

Comments and Replies

The Comment

Comments are publications that criticize or correct specific papers of other authors previously published in *Physical Review Special Topics - Physics Education Research*. Each Comment should contain an abstract and should clearly state to which paper it refers. The normal publication schedule is followed.

Authors of potential Comments are encouraged to try to resolve and clarify any disagreement with the authors of the original paper before submission of the Comment. The content in a Comment should be directed to the physics or methodology in the paper being criticized; statements on other matters, such as perceived citation omissions, are not generally suitable for publication as Comments, and can usually be addressed most effectively through direct contact with the authors of the original paper. Criticism should be free of polemics and personal or *ad hominem* remarks.

The Reply

When a Comment is deemed suitable for publication by the Editor, the criticized authors will be given the opportunity to write a Reply for possible simultaneous publication. The Reply will also be reviewed and to be suitable for publication should contain new physics material or discussion; it is not appropriate simply to repeat what has already appeared in the literature. If a Reply is not found suitable for publication, it may be rejected even if the Comment is accepted.

It is the responsibility of the corresponding author of the original work being criticized (to whom a copy of the Comment is sent as part of the review process) to ensure that all the original authors are aware of the criticism and to ensure that all appropriate individuals are listed as authors of the Reply.

The Review Process

1. The paper is sent to the authors whose work is being criticized. These authors should provide a report, following the normal guidelines for referees. This report will be sent to the authors of the Comment for possible revision with the understanding that the Comment will be reviewed further. At this stage, the authors of the original paper should send only a report suitable for transmission to the authors of the Comment; they will be given the opportunity to write a Reply at a later date.
2. After the issues in question have been addressed by the authors of the Comment and the authors of the work being criticized, the Editor will usually consult an independent, anonymous referee. When the Editor is ready to accept a Comment, the authors being criticized will have an opportunity to submit a Reply. This Reply will also be reviewed by an independent, anonymous referee.
3. After the Comment and Reply have been accepted for publication, the author of the Comment is sent a copy of the Reply for information, but should not alter the text of the Comment in proof. The Comment and Reply are usually (but not always) published in the same issue. If, however, the Reply is unduly delayed, it may be published in a later issue; if a Reply is deemed unnecessary, none will be published.