

Editorial Aspects of Program and Study Design and December *JOE* Highlights

Abstract

The "Editorial Aspects of Program and Study Design" section of this Editor's Page presents two compelling reasons authors should consider editorial matters while developing programs and designing studies. "December *JOE* Highlights" draws attention to the plethora of articles in the issue devoted to the subject of new technologies and identifies other topics highlighted in the issue

Debbie Allen
Editor, *Journal of Extension*
joe-ed@joe.org

Editorial Aspects of Program and Study Design

Earlier this year, I conducted a [webinar on writing about research](#). Although the webinar focused on composing manuscripts for publication, I first addressed actions authors should take well before they consider publishing their results. Specifically, I noted that authors need to attend to editorial matters as they develop programs and design studies. According to the results of a relevant poll question, 47% of the webinar attendees thought ahead about writing about their research while designing a study, 47% did so sometimes, and 6% never did. If you're like the majority of the webinar participants, you may need motivation to concern yourself consistently with editorial aspects of program and study design. Herein, I offer two arguments for doing so.

First, lack of clarity and flaws in manuscripts submitted for publication can stem from problematic content in program and study materials. Many manuscripts submitted to *JOE* include titles of or excerpts from program curricula, survey or interview questions, parts of focus group moderator guides, and other such items. In these items, I often see unclear language, inconsistencies, grammar and punctuation errors, misspellings, and so forth. And, of course, I can't edit away these problems because they occur in what essentially is quoted material.

A second, more foundational reason to attend to editorial aspects of program and study materials is that failing to do so can negatively affect the integrity of your work. A recent communication from a *JOE* peer reviewer to an author puts a fine point on this problem. The reviewer expressed unease regarding the researcher's "lack of care in choosing [survey question] language" and the likelihood that the imprecise, unclear language in the survey items "affected respondents' understanding of what was being asked." Obviously, the clearer program and study materials are, the greater participant understanding will be and the more powerful impact the resulting work will have.

For these reasons, I recommend concentrating on editorial factors early and often during development of a

program or preparation of a research project. When creating program resources, survey instruments, or other written products, ensure that all materials are clear and straightforward, grammatically and mechanically correct, and free of inconsistencies, misspellings, and so forth. Realize that you might want to include such items, in part or wholly, in a manuscript submitted for publication and that the fidelity of your work hinges to a considerable extent on effective writing.

December *JOE* Highlights

Techies, hold onto your VR goggles because this issue of *JOE* is jam-packed with ideas for incorporating "the latest thing" into Extension programming. No less than a third of the articles center on using new technologies, refining uses of nearly new technologies, or combining new and not-so-new technologies. Two examples are the Feature articles "[Drones in Extension Programming: Implementation of Adult and Youth Activities](#)" and "[Meeting Stakeholder Energy Technology Education Needs Using a Mobile Demonstration](#)." Extension's role in bringing together technology and youths is addressed in all three entries in the Ideas at Work category: "[The Money Mentors Program: Increasing Financial Literacy in Utah Youths](#)," "[Tinkering with Technology: A Library Workshop to Support 4-H Youth Development](#)," and "[Pioneering Extension Nutrition Education with iPad Apps: A Development Story](#)." Additionally, technology is the focus of four Tools of the Trade offerings. For example, the article "[Visionmaker.NYC: An Online Landscape Ecology Tool to Support Social-Ecological System Visioning and Planning](#)" describes a resource that combines application of advances in mapping technologies, consideration of theoretical models, and climate-related community engagement to foster "conversation around urban social-ecological systems and historical landscape changes" while encouraging "participation and exploration for the future."

Other articles explore ways in which Extension serves groups such as farmers facing policy overload—the Commentary "[Necessary Role of Extension in Development of Agricultural Regulations](#)"; youths living at the margins—the Feature "[The Contribution of Urban 4-H to Social Capital and the Implications for Social Justice](#)"; families enduring divorce—the Research in Brief entry "[Co-Parenting for Successful Kids: Impacts and Implications](#)"; and rural communities needing resources to combat childhood obesity—the Tools of the Trade offering "[Mobilizing Rural Communities to Prevent Childhood Obesity: A Tool Kit](#)." The issue is rounded out with a handful of articles focused on developing the Extension workforce, several on improving Extension's understanding of various client populations, and more.

Copyright © by *Extension Journal, Inc.* ISSN 1077-5315. Articles appearing in the Journal become the property of the Journal. Single copies of articles may be reproduced in electronic or print form for use in educational or training activities. Inclusion of articles in other publications, electronic sources, or systematic large-scale distribution may be done only with prior electronic or written permission of the [Journal Editorial Office](#), joe-ed@joe.org.

If you have difficulties viewing or printing this page, please contact [JOE Technical Support](#)