

**International Agricultural and Extension Education:  
Meeting the Unknown Challenges of Tomorrow**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this paper is to provide philosophical observations and reflections over 25 years of the *Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education* (JIAEE) as a reader, author, and editor. The paper provides a brief history of JIAEE including changes that occurred over the years. This paper honors those that contributed to JIAEE and stood as its caretakers over the past 25 years. This main body of the paper is divided into three sections: early years, middle years, and contemporary years. The paper explores the development and use of JIAEE keywords and provides visual depictions using wordclouds. The purpose of keywords is discussed and suggestions for future use are provided. Final recommendations and well wishes for the future are provided. Recommendations include: Considering the hiring of a permanent editor or publishing firm such as Taylor & Francis; creating a purposeful research agenda in conjunction with AIAEE; and redressing the developing and use of keywords.

Keywords: Keywords, JIAEE, managing change, partnerships, & historical

## Introduction

I am excited to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Journal of International Agricultural and Extension Education* (JIAEE) through observations of reflections of our collective research. I published my first JIAEE paper over 20 years ago and have been an avid reader since the first issue was hand delivered to members at the 1994 annual meeting of the Association for International Agricultural Education. In the first issue “[t]he purpose [was] to develop a broad research and knowledge base on agricultural and extension education in developing countries” (Elliot, 1994, inside cover). While not published until ten years after the first AIAEE (originally known as Associate for International Agricultural Education) meeting, Meaders (2009) noted a journal as a medium for distributing scholarship was discussed from the beginning. You could purchase an ASCII formatted copy of JIAEE on a diskette for \$15. Today JIAEE is open access and available only in an online format. In the latest volume of JIAEE “[t]he purpose...is to enhance the research and knowledge base of agricultural and extension education from an international perspective” (Hains, 2018, p. 1). Do you notice the difference in the purpose? From “developing” to “enhancing” and from “in developing countries” to “from an international perspective”. Things that change do not remain the same. JIAEE is changing and adapting as it ages and I would argue for the better.

When JIAEE was first conceived the complexities of online submission and publications were as unanticipated as digital object identifier numbers. When I first published in JIAEE, I was cautioned about its lack of track record and reputation. Today JIAEE is widely recognized as a leading journal in our field with a long record of accomplishment and stellar reputation based on its past successes. What will keep JIAEE as a prestigious journal will

be different than what it took to gain its current status. JIAEE must continue to evolve and adapt.

**“The world in front of you is nothing like the world behind you” Bolsinger (2015, p. 17).**

In “Canoeing the Mountains” Bolsinger (2015) recounts the story of Lewis and Clark’s quest to find a passage to the Pacific Ocean. Finding the source of the Missouri river, it turned out, was the easy part of the expedition. Historical understandings and all their planning and training did not prepare them for the Rocky Mountains they encountered on their way passage to the Pacific Ocean. “Canoeing” over the Continental Divide was not possible. “They would have to change plans, give up expectations, even reframe their entire mission” (Bolsinger, 2015, p. 27). This quote resonates well with me as I reflect on the history of JIAEE and ponder how it evolved and will evolve to the challenges of an increasingly global society, population growth, and sustainability of agricultural practices.

For those that do not know me, I am very reflective and my best thoughts always come a day later. I also think about those before me that have also pondered current events and pontificated about the future. The first issue included several authors whom I had the pleasure to work with over the years that influenced my thinking and writing; giants in our field. These include Don Meaders, Barbara Ludwig, Arlen Etling, Bob Martin, David Acker, Jim Diamond, Roger Steele, and Wade Miller. The latest issue includes many of my contemporaries that I have been working with for the past decade or so including: Theresa Murphrey, Grady Roberts, Amy Harder, and Wayne Ganpat. This issue also includes many new and first time authors that will contribute to the world in front of us. Along the way JIAEE has had the steady hand of many

excellent editors including: Jack Elliot, Satish Verma, Jim Connors, Gary Wingenbach, Kim Dooley, Brenda Seevers, Amy Harder, Robert Strong, Kristina Hains, Alexa Lamm, and yours truly.

The early pioneers (editors and authors) of JIAEE established a strong bedrock from which to launch it into the future. Twenty-five years from now, my contemporary colleagues and I will likely be relegated to faded ink and poor memories. JIAEE will be very different than it is now. Those providing leadership to JIAEE likely have not even started a doctoral program. They will likely ponder why we did some of the things we did and hopefully recognize some of the hard work that it took to establish JIAEE as a premiere journal in our field. These new leaders will struggle with challenges that today are not known, technologies that do not yet exist, and very different education and extension needs. My hope is that what we have done in the past is prelude to continued success in the future.

### **The Early Years**

From its inception, the scholarship of JIAEE has broadly represented our knowledge bases and contextual applications. Jack Elliot edited the first two volumes of JIAEE. In his last issue as Editor, he recollects the first couple of years of JIAEE in what he wrote “[t]he association comes of age” (Elliot, 1995, p. 2). He extolled that the future of JIAEE was positive. The first issue reported research on leadership education, adoption and diffusion, competency development, and educational impact (Elliot, 1994). Research on indigenous knowledge systems, youth development, gender issues, training and visitation systems, and empowerment of rural populations were also reported. During the first three years of JIAEE (1994, 1995, 1996) research was conducted in Bangladesh, Belize, Caribbean, China, Greece, Honduras, India, Iran, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Mexico, Russia, Rwanda,

Somalia, South Africa, Swaziland, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe. Satish Verma, JIAEE Editor wrote “[a] vision for the Journal by 2005 [included] ... maturity, worldwide representation and circulation, universal access, diverse content, and multilingual print/electronic version are a few images of this version.” (Verma, 1996, p. 4).

It is apparent to me that JIAEE achieved its goals with one exception. While there were early attempts to print and distribute abstracts in additional languages this vision was never sustained. By Volume 4 of JIAEE, research contributions had grown enough to support a third yearly issue. This issue was referred to as the Conference Edition; a practice that ended with the summer 2014 issue. JIAEE provides an excellent history of AIAEE with “One Eye on the Rearview Mirror” (Verma, 1997, pp. 13-19) and offering insights for aspiring JIAEE authors. In this issue, Don Meaders offered three timeless recommendations for potential authors including conforming to style, logical flow of thoughts, and defining terms. In this issue, Arlen Etling laments the need for reviewers to offer well thought out responses and to complete their task in two weeks. In the summer 1998 issue (Verma, Hamilton, & Long, 1998), it was reported that the acceptance rate for all previously published issues was 62% and that it took from six to nine months to review and publish a paper. In the summer 2000 issue (Connors, 2000) noted that the JIAEE *submission fee* required was suspended. The summer 2001 issue (Connors, 2001) highlighted the first electronic publication of the summer proceedings online. Connors further noted that JIAEE was in a constant state of change for the better; to meet the needs of AIAEE members and JIAEE authors.

### **The Middle Years**

I ascribe that the middle years of JIAEE covered Gary Wingenbach's six years as Editor, Kim Dooley's term and my term. The Dooley and Lindner term was the genesis of the managing editor, executive-editor, and past-editor format. Collectively representing Volumes 9-19 of JIAEE. Wingenbach provided leadership as the JIAEE online submission and review process was conceptualized and implemented. The first recognition for JIAEE Article of the Year was made in 2002. The JIAEE's first Seminar Article Series paper was published in 2005. In this invited paper, the late James Christiansen wrote about "addressing the right issues and raising the right questions in AIAEE" (Christiansen, 2005, p. 5). In this paper, Christiansen offers eleven postulates for developing a more complete JIAEE theoretical base. Christiansen (2005) concludes his paper by asking us to consider five questions that may help our scholarship move forward: 1) Do we have the necessary partnerships to make a difference; 2) How can we better promote effective programs; 3) How can we better prepare the next generation of International Development Specialists; 4) How can we better integrate programs and projects and use holistic approaches; and 5) How can we better keep our colleagues engaged in International Development throughout their careers? James Christiansen's contributions to our professional cannot be overstated. This is why we are dedicating the 2019 AIAEE conference in his name and honor. In the Spring 2006 issue Wingenbach noted acceptance rates dropped to approximately 30% as JIAEE gained rigor and review time averaged about two weeks...progress. The spring 2010 issue was the only available online and was published through the current content management system operated by Cybersense. By 2010 acceptance rate dropped to approximately 15%; further highlighting the rigor of JIAEE.

Wingenbach was invited to reflect on his time as Editor under special invitation from the Editorial Board. He noted that "[t]he JIAEE serves as the AIAEE's passport to the world" (Wingenbach, 2008, p. 7). He noted further "AIAEE needs to adapt, adopt, or create its own international research agenda" (p. 7). These middle years saw much change with JIAEE including electronic submission and publication. JIAEE began using doi to help readers find articles published in the Journal. Beginning with JIAEE Volume 10 Issue 3 authors were required to include keywords with their submissions. These keywords helped JIAEE to categorize and index information included in published papers. Additionally, these keywords were intended to help focus research and better communicate our collective work. Keywords from past issues along with a content analysis of all past issues resulted in what we use today as a basis for JIAEE topics (Lindner & Dooley, 2008, p. 5).

The...topics encompass the multidisciplinary nature of our work...:**Education** (Adult Learning, Curriculum Issues, Distance Learning, Experiential Learning, Faculty Teaching, Higher Education, Information Technology, Primary/Secondary Education, and Student Issues); **Environmental Issues** (Agro ecology, Energy, Ecotourism, Health Care, Natural Resources, Solid Waste Management, and Wildlife Biology); **Extension** (Administration and Policy, Curriculum Development, Delivery, Methods, Programs, Systems and Models, and Theory and Practice); **Partnerships** (Community-based Organizations, Cooperatives, Governmental Organizations, NonGovernmental Organizations, and Public-Private Networks); **Perspectives** (Age, Ethnicity, Gender, Historical, and





Figure 2. Wordcloud of JIAEE Keywords Volumes 20-25

Black (1962) noted that the use of keywords for indexing, cataloging, and retrieving began in the mid-1950s. In discussing keywords he wrote that “[t]he only word or words which will describe a subject are those by which the workers in that field refer to it” (p. 313). The Taylor and Francis Group (n.d.) noted that the selection and use of keywords are needed to help others discover and find our collective research. They note further that such discovery is needed for indexing and promoting scholarly work. Collectively, I would argue that keywords establish the parameters of our research and communicate that to those seeking our expertise. Springer (2018) publishing highlights that keywords should be specific to the field of study being represented and cautions against using general words and terms that lack such specificity. Joshi (2014) wrote that keywords help readers find relevant papers on the topic in which they are interested. Joshi (2014) offers five suggestions for selecting keywords: regional context of study; methodological context/technique; applications of findings; phenomena studied; and *avoid* words from title. Words and phrases in titles of papers are perfunctorily indexed. Rodrigues (2013) highlighted the need for careful selection of keywords. Rodrigues further noted that along with the title and abstract keywords are critical to communicating research findings.

JIAEEs contemporary years end with a consistent theme for the Journal...change. The first issues of JIAEE allowed for

submission of philosophical, theoretical, and practice manuscripts. Maximum length of manuscripts was 12 pages. Book reviews were also accepted. Over time acceptable submissions morphed into feature articles (reporting original research within a maximum of 20 pages), commentary articles, tools of the profession, and book reviews. Today JIAEE accepts: feature articles (reporting original research, methodological findings, and theoretical and conceptual building papers within a maximum of 20 pages); and research notes (presenting emerging research on contemporary issues, innovative programs, and replication of previous research within a maximum of 10 pages).

### **Beyond Excellence or Replacing our Canoe**

What appears to be happening has already happened...JIAEE has changed. JIAEE has had 25 years of excellence and enjoys a reputation as one of the premiere journals in our field of study; agricultural and extension education. Happy birthday JIAEE and congratulations to all the editors, authors, and readers. Like Lewis and Clark, the “canoe” that got us to where we are today will likely not take us into the future. Change will continue and we likely cannot fathom what that change will be. I doubt it will be a linear progression of what got JIAEE to where it is today. Much like Lewis and Clarke’s voyage up the Mississippi River in canoes to find a passage to the Pacific Ocean, JIAEE will ride the currents

until its next challenges. Looking at JIAEE from Volume one to Volume twenty-five it looks like cataclysmic change occurred, this however, is not true. Change happened slowly with able-bodied captains (JIAEE editors) hands on the rudders steering the Journal threw both clear blue waters and turbulent rapids. The future will present challenges to JIAEE and I am confident the Journal will respond and strengthen over time.

**“In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock” Thomas Jefferson**

Reporting our collective research, methods, and practices are the rocks on which we stand. Having a journal that is well-respected, rigorous, blind-peer reviewed, and relevant are characteristics of JIAEE that should never change. In *Built to Last* Collins and Porras (1994) remind us that to be successful we must be willing to change everything about JIAEE except those characteristics that define us. Getting in the currents...perhaps the time has come to move JIAEE ahead again by hiring a permanent editor. Perhaps envisioning a future similar to *The Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension* (JAEE) published by Taylor & Francis. This strategic partnership provides valuable opportunities for JAEE of which we cannot take advantage unless we change. AIAEE needs to create and reflect a purposeful research agenda focused on a shared vision for our collective work; the conference and JIAEE should be outlets for this agenda. Keywords need to be reviewed and updated. Keywords are the basis from which JIAEE hangs its theoretical underpinnings. We should not cede this responsibility to authors' arbitrary selection, rather they should be established by JIAEE. We must do a better job indexing and communicating our research. Will it be easy? No! Ask any previous JIAEE editor yours truly included.

To paraphrase my friend and mentor, James Christiansen, ata boy JIAEE you done good! Happy birthday JIAEE. Carpe diem JIAEE, carpe annos sinulos JIAEE, quotidie celebramus JIAEE...the best is yet to come.

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