

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PUBLISHING: A GUIDE FOR COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PRACTITIONERS¹

Workshop

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Compared with other disciplines there are few opportunities for cooperative education practitioners to conduct research and few avenues for publishing work. Cooperative education has been and is a practitioner-dominated field, with only a developing tradition of research and publication relative to other disciplines. This workshop will examine what methodologies practitioners can employ, discuss aspects of research design, and provide guidelines designed to enhance opportunities for getting research published.

Projects

Focus on action research; that is, research that involves an intervention or modification of practice/process. These projects can be survey type studies or small-scale qualitative studies. Surveys might be best done in connection with colleagues to get good numbers that are useful for statistical analysis. Be sure to get good numbers, and a representative sampling (especially important for cooperative education where programs/contexts vary considerably).

Research Design

1. Principal driving force for research design is *what you want to know*. This rather than methodological biases should dictate how you then collect data.
2. Quantitative work good for overview, general look at a problem. Has the advantage of generalisability if sampling done correctly. Do not over state the significance of your work.
3. Qualitative work best for in-depth inquiries when you want to, for example, understand reasons for trends/differences observed in quantitative work.
4. Mixed methodology combines best of both approaches. More complex, different skills required, for example, need ability at quantitative data handling (such as statistics) and qualitative methods (such as interviewing).

¹ Workshop presented at the 12th biennial World Association for Cooperative Education Conference, Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.

Essay/Review/Best Practice Articles

1. What is your point? State early on.
2. Cite relevant literature/descriptions of other relevant programs etc.
3. Sum up your thesis or, conclusions.
4. Make sure you make it clear what the implications your work holds for other practitioners.

Research Articles

1. What is the reason/justification for the research? State early on.
2. Introduce the topic and cite relevant literature.
3. State your research question/objective.
4. Describe theoretical framework.
5. Describe methodology in such a way that someone else could replicate it.
6. Link methodology to theoretical framework
7. Link methodology to research question/objective; i.e., justify your choice of methodology.
8. Describe outcomes of research.
9. Describe the implications your work holds for other practitioners.

Points for Consideration in Presentation of Articles

1. Read the instructions for authors. Many papers are rejected because they do not conform to the journal format. Editors provide these instructions for guidance and many referees will be expecting to see papers set out in a particular manner (see below).
2. Structure the paper carefully so that it follows a logical sequence typically following the instructions for authors for the periodical. If it is not clear from the instructions what format is required, use a recent publication in the same journal as a template.
3. Present the paper in a professional manner; no typographical errors – many referees are very critical of such errors as they consider that poor presentation suggests a sloppy attitude to research.
4. Pay particular attention to references. Most education journals require authors to follow APA guidelines. At the very least be consistent.
5. Make sure you have researched the literature adequately. Your paper should also include plenty of up-to-date references (particularly from the journal that you are submitting the paper to).

Referees Attention

1. Overall research design.
2. Sound coverage of relevant literature.
3. Setting the context; provide a brief description of your institution/program/etc., so that the reader can understand the setting for the study.
4. Conceptualisation of the study; is it clear from the introduction and literature why the study was needed? This needs to be stated early in your paper.
5. Clear statement of research objective/question.
6. Theoretical framework.
7. Is the methodology appropriate? Justify your methodology. Is there an appropriate link between research question, theoretical framework and research question and choice of methodology?
8. Presentation of data; tabulated (quantitative studies), quotations in appropriate format, typically APA (qualitative studies).
9. Discussion of results; are assertions/interpretations reasonable? Does the data provide support the inferences/interpretations?
10. Make sure you make it clear what the implications your work hold for other practitioners. Referees are reluctant to agree to publication of articles that they see as being in-house.

References & Documentary Resources

Instructions for Authors; Journal of Cooperative Education
Instructions for Authors; Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education
Instructions for Referees; Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education
Guidelines for APA formatting of references.

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