

Teacher Research Mentors' Perceptions of Book Review Writing in a Global Community of Practice

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Abstract

The research account describes the experiences of 36 teacher-research mentors who participated in a book review writing project facilitated by dedicated writing mentors in a global community of practice (MenTRnet). Even though members of the community were mainly concerned with mentoring the carrying out of classroom research, writing up and disseminating their mentees' and their own findings were also pursued through research articles and blogs. The two authors, who were involved in supporting all types of writing in the community, were interested in how a specific genre in English for Research Publication Purposes (ERPP), namely, book review writing can support members' continuing professional development by enhancing their academic development and scholarly writing. The research account presents the exceptionally high rate of acceptance of the reviews submitted, and investigates the perceptions of the review writers regarding their motivations and expectations as well as their reflections on the support they received from the writing mentors over a prolonged period from being commissioned to write a review up to the point of publication.

Keywords: writing for publication; mentoring writing; teacher-research mentoring; community of practice; MenTRnet

Introduction and Context

This research account aims at sharing the authors' experiences gained in a community of practice called MenTRnet (<https://mentrnet.net/>), which primarily functions as an international network of teacher-research mentors, but also supports and facilitates the writing activities of its members. Whilst the remit of this community of practice does not focus on how its members may choose to disseminate the results of their research findings, over the years (mainly between 2021 and 2025), there have been several opportunities to support members and their mentees to not only present their research orally, but also to write up their teacher-research and teacher-research mentoring experiences as full-length articles and book chapters. As a subset of our writing activities, and as a result of the first author's professional interest and experience, a fair amount of writing has taken the form of reviews on books related to teacher education, teacher-research and mentoring teachers; therefore, that genre is our main focus.

In their *Handbook for Exploratory Action Research*, Smith and Rebolledo (2018) express a number of useful ideas on how teacher-researchers and, by extension, teacher-research mentors can disseminate their findings: "you can place your writing in a blog, a newsletter or

even a Facebook group or on your own website” (p. 86). However, as mentioned above, we have chosen to focus on another activity, namely, the writing of book reviews. Beyond having its value *per se*, our expectation is that the facilitation of such writing, in due course, will help novice authors to write up their own pieces of research with the support that our community of practice offers.

By providing an account of how far the prospective book review writers were receptive to the idea of experimenting with this genre of academic writing, what their expectations were related to the process and how successful the review writing project turned out to be, we hope to present a pathway to similar initiatives which, in our view, can benefit the continuing professional development (CPD) of both teacher-researchers and their mentors. It needs to be pointed out that on several occasions, our first names, that is, Sidney and Eli (the latter being the name of the first author, Erzsébet, in the community) are mentioned for contextual reasons. As for the terminology employed to describe the participants, they are alternately referred to as “mentees”, “prospective authors” or “authors” depending on what stage of the project is being discussed.

Participating in a Community of Practice

For many of us, the experience that we (i.e., the co- authors, Eli and Sidney) are going to recount below, started about five years ago (in 2020), just before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, beginning with TESOL’s Electronic Village Online (EVO) workshops on teacher-research and teacher-research mentoring in January–February 2020. By then, Exploratory Action Research had become a well-established approach to classroom research and an international network of teacher-research mentors also started to emerge following the EVO on Mentoring Teacher-Research (led by Richard Smith and Seden Eraldemir Tuyan) in that year. This community of practice, in whose activities we both participate, and which is now officially named MenTRnet (<https://mentrnet.net/>), has over 250 members from all over the world (Smith et al., 2024). The same-named Facebook (FB) group has more than 570 members. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/373366133378401>).

Nurturing Writing

Over the past five years, MenTRnet has been supporting the writing-up of community members’ experiences related to teacher-research and teacher-research mentoring. Apart from many individual successes in publishing, what specifically stand out are the *Proceedings* of the Teachers Research! conferences (Smith et al., 2022; Göktürk Sağlam et al., 2024; Vargas Gil et al., 2025) and the recently published edited volume, *Stories of Mentoring Teacher-Research* (Smith et al., 2024). Another major writing drive has, in fact, been related to this very journal. In October 2023, we set up a multi-layered writing support system specifically for *ELT Classroom Research Journal*’s first issue (October, 2024). As a result of a year-long writing process, MenTRnet members and their teacher-research mentees successfully submitted three full-length articles and two book reviews for that issue (*ELT Classroom Research Journal*, 2024). However, judging by the number of published pieces, what appears to have been the most prolific genre is that of *book reviews* (see Figure 2 on the output between 2021 and 2025). So, even though we will refer to other types of writing in our community, our exploratory account here will focus on book review writing and how our MenTRnet members took the activity in their stride.

Our focus on book review writing can be justified by the fact that this activity has involved a fairly large number of our members (see Appendix Table 2 on the authors' profiles and geographical distribution), and has proved to be a highly successful and inclusive activity. Success, in our specific case, can be measured in two ways. Quantitatively, it can be expressed by the ratio of publications over submissions, which is often referred to as the "rejection rate", or, more positively, the "acceptance rate". The latter can be as low as 5% for a journal such as, for example, *RELC Journal* (Renandya & Floris, 2018). Qualitatively, "success" can be understood as the overwhelmingly positive feedback that was provided by the authors regarding the book review writing experience.

We treat this research project as "exploratory" in its design, constituting a piece of preliminary empirical investigation. Our aim is to highlight aspects of mentoring writing that might be applicable in other contexts as well. Ours, therefore, can be perceived as a precursor to a more systematic research study on how and to what extent book review writing can lead to teacher-researchers and their mentors' academic development and scholarly writing, and contribute to an increased feeling of confidence in them arising from successfully reaching a "real" audience.

The data gathering focussed on several issues related to the specific genre of book review writing, posing the following questions:

- Why did prospective writers decide to volunteer to write a book review?
- What did they expect to be the major challenges in the write-up process?
- How did they find the overall writing experience?
- What kind of support did they find helpful (if at all) and why?

Ultimately, book review writing for publication can be perceived as a useful means of continuing professional development for in-service teachers (see Orosz et al., 2019), but it can also be applied in pre-service teacher education contexts. Banegas et al., (2020) conducted a collaborative, action-research based study on how book review writing for publication affected 57 student teachers' experience with academic writing. The data gathered showed that the initiative to introduce genre pedagogy (presenting and employing the specific characteristics of book reviews) improved student-teachers' motivation, and it enhanced their sense of self-efficacy. Further, writing for publication had a positive effect on the student teachers' perception of academic writing since the task had an authentic audience as its target and the process involved experiential learning.

In the sections that follow, we will describe in detail how writing for publication, and specifically, writing book reviews has been supported in our community of practice. We present both the challenges and the successes as well as the reflections of the authors and their principal writing mentor.

Methodology

Considerations

Our aim was to facilitate the production of publishable pieces of writing, mainly that of book reviews but articles as well (see Figure 2 below). We also decided to gather information at various stages of the project, synchronised with the writing process itself. This means that we gathered data by asking prospective authors about what they needed most at the given stage. The two google forms sent out initially aimed at establishing the authors' expectations,

motivations and concerns and were also helping us, mentors, to match review writers with potential outlets for the books chosen. The third google form served the purposes of guided reflection as well as offered an opportunity to mentees to provide feedback to the writing mentors.

This approach allowed us to monitor the process and let the information gathered feed back into our practice continuously and almost instantaneously.

Research Method

We have already mentioned that the present account is of exploratory nature, and within that, employs a design that falls under exploratory mixed methods research. Further, it belongs to the category of convergent parallel design since the gathering of qualitative and quantitative data was carried out simultaneously with the aim of gaining a better understanding of the issues related to our research questions. We have given equal weight to the complementary data sets as they were deemed equally important for the purposes of triangulating and interpreting the findings.

Quantitative data were gathered by the methodical collection of information on both published pieces and work-in-progress submissions as well as the related information on publishing outlets (see Appendix Table 1).

Qualitative data were mainly obtained by using survey questionnaires containing both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Inductive thematic analysis was applied involving a bottom-up approach, because owing to the exploratory nature of the project, we were looking for themes that could emerge directly from the data without prior assumptions.

The responses were thematically coded. The co-authors carried out the thematic coding process individually, and following that step they discussed and identified the emerging themes. These were further refined and, finally, agreed on for data presentation.

By using a mixed methods approach, we obtained two complementary data sets, namely, the narrative responses and the data referring to acceptance rates and the publishing of the output. As we will demonstrate below, these show a high level of correlation (strong relationship). It means that the authors' positive experiences are in line with the high rate of success in publishing.

Participants

The number of participants over the years under consideration totals 36, out of whom 34 are members of MenTRnet and two (Valeria and Anabella) are external authors. Most of them work in secondary or tertiary contexts (see Appendix Table 2) with a teaching experience of between 3 and 35 years (Eli is an outlier with her 50+ years in English teaching). Their mother tongues are as varied as their geographical background: we have one trilingual and several bilingual members in the group surveyed, their additional languages always contain English, but beyond that, L+ languages include Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Chinese.

To start with, we would like to emphasize that our global teacher-research mentor support community is truly international. It is also worth pointing out that our membership data

demonstrate a wide geographical spread and also reflect a conscious effort on MenTRnet's part to propagate and support "de-centring", namely, a drive that promotes and celebrates local knowledge as opposed to "wisdom" parachuted in from the centre (Banegas et al, 2022; see Corona Gala's review (2024) on the related book, Padwad & Smith, 2023). It also needs to be stressed that networking in a global community of practice has become exponentially easier with the availability of the Internet and all the online tools and applications that we have seen spreading over the past decade (Martin, 2024).

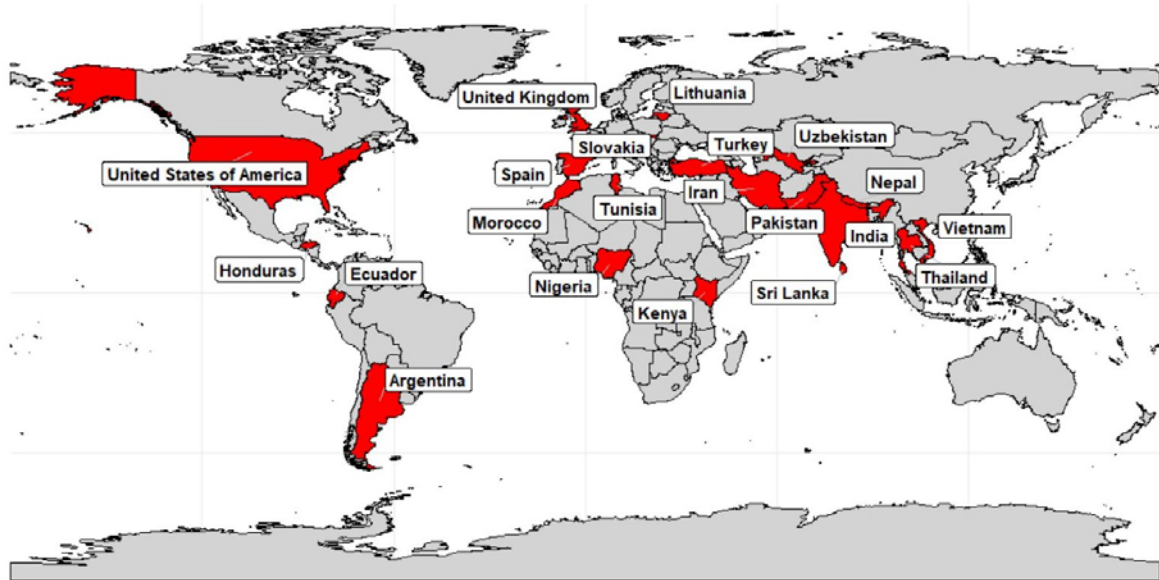


Figure 1.
The Geographical Spread of the Participants in the Writing Projects
Note: Based on articles and book reviews only.

Research Ethics

The 36 participants of the writing projects took part voluntarily and had no obligation to take on writing tasks or provide responses for the questionnaires. In fact, several opted out before or during writing for personal circumstances, such as COVID-19, sudden deaths in the family, accidents, and mental health problems. Each time somebody opted out, we made sure to explain that there will be further opportunities, and they can join writing projects when they feel they are ready to.

All those involved in the project were sent a copy of the present manuscript for "member checking", namely, to agree that the personal details included in it were up-to-date and also to confirm that our interpretation of the events was correct. They were also given the choice of being referred to anonymously or by their own given names, and all opted for the latter.

Data Gathering

The data discussed below were mainly gathered from the responses to the google form questionnaires sent out to (prospective) authors. A substantial amount of time was spent on collating and counting the data including the listing of publications (articles and book reviews) and work-in-progress type of writing (both for articles and book reviews). Further, we have compiled a detailed list of publishing outlets (a truncated list is contained in Appendix Table 1),

and put together all relevant information on editors, review editors, materials editors as well as those who are responsible for sending out printed and e-copies of books for review on behalf of publishers. We believe that all these will be useful resources for the MenTRnet community, four members of which are taking over the tasks related to mentoring and publishing later this year (July 2025) from the first author.

The google forms were sent out in 2023 and 2024, often in the form of personalized emails to seek feedback or support the upcoming writing task. Feedback was not gathered from the authors who published book reviews in 2025.

Table 1.
Description of the Key Characteristics of the Surveys Conducted

Name of the survey	Purpose	Number of respondents	Timing
The Prospective Book Review Writers Questionnaire (PBRQ)	To identify and connect potential book review writers within our community, and help us match them with suitable publishing opportunities.	20	sent out in 2024
The Book Review Questionnaire (BRQ)	To explore how far our members, in general, were prepared to write book reviews as a tool for continuous professional development.	7	sent out in 2023
The Book Review Feedback Questionnaire (BRFQ)	To gather data on the participants' recent book review writing experience. This was a follow-up to the Book Review Questionnaire that some of them filled in at the beginning of their book review writing journey.	11	sent out in 2023 and 2024

In total, 38 responses were received from members of MenTRnet (out of a community of more than 250 members). The feedback questionnaire was only administered to those who had written book reviews.

The professional profile of the participants is contained in Appendix Table 2. The data on the publishing output (see Figure 2 below) relate to the period between 2021 and early 2025 (the cut-off point was April 2025).

Findings and Discussion

Altogether, 34 members of MenTRnet and two external co-authors took part in the writing of articles and book reviews. It needs to be pointed out that the same members and others in MenTRnet have written several other articles, reviews, blog posts, and features over the same period of time (2021–2025), but they do not exactly come under the heading of our “mentoring writing” project. The latter has been characterized by a systematic search for various outlets for publishing classroom research, looking for suitable books to review, and identifying potential authors as well as providing continued support in the collaborative writing-up phase.

Data Gathered from Questionnaires PBRQ and BRQ

Even though the aim of the two questionnaires listed above was slightly different, we collapsed the data contained in both to focus on three main aspects: motivation, concerns and expectations of prospective book review writers.

It is important to stress that members in MenTRnet did not seem specifically interested in book review writing until the “publication nudger”, Eli (based on her own book review writing experience) offered opportunities for others to do so. Therefore, first, we wanted to find out why prospective writers would come forward to take on the task when the occasion arose (the writing opportunities were announced in our groups.io community). Table 2 summarizes both the themes and the *verbatim* responses of some of the prospective authors.

Table 2.
Reasons for Volunteering to Write a Book Review

Enhancing writing skills	<i>“I am applying for a PhD so I want to develop my academic writing skill”. (Gyanu)</i>
Interest in writing and publishing	<i>“To learn more both about writing in a new genre as well as about an area I work in”. (Saba)</i> <i>“I like writing book reviews”. (Azadeh)</i>
Learning the structure and techniques	<i>“I really want to know what’s the structure involved in the book review, how the language should be, what are all the things we need to keep in mind while writing the review”. (Vanita)</i>
Learning from more experienced peers	<i>“Collaboration with other team members and learning and developing skills when writing a review—and the best part, to be mentored by someone like Eli, who has so much expertise in book [review] writing and publishing to guide us in our journey”. (Vanita)</i>
Enjoyment and personal engagement	<i>“I expect to learn to write a review, and also to enjoy the experience. (And of course, to raise curiosity and interest in my readers!)”. (Maria Marta)</i>
Research and academic growth	<i>“I am an avid learner who enjoys reading and writing as well as analyzing and critiquing. This would be an opportunity for me to remain stimulated, updated, and engaged in ELT research”. (Nada)</i> <i>“It’s something I’ve been thinking about for some time now. I see it as a motivational path to research work”. (Isaac)</i> <i>“To contribute to academic discourse and share my expertise from my context as an English language teacher educator”. (Cynthia)</i>
Professional and career development	<i>“For my own CPD (Continuing Professional Development), as this is something I have never done till now”. (Vanita)</i>
Contributing to the profession’s knowledge base	<i>“Writing a book review for The Teacher Trainer Journal is a remarkable opportunity for me because this platform allows me to reach and influence an audience of dedicated educators, sharing insights from literature that can inform and enrich their teaching practices”. (Krishna)</i>

The reasons that prospective authors gave reflects their intention to develop writing skills for a specific genre, the aim to promote their professional and career development as well as become part of a professional community and contribute to the building of the knowledge base of the profession. It is also notable that Isaac perceives book review writing as a potentially engaging way of setting him on the path of carrying out research projects of his own.

We also wanted to learn what kind of challenges the prospective book review writers thought they would face in the write-up phase. Table 3 presents the main themes and some excerpts from the responses given.

Table 3.
Challenges Expected by Prospective Review Writers

Writing academically, structuring the review	<i>“Organizing the ideas (book content and what I want to write about) in one piece of writing”.</i> (Renu)
Writing style observing the conventions of the genre	<i>“Adapting one's writing to the requirements of book reviews”.</i> (Sidney)
Being objective	<i>“The greatest challenge will probably be providing a balanced and fair critique while highlighting both the strengths and weaknesses of the book without bias”.</i> (Isaac)
Engaging readers	<i>“The greatest challenge would be to what extent the book review would reflect the content of the book and how it would fuel the audience's eagerness to read the book”.</i> (Maaouia)
Lack of experience and confidence	<i>“I have never professionally written a book review and I think the urge to give a completely fair and insightful review in a wording that is clear and meaningful would make me ponder every word I write. That is why having a writing mentor would be of great help to me”.</i> (Nada)
Finding time for writing	<i>“Time management and making notes for every chapter...”.</i> (Vanita) <i>“The timing may be an issue depending on my schedule”.</i> (Rasheedat)

The challenges that future authors could envisage highlight several different aspects that novice writers and busy teachers hoping to engage in writing often mention: writing academically (also engagingly!) and, within that area, following the conventions of the genre as well as displaying academic honesty and objectivity. They point out their lack of experience and, as a result, lack of confidence in their writing skills. Finally, they mention the very mundane but widespread issue of making time for this “extracurricular” activity.

As can be seen from Table 4 below, prospective writers were able to verbalize what kind of support they felt they needed from their writing mentors. Many of them had not written a book review before, but were ready to learn the specific skills related to the genre.

The themes mentioned in Table 4 are, in fact, *suggested solutions* to the challenges mentioned before: emotional support, readily available mentoring, considered and considerate feedback, and guidance from a more experienced peer.

We were also wondering if the book review writers thought they would benefit from both the writing process and the fact that they managed to publish. The responses reflect that prospective writers could clearly see some benefits for their professional advancement by adding a new skill to their repertoire.

Table 4.
Support Expected from the Book Review Writing Mentor

Guidance in book review writing as a genre	<i>"Advice on how to proceed and some guidelines about the structure of the book review". (Samira)</i>
Providing feedback	<i>"Feedback on where I could improve, maybe suggestions on what to read to improve my review if necessary, clear communication to understand mutual expectations". (Hai Yen)</i>
Mentoring offered	<i>"[...] the mentorship makes it quite manageable as there's the trust that the trained eye can pick up errors and areas for improvement". (Isaac)</i>
Emotional support	<i>"[...] suggestions, encouragement, and motivation". (Cynthia)</i>

Table 5.
Potential Effects of Book Review Writing / Publishing

Improved critical thinking skills	<i>"Through the meticulous dissection of the book's content and the careful construction of a coherent review, I can prominently display my prowess in critical thinking and adept communication". (Renu)</i>
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	<i>"Honestly speaking, CPD is indeed the key highlight but as a freelancer it will definitely help me then get into individual book review writing assignments to hone my skills". (Vanita)</i>
Professional advancement	<i>"This achievement will be a notable addition to my professional portfolio, demonstrating my capacity for critical engagement and clear articulation of complex concepts". (Krishna)</i> <i>"It will help me look for better prospects as a writer." (Saba)</i> <i>"It gets me points, it is a great way to earn recognition". (Omid)</i> <i>"I have reviewed manuscripts for IGI Global publications for more than a decade. Now I am interested in reviewing books". (Revathi)</i>
Networking	<i>"I am optimistic that the visibility and networking possibilities arising from this endeavor will lead to new opportunities for collaboration and career advancement". (Krishna)</i>

So "what's in it for them?" is a question that can be raised, and the respondents are vocal about how they perceive the potential benefits of book review writing: improved critical thinking skills, an engaging way to develop professionally, opportunities for promotion and professional advancement coupled with increased recognition and a chance that the process will lead to becoming a member of an extended network of ELT professionals (on occasion, even getting in touch with the author(s) of the book when a review comes out (Maksakova & Chumbi Landy, 2023).

The Book Review Feedback Questionnaire

A total of 11 out of 22 authors responded to the questionnaire (sent out in 2023 and 2024).

Reflections on the book review writing process.

The aim of this section is to describe how mentees felt about the book review writing experience. The mentoring was mainly performed by the first author (Eli), but she is soon (end of June 2025) handing over to a four-member publication support team within MenTRnet, and the learnings from recent book writing projects may be helpful in their work.

Feedback on authors' recent book review writing experience.

Respondents called it “*an insightful experience*”, leading to a “*great sense of accomplishment*”, and felt “*motivated and empowered*”. “*Fulfilled*”, “*satisfied*” and “*proud*” were also mentioned, with the experience described as “*very enjoyable*”.

Nada's response is interesting, because it shows that sometimes it is only a bit of “nudging” and some regular “checking in” that is needed to get someone started on the road of writing, which is, arguably, the most difficult of the four language skills (Pardede, 2024) for both L1 and L+ speakers:

It was a great motivation and inspiration to read and get back to the ELT world of development and research. It has been a while since I read any ELT related books, so this, for one, made the experience useful. Secondly, I immensely enjoy writing especially knowing that I'd receive feedback and guidance. On my own, I am not sure what to write or how to improve what I write when I do.

As for whether the experience was similar to what the authors anticipated, the whole spectrum was on display from “*exactly how I expected*” through to “*similar*” and “*much more difficult than I thought*”.

Anabella, who said that the experience was better than expected, explained it this way:

“I suffer from writer's block and I'm really self conscious, I always fear my colleagues or peers will heavily criticize what I wrote. If it were not for my mentor and co-author, I would have never sent a proposal”.

Whilst *before* writing, the authors had a fair idea about what the anticipated challenges might be, *after* having written the reviews, the challenges that they were able to recall were a lot more specific:

- Formal language use, referencing conventions, journals' style guides
- Structuring the review, relatable language
- Keeping to the word limit
- Going through the comments and carrying out revisions
- Providing accurate critique tactfully; critical analysis while maintaining a respectful and objective tone
- Communicating with journal editors

We have suggested before that book review writing could be perceived as the “ante room” of “writing in earnest”, namely carrying out your own research and writing it up. When

looking at the list above, it is quite clear that prospective authors will face the same or similar challenges, and for this reason, book review writing can be treated as a kind of “rehearsal” or “trial performance”, especially when the reviewer delves into compiled volumes and feels that “I could write a chapter like this”.

Altogether, when reflecting on the quantitative and qualitative data sets, we can confirm that even though the authors’ book review writing experience brought a fair number of challenges with it, the overall positive feedback and the exceptionally high rate of acceptance (and publication, in due course) may be perceived as triangulated proof of the project’s success. The narrative responses and the year-on-year increase in accepted and published book reviews show that the authors did not only enjoy the experience (several of them asking for further opportunities to write) but that their pieces were positively received and ultimately successfully shared with a wider, “real” readership. This kind of authenticity in writing projects is difficult to achieve (Banegas et al., 2020), and according to our best knowledge, there are only few that have so far combined genre instruction with genuine publication opportunities (for an example, see Orosz et al., 2019).

Outcomes

First of all, it needs to be stressed that feedback was requested from authors via personalized emails after their book reviews had been published. Further, however difficult (or not) the *process* might have been, the *product* was an unequivocal success. We have already mentioned how reputable ELT journals’ acceptance rate hovers around 5-10% (Renandya & Floris, 2018). In our case, this figure is 100%. Out of 32 book reviews submitted between 2021 and April 2025, 32 were published or have been accepted for publication. It was only on one occasion that a book review was rejected, but a re-edited, shorter version of the same was soon offered to and accepted by another journal. This is not because our authors are extraordinary writers or that the journals are of less than excellent standing (see Appendix Table 1 for details), it is only that book review writers cannot easily suffer rejection once a piece has been commissioned and the mentoring of the writing process follows some straightforward and sensible steps (Békés, 2024c). The output related to articles and book reviews specifically is summarised in Figure 2 below.

So far in 2025, there have been no articles published, so that zero value does not show up on the bar graph.

As can be seen from the bar graph (Figure 2), writing activities started in a modest way in the years 2021 and 2022, but the published items were already there as samples or models for further writing in subsequent years. In 2023, even though there was only modest growth in our output, the upward trend continued. 2024 proved to be exceptionally successful: we have already mentioned the publication of *Stories of Mentoring Teacher-Research* (Smith et al., 2024), not included in the graph, but article writing beyond that volume also continued to flourish, with three of the five articles published appearing in *ELT Classroom Research Journal* (2024). More than a dozen book reviews also came out involving 14 authors altogether. Some of them acted as co-authors, while three of them published more than once (Abeer, Eli and Regina).

The year of 2025 has started well. At the time of writing (April 2025), three articles have been included in the present issue of *ELTCRJ*, and another has been submitted to the journal titled *Profile* by Seden and Mariana.

As for the book reviews scheduled for this year, six have already been published and 15 are in the “work-in-progress” stage, all commissioned for this calendar year or 2026.

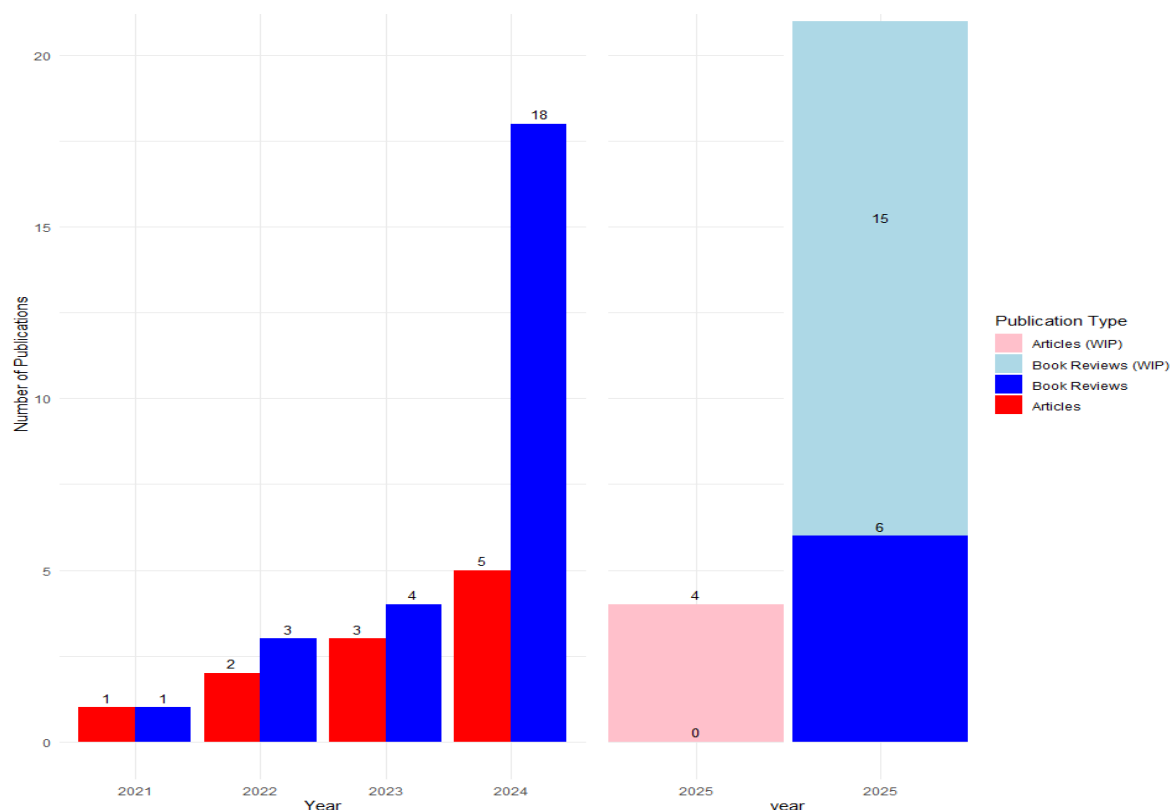


Figure 2.
MentRnet Article and Book Review Publishing Output between 2021 and 2025
 Note: WIP: work-in-progress

In the next section, we summarize the kind of support that book review writers found useful, including some suggestions for future writing projects.

Support Provided by the Book Writing Mentor

Respondents characterized the type of mentoring they received by mentioning the following elements:

- Continued support, encouragement, guidance
- Keeping track of progress
- Professionalism and expertise, efficacy and competence

Some mentees sent back fairly detailed responses that reflected how complex mentoring can be at several levels and in various roles as laid out in Malderez (2024):

Support role

[provided] ... “unwavering encouragement and confidence boost”. (Chang)

“She was at the reach any time her support was needed”. (Maaouia)

"I felt supported from the very beginning. She checked in at different times to keep track of my progress but still gave me space to go on my own pace". (Nada)

"We were supported and encouraged all along the process". (Maria Marta)

"I [appreciated] her understanding of my feelings towards writing. We combined a professional and personal relationship by talking about family for example, that was humanising and helped me understand academic writers are not aliens". (Anabella)

Acculturator

In book review writing contexts, this role includes not just introducing mentees to the world of publishing, of which Renandya succinctly says: "It is really a jungle out there" (2014, p. 2). It means introducing mentees to levels of formality, the in-house conventions and style guides of journals, preparing the authors for rigorous (and, on occasion, pedantic) peer review processes as well as modelling how to provide critique respectfully and considerately.

In this regard, Omid mentioned that he was given *"a structure to follow so I knew what main parts to write about"* while Chang wrote that *"Her willingness to guide me through the intricacies of book reviewing ... was invaluable"*.

Model

It is important that writing mentors should model behaviour, and what better way is there than for them to "walk the talk" and share their experience. Smith (2020) mentions several reasons why this should be so:

Mentors, too, should reflect on and think about publicly sharing their experiences of mentoring teacher-researchers. You may need to report on your mentoring activity to a sponsor, or you may simply wish to record your experiences as a good way to complete a particular round of mentoring and as an opportunity to reflect and plan better for the future. You may also find that the data you gather in this process, with appropriate permissions from the teachers involved, can be used for a conference presentation and/or an article for a wider audience. (pp. 65–66)

Eli's mentees referred to several aspects of such modelling behaviour:

"Her professionalism and expertise were evident from the outset". (Chang)

"She is open to suggestions and comments making the mentor-mentee relationship a two-way exchange of views, experiences and knowledge". (Mariana)

She has also written widely on the topic (Békés, 2024a; 2024b; 2024c).

Sponsor

This aspect was not highlighted much in the feedback responses, since this role, which means "using your knowledge and contacts to help your mentee" (Malderez, 2024, p. 19) usually takes place behind the scenes. It involves finding opportunities, identifying the right outlet, negotiating with journal editors and making sure the mentees have the space and can shine on the stage built for them.

Educator

In a mentoring relationship, mentors and mentees learn together. There are aspects (such as their local context) that the mentees have a lot more expertise in, while the mentor may have gained years of experience regarding a special aspect in (teacher-research) mentoring. In our case, the first author's experience in book review writing was the result of years of work in this area. As a more experienced peer, she had a lot to share, which her mentees were quick to point out:

"Regular interaction allowed for the continuous exchange of ideas, feedback and progress update". (Chang)

"I loved her guiding questions, which came in ideal as a kick-off for writing"! (María Marta)

Finally, some of the responses to how the book review writing mentor could improve their practice:

"By spending more time mentoring me, or mentoring me more often". (Omid)

"Have more patience with mentees". (Cynthia)

"I felt I might have benefitted from more frequent check-ins". (Rasheedat)

"Personally, I was hoping for more feedback after the final submission of the review". (Nada)

And something heartwarming for the technophobe that she is, says Eli:

"She is much more technologically skilled nowadays than what she used to be." (Mariana)

Let's close this set of excerpts by a remark in response to whether the authors would like to write further reviews (as six out of the 11 respondents actually did!):

"Yes, I would. I benefited immensely from the experience. I was spurred to finish the book and I processed it on a deeper level than when just reading for information and pleasure. I would like to practice that level of reflection and analysis more often". (Rasheedat)

Altogether, it seems to be the case that book review writing works best when the prospective authors feel supported in each and every stage of the process, from choosing the right book, to getting in touch with the potential outlets and facilitating the write-up in several rounds of revision, and ultimately making a submission. The process does not end there, as the editors and peer reviewers' comments will need to be taken on board until a manuscript is finally accepted and, in due course, sees the light of day and becomes – official!

Conclusion

In this exploratory report, we made an attempt to demonstrate how a community of practice (MenTRnet) has been supporting a dedicated group from among its more than 250

members in their writing efforts. While writing for publishing is not the principal activity for the community's members, over the past couple of years there has been a notable rise in publications and a vigorous writing drive has resulted in a number of articles, book chapters, blogs and book reviews being brought out. With the help of a dedicated team of writing mentors and internal editors, MenTRnet members experienced both the challenges and the far-above-average success rate of their efforts. From among the types of academic writing, book review writing turned out to be highly regarded among members both for the opportunities that such activities may provide for professional development and for the opportunities it creates for book review writers, who might gain skills that they can use later on when they decide to disseminate their own teacher-research or teacher-research mentoring findings.

Book review writing has been a steep learning curve for both the authors and those of us who have been involved in managing and mentoring the process (increasingly passed on to a new team supporting writing and publishing). It is the authors' hope, though, that book review writing, as a niche genre of English for Research Publication Purposes, will remain an enticing and engaging activity for the members of our community of practice in the coming years as well.

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The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

The contributors have seen the contents of the manuscript, and the authors agree with the contents and the order of presentation. The listing of authors correctly identifies their level of contribution to this work.

Appendix Table 1.

Collaborating Journals

Journal's full name and short version	Open Access (Yes or No)	Frequency of publication	Month of publication	Website
<i>Argentinian Journal of Applied Linguistics</i> <i>AJAL</i>	Yes	Biannual	May and November	https://ajal.faaapi.org.ar/ojs-3.3.0-5/index.php/AJAL
<i>ELT Classroom Research Journal</i> <i>ELTCRJ</i>	Yes	Biannual	April and October	https://elcrj.com/
<i>ELT Journal</i> <i>ELTJ</i>	No	Quarterly	Jan/Feb/March, etc.	https://academic.oup.com/eltj
<i>English Language Teacher Education and Development Journal</i> <i>ELTED Journal</i>	Yes	Annual	Feb of the following year	http://www.elted.net/
<i>ELT Research</i> <i>ELT R</i>	No	Annual	Feb of the following year	https://resig.weebly.com/
<i>Humanising Language Teaching</i> <i>HLT</i>	Yes	Bi-monthly	Jan/Feb, etc.	https://www.hltmag.co.uk/
<i>Modern English Teacher</i> <i>MET</i>	No	Bi-monthly	Jan/Feb, etc.	https://www.modernenglishteacher.com/
<i>The Teacher Trainer Journal</i>	Yes	Quarterly	Nov/Dec/Jan Feb/March/ Apr, etc.	https://pilgrimstj.com/
<i>Voices</i>	No	Bi-monthly	Jan/Feb, etc.	Membership magazine, no website Contact: editor@iatefl.org

Appendix Table 2.

Participants' Professional Profile

First name	Country where you are from and where you reside now (if different)	The level you teach now (primary, secondary, tertiary, other)	Years of experience	L1	L+
Abeer	Egypt	Adults	28	Arabic/English	Arabic
Ana	Spain/UK	Teachers	31	English/Spanish	Portuguese French
Anabella	Argentina	Secondary, tertiary	10	Spanish	English, German and Portuguese
Anek	Thailand	Secondary	10	Thai	English
Chang	China	Tertiary & Secondary	11	Chinese	English
Chris	UK /Spain	Secondary	15	English/Welsh	Spanish Portuguese
Cynthia	Nigeria	Tertiary	25	Igbo	English French
Eli	Hungary/Ecuador	Tertiary (now retired)	50	Hungarian	English Spanish
Ella	Uzbekistan	Tertiary: Adults and young adults	12	Russian	English German
Ganga	Nepal	Tertiary	18	Nepali	English Hindi
Grazzia	Honduras	Tertiary	32	Spanish	English German Italian Portuguese
Gyanu	Nepal/UK	Secondary	18	Nepali	English
Hai-Yen	Vietnam	Various	7	Vietnamese	English German Chinese
Indra	Nepal	Secondary	17	Nepali	English
Isaac	Kenya/Sri Lanka	---	---	---	---
Khoi	Vietnam/Thailand	Teacher trainer	3+	Vietnamese	English
Krishna	Nepal	Tertiary	13	Nepali	English Hindi
Laxmi	Nepal	Secondary	15	Nepali	English
Maaouia	Tunisia	Teacher trainer	16	Arabic / Tunisian Arabic	French English
Maria	Slovakia	---	---	---	---
Mariana	Argentina	Secondary, university, adults	27	Spanish	English
Maria Marta	Argentina	Secondary (recently retired)	35+	Spanish	English Italian
Meifang	China/UK	Tertiary	15	Chinese Putian dialect	English
Nada	Egypt/US	Tertiary	10	Arabic	English
Nishtha	India	Primary	3 months	Hindi	English Punjabi
Omid	Iran/Ecuador	Tertiary	13	Persian	English Spanish

Rasheedat	Nigeria	Primary and Secondary	14	Yoruba	English
Regina	Mexico	Primary, Tertiary, ESP		Spanish	English
Renu	India	Secondary	31	Hindi	English, Marathi
Samira	Morocco	---	---	---	---
Seden	Türkiye	Tertiary ELT and English Translation Students	32	Turkish	English German (B1) French (A2)
Sidney	Australia/Spain	Other: adults	30	English/Spanish /Catalan	
Simona	Lithuania	Primary and adults	11	Lithuanian	English Spanish Russian
Teresa	Kenya	Tertiary	15	Dhoulo	English Kiswahili
Valeria	Ecuador	Tertiary	11	Spanish	English
Vanita	India	Tertiary and in-service teachers	17	Hindi Punjabi	English

Notes: --- data unavailable