

## Considering Audience and June *JOE* Highlights

### Abstract

In the "Considering Audience" section of this Editor's Page, I explain the difference between the intended audiences for two types of *JOE* articles: Feature and Research in Brief. I also focus on the concept of audience in "June *JOE* Highlights," where I preview several offerings in the issue that directly or indirectly address the importance of Extension audiences.

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### Considering Audience

Inspired by a theme running through the articles in this issue (see below), I decided to focus this section of the Editor's Page on audience—specifically, in relation to two types of *JOE* articles. Most authors who submit manuscripts to *JOE* understand the overall *JOE* audience. But some confusion exists surrounding the relationship of audience to the Feature and Research in Brief article types. Both Feature and Research in Brief articles address research findings of importance to Extension professionals and convey Extension-specific implications. However, as the *JOE* Submission Guidelines indicate, Feature articles pertain to concepts and research of broad significance to Extension, whereas Research in Brief articles concentrate on concepts and research of importance to particular segments of Extension. In general, the content of a Feature article is relevant to Extension as a whole, or at least to nearly all Extensionists working in a particular programmatic area (agriculture, family and consumer sciences, etc.). The content of a Research in Brief article applies to a narrower group. Therefore, whether a manuscript is more suitable as a Feature or Research in Brief submission does not necessarily relate to the rigor of the science described or level of methodological detail presented. And, although word count limits apply to each article type, it's certainly not about length. Rather, the key is audience. If the concepts and research described are of significance to an expansive range of *JOE* readers, the manuscript likely fits the Feature category. If, instead, the content is useful mainly to a subgroup working in a particular discipline or geographic region, the manuscript should be a Research in Brief submission.

### June *JOE* Highlights

Throughout Extension, connection with audience is paramount. Providing education and disseminating

information are not endgames—in all Extension endeavors, audience completes the meaning-making process. In this issue, several articles directly or indirectly address the importance of Extension audiences.

One such audience is volunteers. The author of the Commentary "[Engagement of Health Volunteers: A Promising Approach for Meeting Community Needs](#)" contends that Extension must view volunteers as partners, capitalizing on their impressive strengths and empowering them to address community challenges in personal ways. The authors of the Research in Brief offering "[Increasing Invasive Plant Pest Early Detection Through Interagency First Detector Education](#)" also explore the unmet potential of volunteers. The article addresses the idea that volunteers do not need to be experts in an area of study to play vital roles in tackling a critical public issue.

Obviously, cultivating an organization's connection with audience involves expanding reach. As evidenced by two articles in this issue, Extension can expand reach by attending to both existing but underserved groups and members of proliferative new movements. Committed to rigorous exploration of ideas, frequent but practical communications, and consensus building, a task force in Florida developed a comprehensive plan for meeting the needs of an audience thus far underserved by Extension. Their effort is described in detail in the Feature "[A Strategic Plan for Introducing, Implementing, Managing, and Monitoring an Urban Extension Platform](#)." The authors of "[Building and Managing Makerspaces in Extension](#)," an Ideas at Work entry, explain how Extension can tap a new 21st-century audience by contributing to a cutting-edge trend.

Another set of articles speaks to the importance of applying thoughtfulness and precision when preparing materials for various audiences. These include the Feature "[Using Social Marketing to Engage Extension Audiences: Lessons from an Effort Targeting Woodland Owners](#)," the Research in Brief article "[A Salamander Tale: Effective Exhibits and Attitude Change](#)," and the Tools of the Trade offering "[UserTesting.com: A Tool for Usability Testing of Online Resources](#)." Findings related to better understanding key groups are presented in two other articles, the Research in Brief entries "[Different Definitions and Great Expectations: Farmers' Market Consumers and Local Foods](#)" and "[Understanding Residential Irrigation Users to Target Water Conservation Extension Programs](#)."

Besides presenting varied perspectives on Extension audiences, the issue is replete with information useful to the JOE audience. Various articles explore learning and instruction as applied specifically within the context of Extension, novel approaches to evaluating Extension programming, and Extension's involvement with matters such as disaster recovery, literacy, and food security.

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