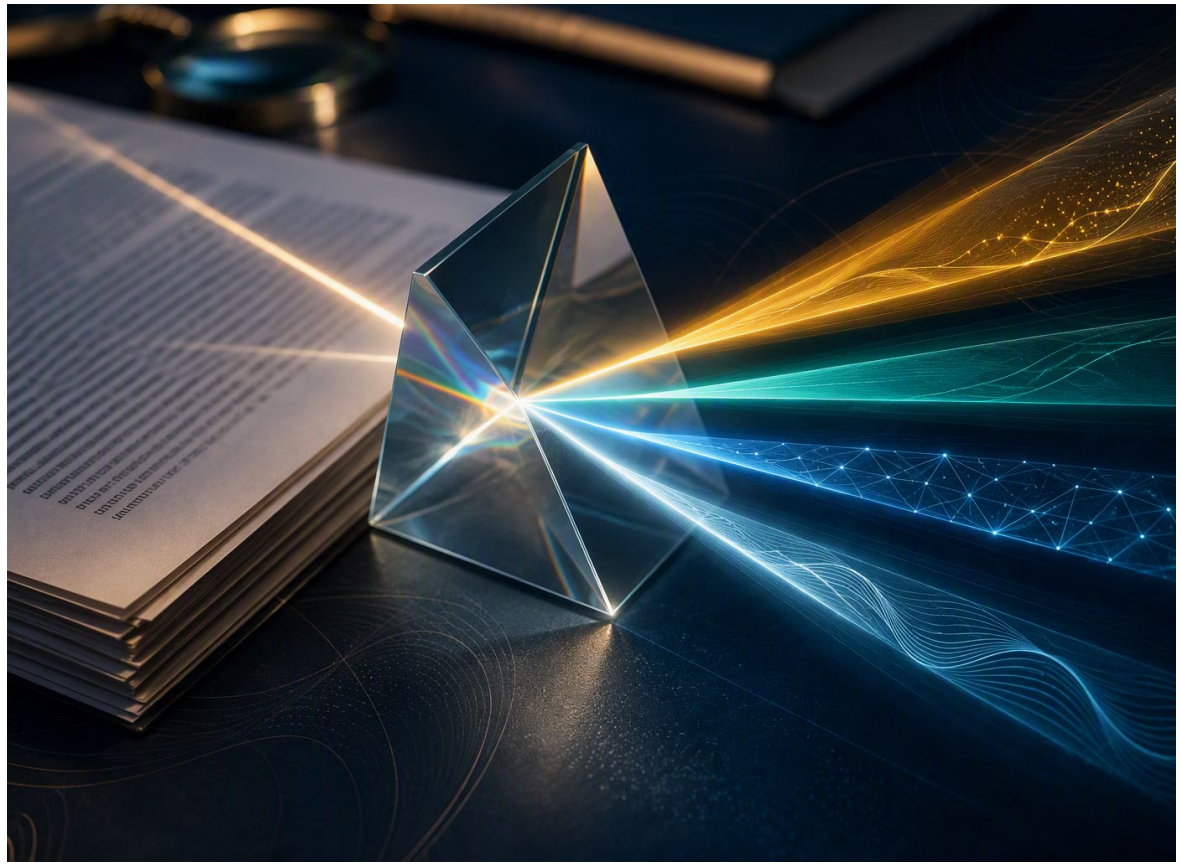
Target	Position	Prepare	Respond
• Choose journals for genuine fit, not ranking alone	Make the contribution visible, credible and relevant.	Remove avoidable reasons for desk rejection.	Use peer review to strengthen both paper and strategy.

What “Q1” Does and Does Not Tell you

Q1 can indicate	A journal sits in the top quartile within a particular ranking system, category and year.
Q1 cannot guarantee	Fit with your topic, quality of editorial experience, speed, readership, impact for your purpose.
Your decision	Check the ranking source and year, then evaluate scope, recent content, audience, article types.

Quartile is useful context, but it is not a manuscript strategy – Look for the best home not the highest label

Understand the publication journey



- **Technical Checks**: Complete and compliant
- **Editorial Assessment**: Fit and merit
- **Peer review:** Methods, evidence and argument
- **Revision and decision**: Response and coherence

Surviving the Process

Submission

Surviving Editorial Screening

Surviving the Review Process

Reacting to Rejections

Surviving the Process

Submission

Surviving Editorial Screening

Surviving the Review Process

Reacting to Rejections

Submission

- Blind manuscript
- Address all technical points outlined in the guidelines
- Double space document
- Use journal template where available
- Note date of submission
- CV as a living document

Surviving the Process

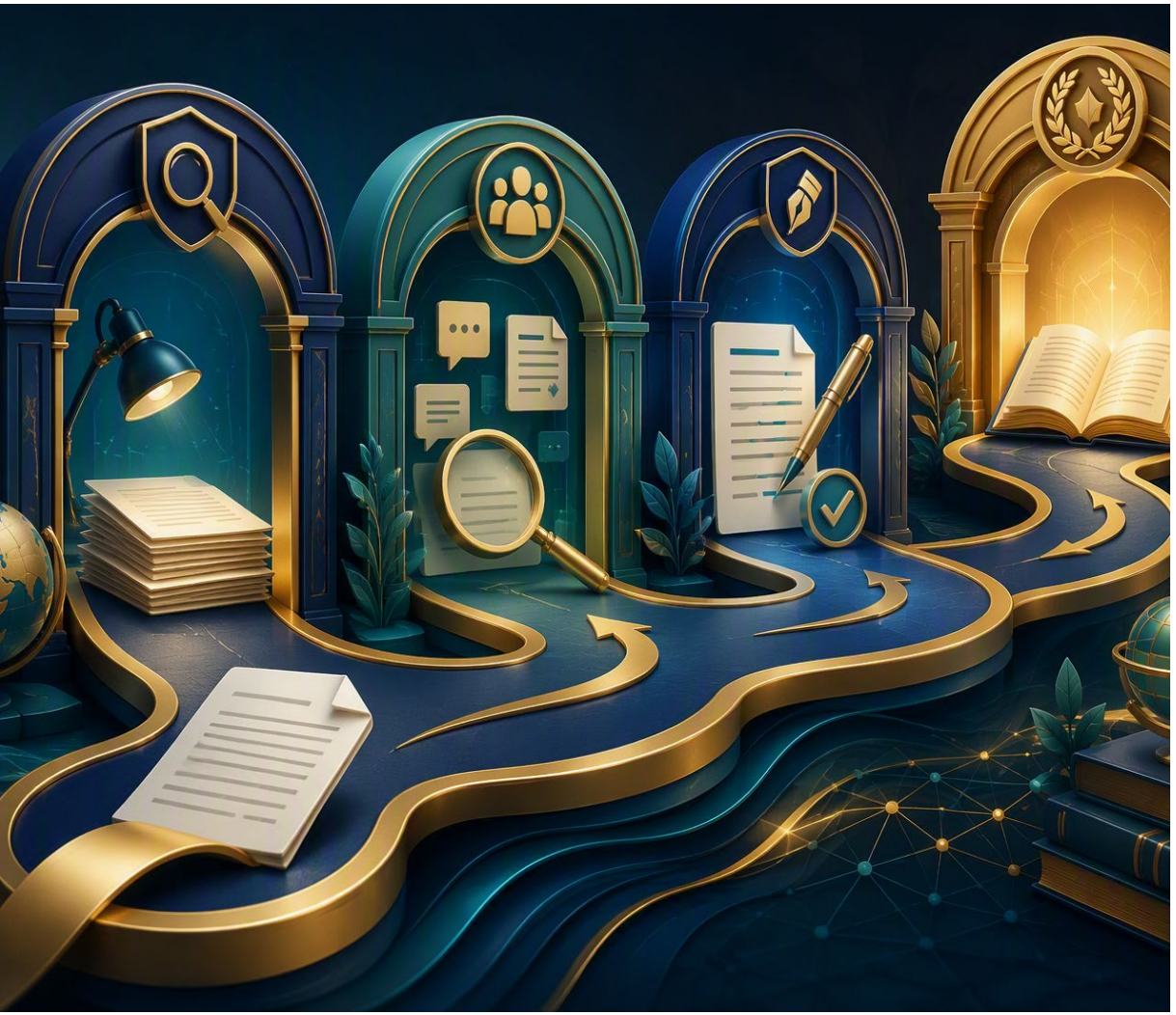
Submission

Surviving Editorial Screening

Surviving the Review Process

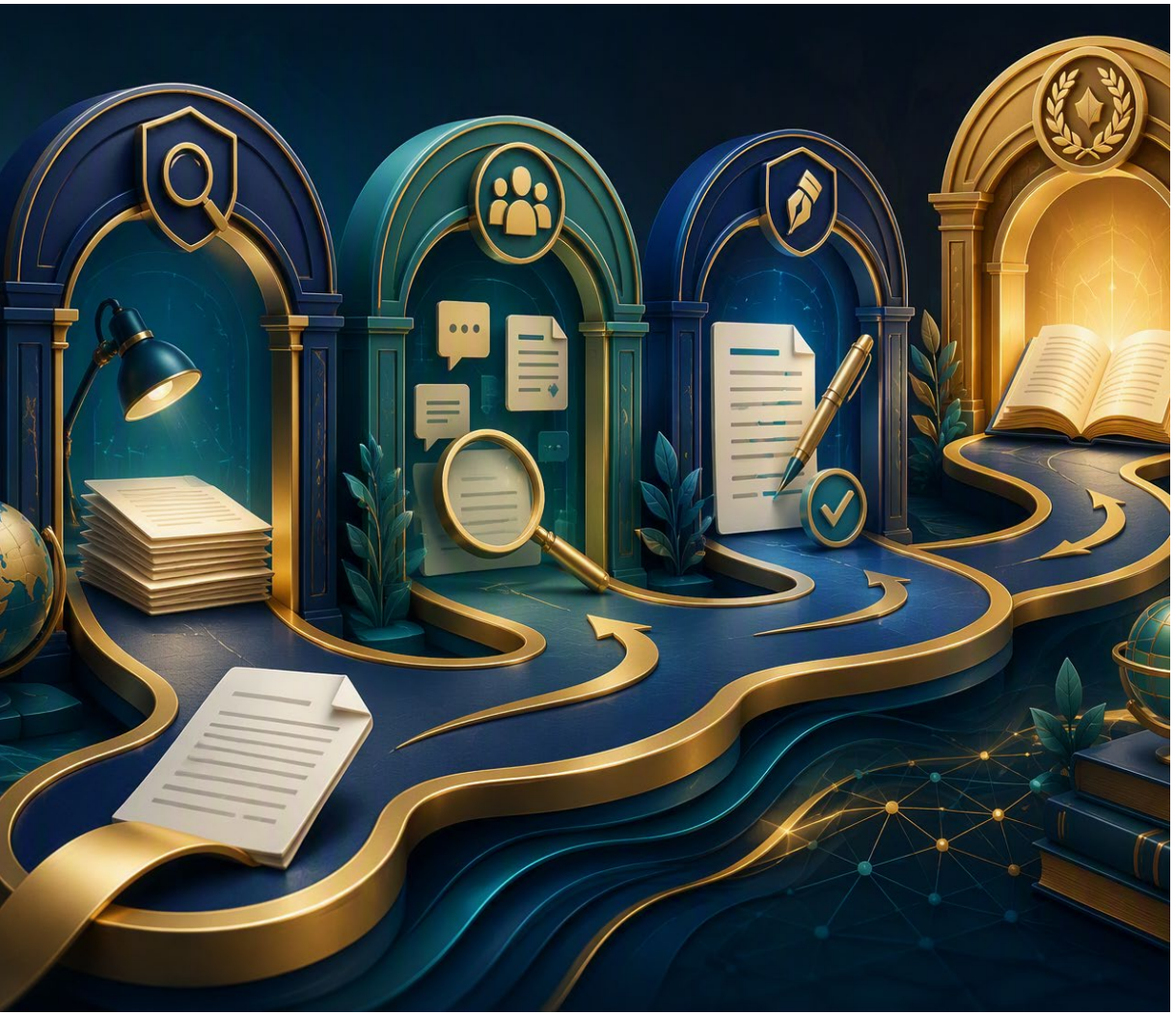
Reacting to Rejections

The editor's first lens



Fit	Right conversation, readership and article type
Contribution	A clear addition to knowledge or practice
Rigour	Methods and claims that withstand scrutiny
Clarity	• coherent argument that is easy to evaluate

The editor's first lens



Fit

Right conversation, readership and article type

A clear addition to knowledge or practice

Rigour

Methods and claims that withstand scrutiny

- coherent argument that is easy to evaluate

Choosing the journal

- Does the study speak directly to the aims and scope
- Would the readers care about the problem
- Does the paper resemble article types
- Can you explain the contribution in the journal's language

Note: An excellent method cannot compensate for weak

Practical Steps

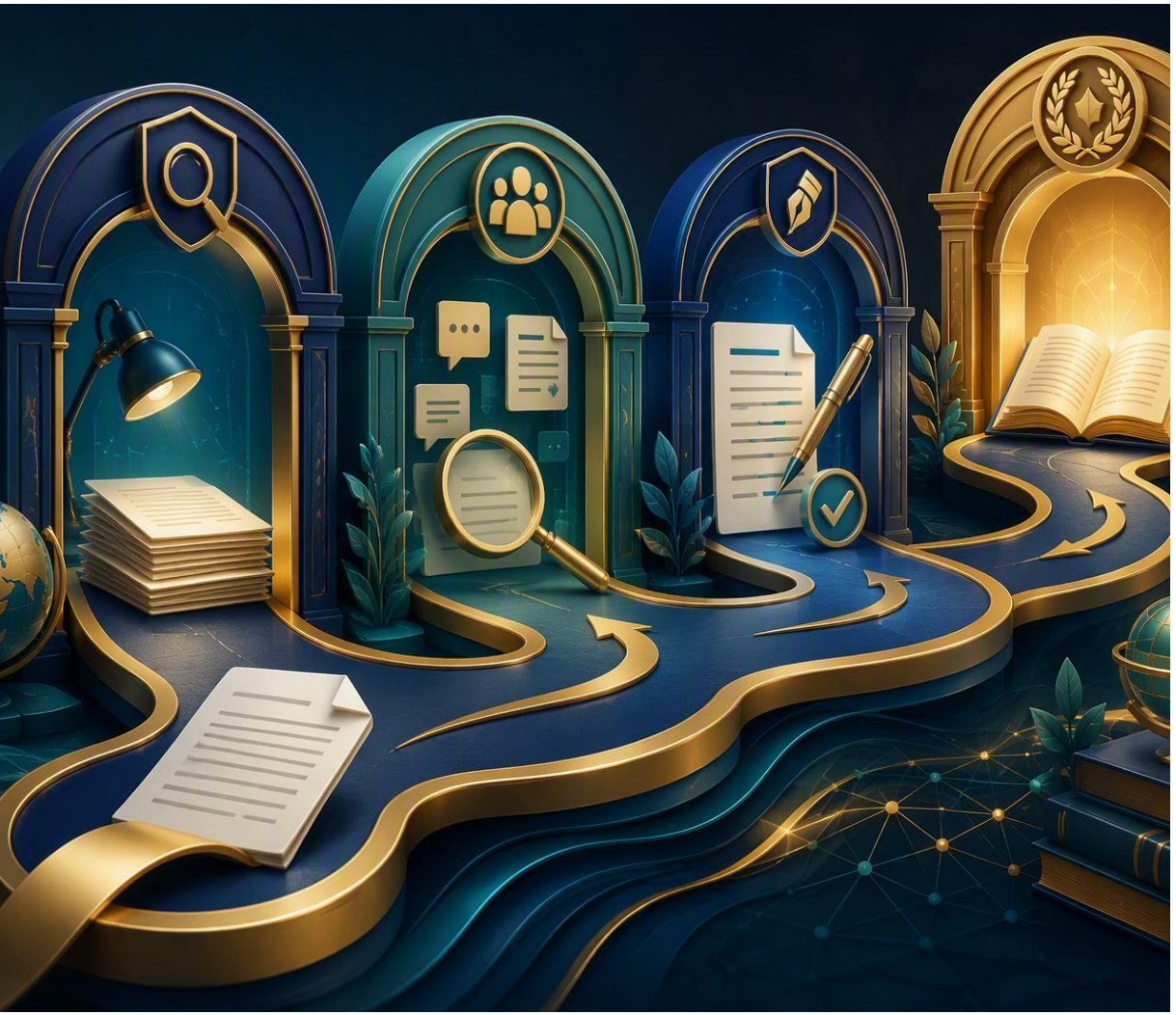
Read the aims and scope

author guidelines and 5-10 recent papers.

Then write one sentence:

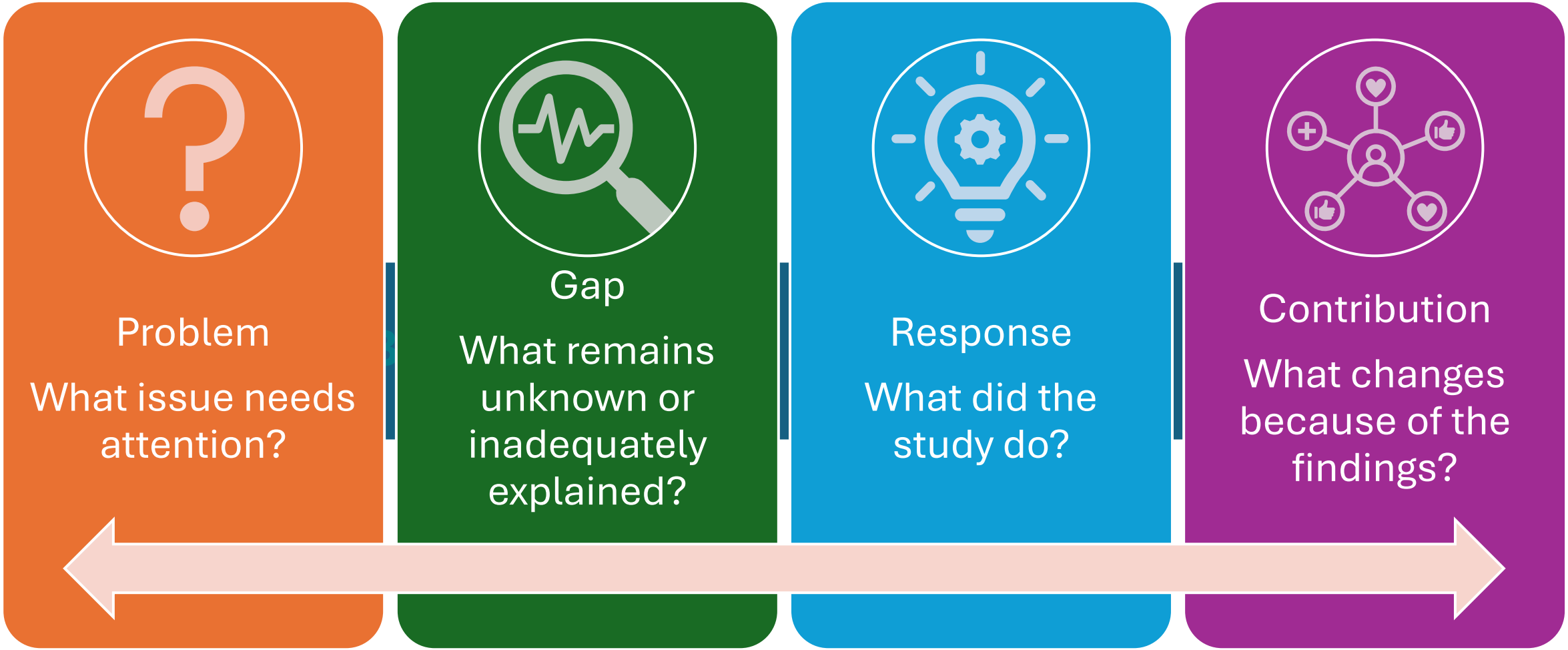
"This paper belongs in this journal because…"

The editor's first lens



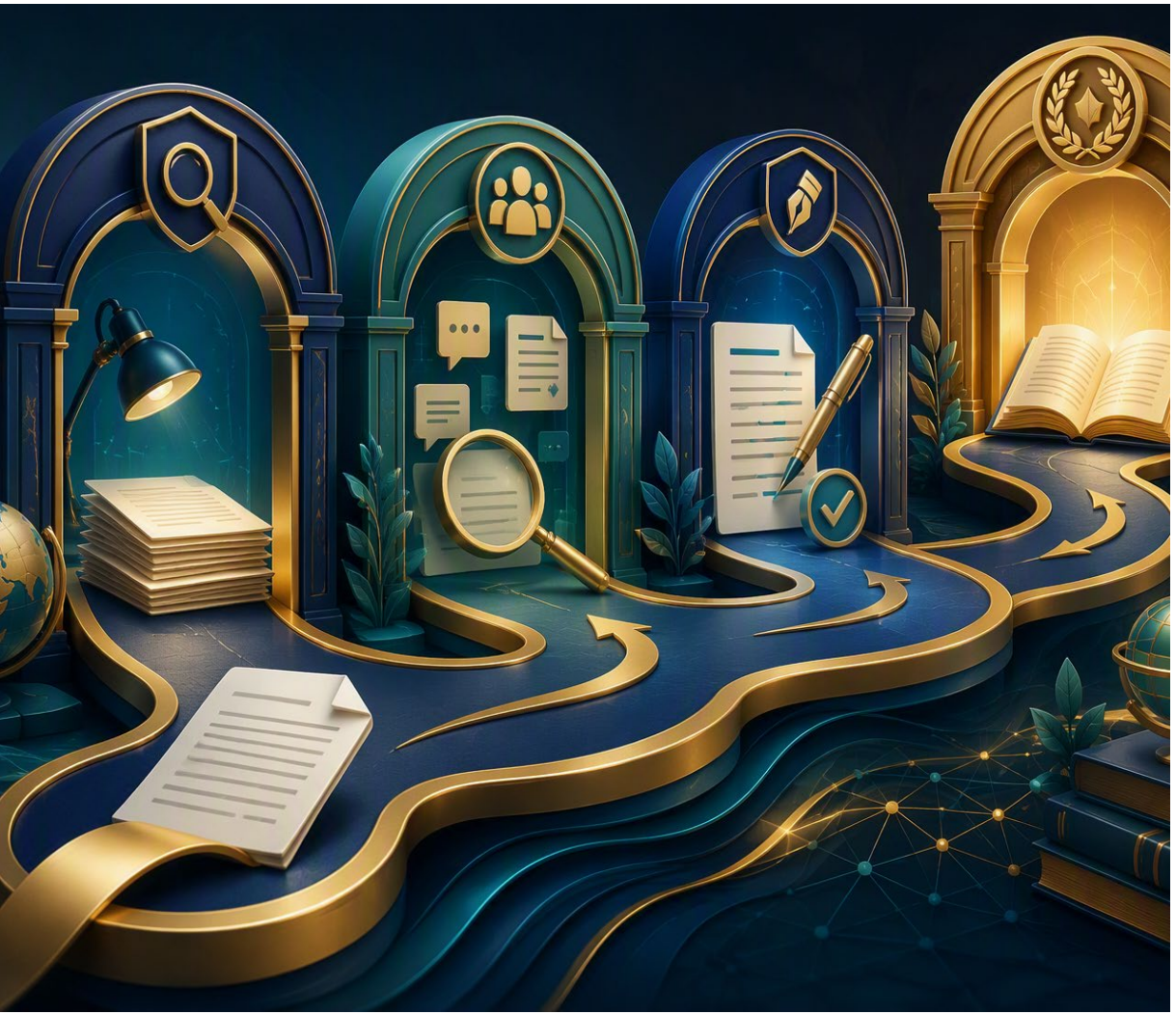
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Make the contribution impossible to miss



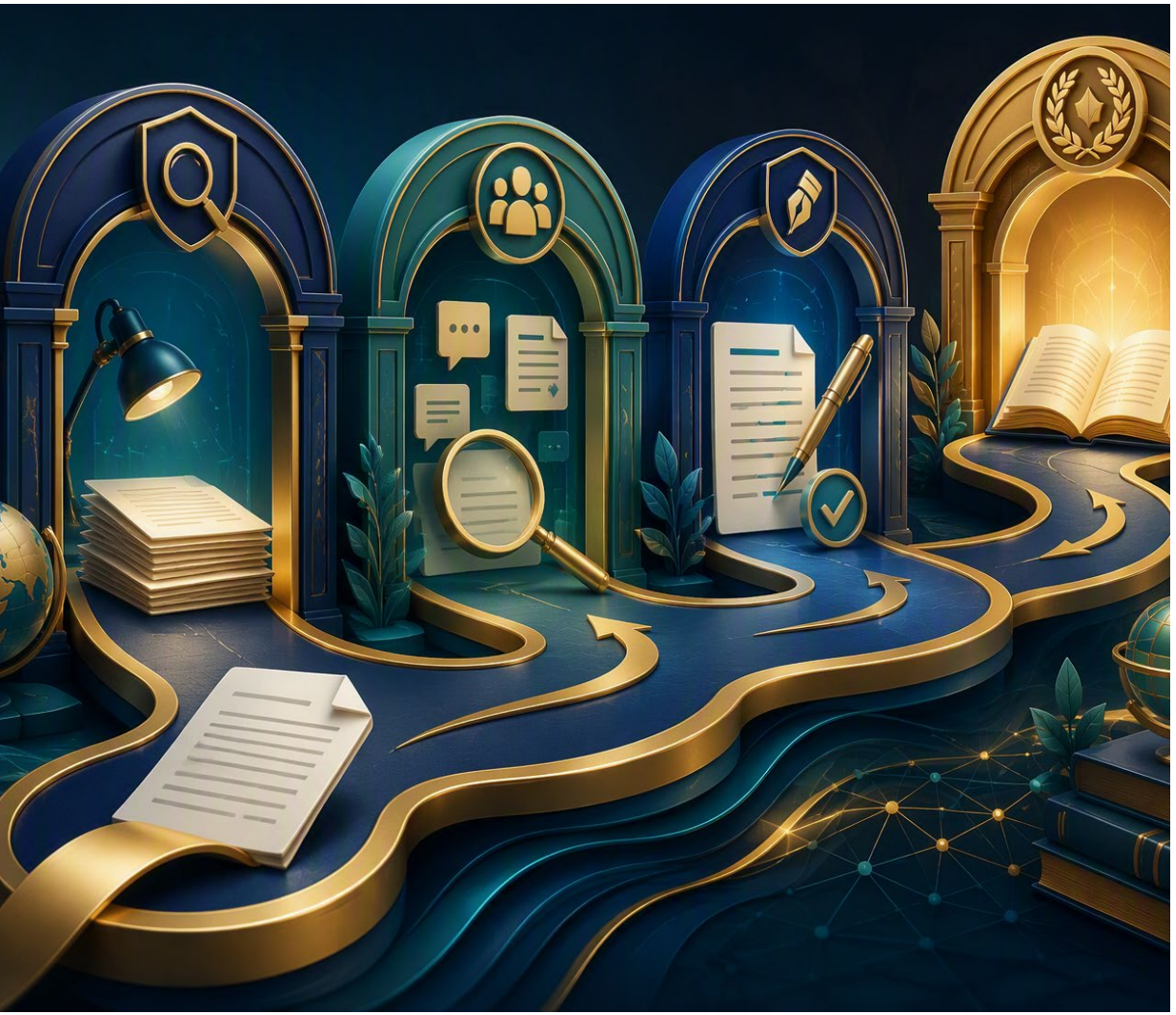
Contribution sentence: “This study extends/challenges/refines _____ by showing _____, with implications for _____.”

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Surviving the Process

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Preparation



Rigour

Methods and claims that withstand scrutiny

Clarity

- Coherent argument that is easy to evaluate

Build one argument across the manuscript

Title and Abstract	Accurate promise, searchable terms, clear contribution
Introduction	Problem, literature-based gap, purpose and significance
Methods	Transparent design, sample, measures, analysis and ethics
Results	Evidence organised around the research questions
Discussion	Interpretation, contribution, boundaries and implications

A pre-submission ten-point check

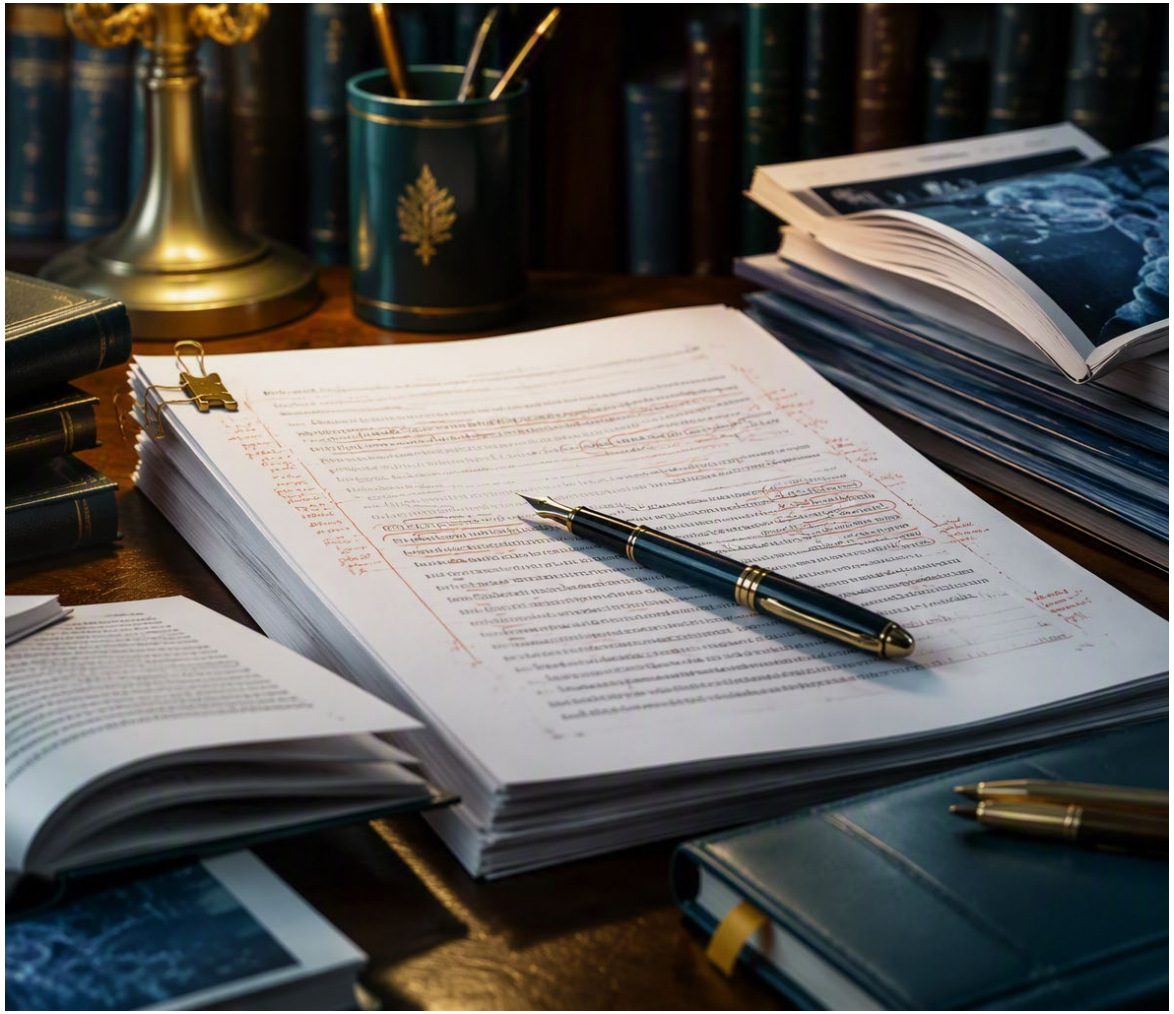
- Exact fit with aims and scope
- Recent papers confirm audience relevance
- Contribution stated in one sentence
- Title and abstract accurately promise the paper
- Research questions align with methods and results
- Claims match the design and evidence
- Ethics and reporting are transparent
- Tables and figures stand alone and add value
- Author guidelines and files are complete
- A colleague has reviewed argument and clarity

The Review Process

- Inviting Reviewers
  - Based on expertise where possible
  - Decline or accept
  - Time to review
  - Reminders, delays
- Decisions
  - Reject after Review
  - Major Revision
  - Minor Revisions



Responding to reviewers



- Pause …
- Classify each comment
- Revise the manuscript, not only the letter
- Respond point by point with locations – highlight changes
- Disagree respectfully with evidence
- Check consistency after every change

Consider the Tone

Responses

- Major Revisions
  - Editor screen
  - Reviewers are invited to review changes
  - Same reviewers where possible
  - Decline or accept
  - Time to review
- Minor Revisions
  - Editor screen
  - When in doubt, reviewers are invited
- Final Decisions
  - Recommendations and final decisions



Surviving the Process

Surviving Editorial Screening

Surviving the Review Process

Reacting to Rejections

Use rejection to revise, retarget and realign

React Constructively

- Pause. Group comments into revisions, clarifications and respectful disagreements.

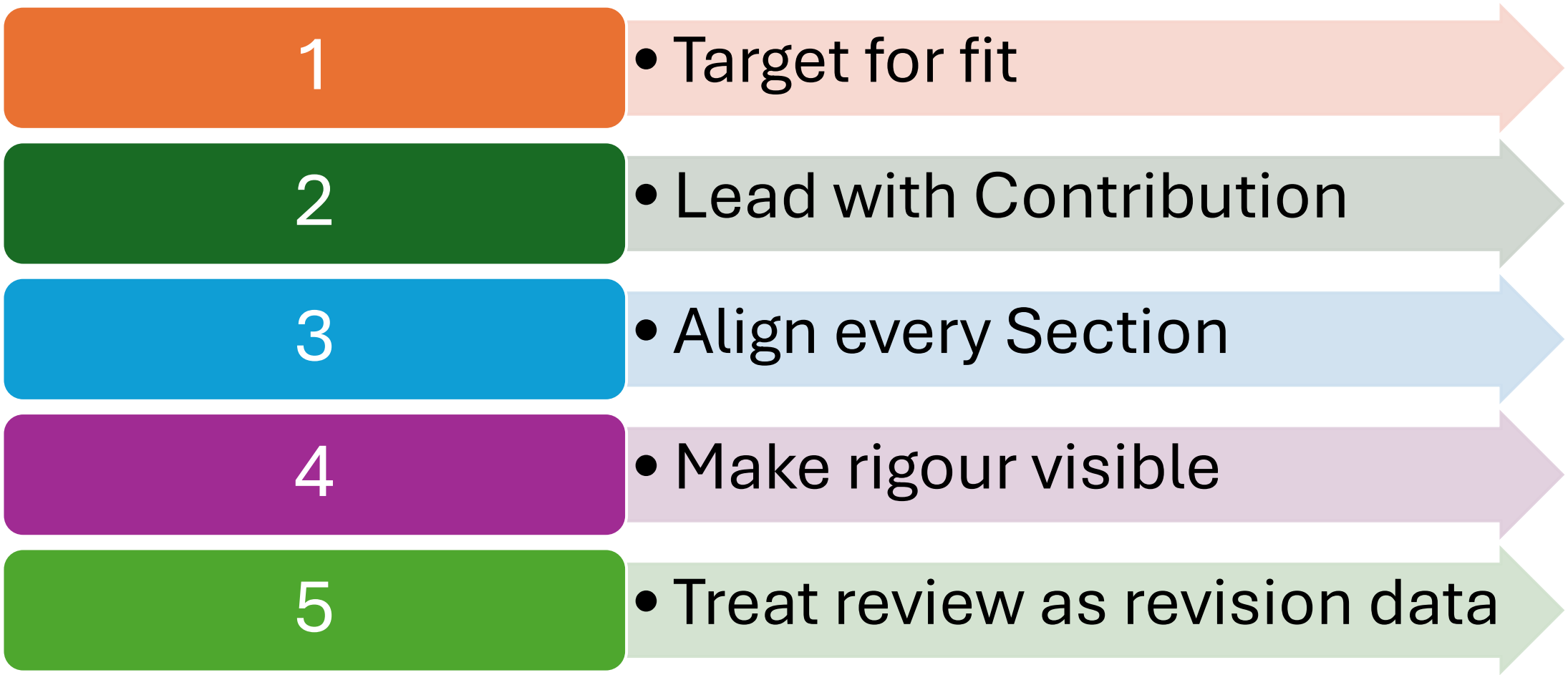
Find a Better Fit Journal

- Recheck scope, readership, article type and methods. Read recent papers, and shortlist journals.

Align the Resubmission

- Tailor the title, abstract and cover letter. Follow word limits, and other requirements; remove every trace of the previous journal.

Five practices that improve success



No “trick” replaces strong research, but strategy prevents avoidable failure

Questions & discussion

Thank you

Professor Jill Aldridge
Editor-in-Chief, Learning Environments Research
Curtin University

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