

Hooking the Reader and June *JOE* Highlights

Abstract

In the first section of the Editor's Page, "Hooking the Reader," I provide strategies scholarly authors can use to prompt target audiences to read their work. My focus in "June *JOE* Highlights" is on articles in the issue devoted to the topic of scholarship and articles centered on newly developed tools or unexpected methods for improving Extension's impact.

Debbie Allen

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

Hooking the Reader

The primary goal of scholarship should be to share critical knowledge with those who need it. Publishing an article is merely Part 1 in the two-part sum of achieving this goal. Part 1 is conveyance of the knowledge. Part 2 is receipt of the knowledge. Only when both parts occur is knowledge truly shared. Therefore, if you write for scholarly publication, you must do what is required to realize Part 1 but also do what you can to encourage Part 2. A fundamental method for encouraging Part 2 is to hook the reader, early and often.

Hooking the reader of a scholarly article is the equivalent of foreshadowing in a work of fiction. As with foreshadowing, the idea is to compel the audience to keep reading. You can do this by applying the following strategies:

- *Intrigue as wide an audience as possible with your title.* Obviously, a title should convey an article's main idea, but keep in mind that the main idea of a scholarly article is the answer to "so what?"—the implications of the research. When crafting a title, determine how to lure the widest range of readers without overstating the substance of your work. Using an example from this issue of *JOE*, two titles appropriate for a particular article in the Feature category are "A Continuous Response Assessment of Extension Messaging on Climate Change" and "Using Continuous Response Assessment to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Extension Education Products." Both accurately portray the substance of the authors' work, but the latter likely will intrigue more readers.
- *Whet readers' appetite for more information with your abstract.* You use an abstract to summarize the problem you studied, your methods and findings, and the associated conclusions, recommendations, and/or implications. Attending to this last component of an abstract is key to hooking the reader. Do not just summarize what you did; summarize what it means. Another article in this issue demonstrates this point well. The abstract of the Feature "On-Farm Food Loss: Farmer Perspectives on Food Waste" ends with the following sentence: "On the basis of our findings, we identify potential strategies for better aligning food recovery efforts

with farmer limitations and needs and make suggestions for the role Extension can play in research and food recovery efforts." Any reader interested in addressing food insecurity likely will choose to read this article.

- *Preview the implications of your research in your introduction.* At or near the end of your introduction, convey to your target readers why they need the information you are providing. For manuscripts submitted to *JOE*, keep in mind that these readers might comprise the greater *JOE* audience or one or more segments of the *JOE* audience and that the preview might relate to your methodology, your findings, or both. To illustrate, I'll take a final look inside this issue, this time at the Feature "Capturing Outcomes Often Overlooked: A Pilot Evaluation of Florida Individual Contact Teaching." Enticing educators, evaluation specialists, administrators, and others across Extension to keep reading, the authors conclude their introduction with the following statement: "Through a pilot test of the University of Florida ICT Evaluation Survey Tool, we sought to measure a more diverse range and scale of outcomes and to identify relevant implications for Extension professionals and the community members they serve."

In developing manuscripts for publication, bear in mind that publishing your work is only half the transaction. Do everything in your power to ensure that your message is received—that the knowledge you hold is actually shared with those who need it.

June *JOE* Highlights

For many *JOE* readers, scholarship is integral to their professional duties. Many fulfill this responsibility in part by publishing in *JOE*, and most likely publish in a multitude of venues. The authors of two articles in this issue—the Commentary "[Publishing in the Journal of Extension—A Place for All Authors](#)" and the Tools of the Trade offering "[The Evolving Landscape of Academic Publishing: Essential Knowledge for Extension Scholars](#)"—add to the professional development of *JOE* readers by providing insights on this topic.

Although articles across the issue contribute new findings to existing pertinent literature, some focus specifically on newly developed tools or unexpected methods for improving Extension's impact. Three examples are from the Feature category. "[Needs Assessment for Informing Extension Professional Development Trainings on Teaching Adult Learners](#)" describes an assessment instrument and associated training intended to fortify the relationship between Extension education and andragogy; "[Capturing Outcomes Often Overlooked: A Pilot Evaluation of Florida Individual Contact Teaching](#)" addresses a tool for measuring the impacts of a type of Extension education characterized as crucial but not typically evaluated in a standardized way; and "[Using Continuous Response Assessment to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Extension Education Products](#)" focuses on how Extension professionals can use a method associated with advertising and related fields to obtain feedback on educational products while they are in development. The authors of the Research in Brief article "[Readiness of Congregate Nutrition Sites to Deliver Nutrition Education to Older Adults](#)" report on a data collection tool that serves as a model for evaluating settings where educational interventions may occur. Not surprisingly, various articles in the Ideas at Work category emphasize innovations that respond to emergent issues and opportunities. For example, "[Bringing Family Voice to Determinants of Health](#)" describes a program that increases the capacity of individuals to assist in ameliorating health inequities, and "[Using Short, Silent 'Data Story' Videos to Engage Contemporary Extension Audiences](#)" proposes an up-to-date option for Extension digital communications. Finally, the Tools of the Trade entry "[Assisting After Disaster: A Volunteer Management and Donations Management Training](#)" identifies two new ways Extension can aid organizations following natural disasters.

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](#)