

Writing and Publishing Your Extension Program Impacts in the *Journal of Extension*

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Many Extension programs provide unique opportunities for stakeholder learning. They also collect evaluation data related to audience feedback and changes in knowledge or potential changes in behavior from these respective learning activities. These results and activities can be published in peer-reviewed journals that allow them to be shared with other Extension staff across the United States and world. This fact sheet provides tips to Extension agent on writing for publication with specific examples from the *Journal of Extension* (JOE).

Why and What to Publish

In addition to sharing information and novel ideas with others, publishing your work can provide a sense of personal accomplishment. This can come from adding to the knowledge base in your field and the impact of helping others grow. In many Extension systems, these publications can also be useful or required in advancing careers through promotion and tenure.

Specifically, things like program evaluations, case studies, and innovative curricula or activities are important examples of Extension work, that you are already doing, that can be published. The *Journal of Extension* has two article categories, “Ideas at Work” and “Tools of the Trade,” where these examples may be published. Ideas at Work articles have a maximum word count of 2,000 words and focus on “ideas” like unique programming or activities and include results from program evaluations. Tools of the Trade articles have a maximum word count of 1,250 words and focus on a specific tool that can be used to create something and how it can be used by Extension professionals.

Getting Started

When writing an article, it is important to think about the different parts involved (Fig. 1). These are defined in more detail:

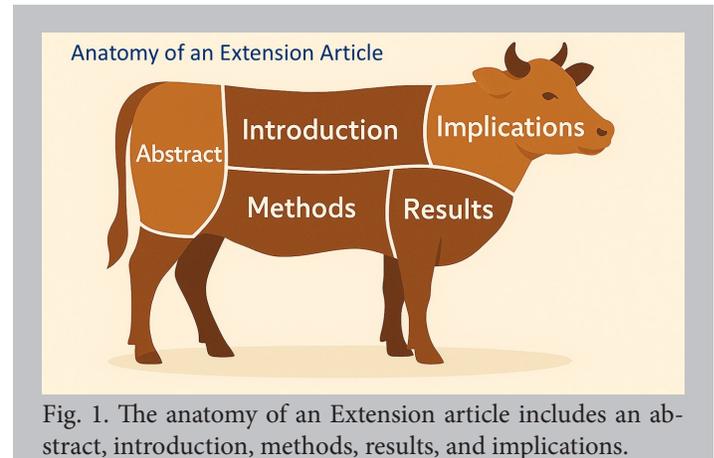


Fig. 1. The anatomy of an Extension article includes an abstract, introduction, methods, results, and implications.

Abstract: This part of the article is found at the beginning but is usually written last because it summarizes the different parts of the article (Introduction, Methods, Results and Implications) in order. An example of a JOE abstract from Hoffman (2025) is below. The blue highlighted text is a synopsis of the introduction, the yellow text is a brief description of the methods, and the gray text represents the results and implications. The maximum word count for an abstract in JOE is 100 words.

Immersive 360 technologies are increasing equity and inclusion, learning motivation and engagement of students in many educational disciplines. Extension stakeholders could also benefit from the use of this technology in educational settings. The affordability and ease of use adds a tool to the Extension repertoire to interest and engage stakeholders in the digital age.

Surveys were conducted in two green industry workshops after the use of 360 immersive technology to determine the technology’s effectiveness and participant perceptions.

Participants reported a positive response when assessing the technology as a learning tool and for ease of use.

Introduction: This part of an article should be concise and provide background information from other published research that relates to your topic. It also provides a justification for why what you are doing is new and important. This also helps the reader understand what you did and why. The structure of an introduction begins with general information and becomes more specific as it continues. An example of this structure can be found in Figure 2 based on a JOE article about focus groups (Koundinya et al., 2025).

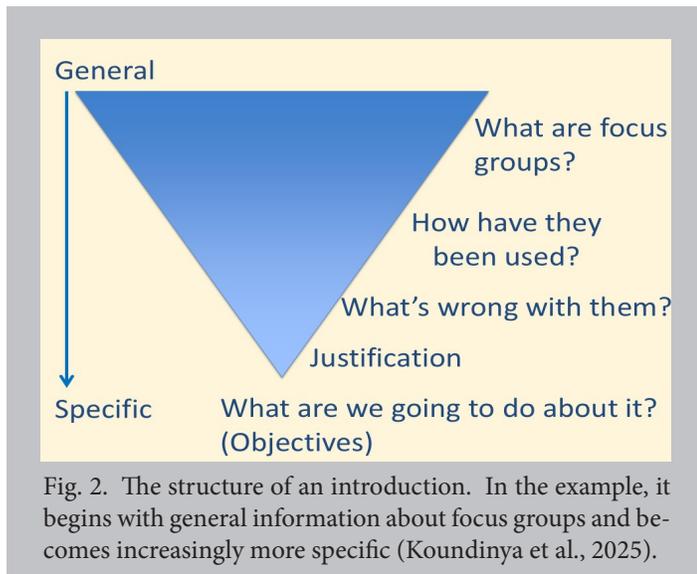


Fig. 2. The structure of an introduction. In the example, it begins with general information about focus groups and becomes increasingly more specific (Koundinya et al., 2025).

The justification usually identifies what is missing in the current research, or educational programming, and the objectives identify what you did to try to fill this gap.

Methods: This part of an article identifies everything that was done. It should include any planning, development, implementation, and evaluation along with measures used and participant information. In many ways this is like a recipe in a cookbook. If another Extension professional wants to do something similar to what you did, they can follow the specific steps you identified.

Results: These are the data you collect from participant evaluations following an activity or program that include things like feedback and changes in knowledge or potential behavior. Displaying data in a table or figure can help make the information easier to understand. If data is displayed in this way it does not need to be restated in the text.

Implications: This section is the most important because it provides Extension professionals with ways they can use your idea or tool. If you are showcasing an idea like a curriculum or activity, you can identify some

of the important things you did or found that worked best when you implemented it. You can also make the curriculum available in an editable format. If you are describing a tool, you can identify some tips for using the tool in Extension as well as things that didn't work.

Keep in mind, some authors and journals use different title names to identify the sections within an article. Those identified here are some of the most common.

Additional Things to Remember

Reading: Before you start writing, it is helpful to read the journal to identify the type of material that is published, the overall tone, and way articles are structured. Articles published in JOE can be found at joe.org.

Peer review: Have at least one colleague review your article before it is submitted. This can help prevent an article's rejection and reduce its time to publication.

IRB approval: Before collecting data from program participants or clientele that you plan to publish, it is important to get approval from your university's Institutional Review Board (IRB). If data were already collected, you still need approval from your IRB using a process called "secondary data analysis." It is helpful to identify someone at your University who has gone through the IRB process so they can serve as a guide.

Style and format: Each journal follows a certain formatting style that is important to use throughout the article. This can help prevent an article's rejection and reduce its time to publication. The *Journal of Extension* uses American Psychological Association (APA) style but in some instances there are journal-specific guidelines. More information on this can be found at commons.joe.org/joe/styleguide.html.

Overall, the writing process may seem daunting and time consuming, however, JOE provides an opportunity to publish what you are already doing without a lot of extra effort. It is likely that everyone has something of value to share and can help strengthen Cooperative Extension programs across the United States.

References

- Hoffman, M.C. (2025). Exploring 360 immersive videos and tours in Extension landscape design workshops. *Journal of Extension*, 63(3), Article 10 <https://commons.joe.org/joe/vol63/iss3/10/>
- Koundinya, V. et al. (2025). Strategies to overcome the unique challenges faced in conducting focus groups in Extension. *Journal of Extension*, 63(2), Article 12. <https://doi.org/10.34068/joe.63.02.12>