Featuring Features

Abstract: "Featuring Features" discusses what makes a Feature article and what distinguishes it from a Research in Brief. "October *JOE*" mentions some interesting pairings in a great issue.

Featuring Features

The Feature is *JOE*'s premier article category. The most salient feature of Features is that, according to the <u>*JOE* Submission Guidelines</u>, they are to "emphasize implications for U.S. Extension" and that they are to do this "for as wide an audience of U.S. Extension professionals as possible." It's *not* that they are 3,000 words long.

Too many authors submit their articles as Features solely because of their length. But a 3,000-word length does not make an article a Feature. What makes an article a Features is that it uses that "extra" 1,000 words to emphasize implications for Extension, to "<u>answer the 'so what?' question for Extension</u>" more thoroughly and extensively than do articles in other categories.

This is the key difference between Features and Research in Brief articles, which focus more on the research results, themselves, and less on wider implications.

Say you've done some work in Indiana on community development through citizen empowerment. If you write a Research in Brief, your title would be something like "Community Development Through Citizen Empowerment in Indiana," and your focus would be on the work you conducted in Indiana. That would make a great article.

A Feature, on the other hand, would be titled something like "Community Development Through Citizen Empowerment" or "Community Development Through Citizen Empowerment: An Indiana Case Study" (if you have to get the name of your state in). Your focus would be on the importance of citizen empowerment as an effective means of community development, and you would be "using" your work in Indiana to demonstrate that point. That would make a great article, tooâ but a different one.

So if you've got an article that runs around 3,000 words but focuses on a single program in a single state, for example, you have two options: cut or expand. By "expand," I do *not* mean add more words. I mean reorient and expand your article to discuss implications for Extension and for a wide audience of Extension professionals. A Research in Brief article *has* implications for Extension and should mention them. A Feature *discusses* those implications at some length.

You should reflect this broader Extension context in your title, as illustrated above, and in your abstract. In fact, you can use a revised title to guide the revising you must do if you want to turn a too-long Research in Brief into a Feature.

October *JOE*

This issue contains several interesting pairings.

The Commentary, "Native Landscaping vs. Exotic Landscaping: What Should We Recommend?," and the first Tools of the Trade, "Tips to Create Biodiverse, Urban Communities," are companion pieces that are well worth reading.

The first two Ideas at Work articles, "Nutrition Education Program Assistants: A Leverage Point for Collecting Authentic Program Data" and "Speaking the Same Language in Paraprofessional Staff Development," both focus on the important roles paraprofessionals play in our work and how best to help them help us and our clients.

In the Tools of the Trade category, I'm sure you'll be struck, as I was, by the role "quiet" plays in both "Quiet Leadership: How to Create Positive Change Without the Noise and Negativity" and "*The Introverted Leader: Building on Your Quiet Strength*â A Book Review." (And that's not to mention that we have two Tools of the Trade articles by authors named Kinsey and two by Johnsons!)

The other 26 articles are at least as interesting and at least as well worth reading.

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