

PART 1

Instructions

This tool helps extension agents turn programs and evaluations into publishable, peer-reviewed manuscripts. It guides you from identifying your situation to developing a study purpose, aligning objectives and methods, and planning an analysis. The components mirror what journals expect in a research paper and will streamline coauthor collaboration, internal review and submission.

How To Use This Template

1. Draft each section in order using plain text that reflects extension-specific work.
2. Match each objective to a method and an analysis technique.
3. Confirm your study design, sampling, IRB status and data sources.
4. When your worksheet is structured and completed, expand it into a manuscript in APA (7th Edition) style.

Where To Publish

- Journal of Extension
- Journal of National Association of County Agricultural Agents
- Journal of Agricultural Education
- For more information, see the LSU Libraries' guide to Agricultural Extension, Education and Evaluation: Journals at <https://guides.lib.lsu.edu/c.php?g=243857&p=1774215>

See the Purdue OWL APA Formatting and Style Guide (7th Edition) quick guide available online for APA help while drafting and formatting.

Ready To Submit Checklist

Fit and Format

- Confirm the journal's aims, article type and word count.

- Make sure the manuscript emphasizes implications for extension practice.
- Format according to the journal's style guidance. Default to APA 7th Edition for references and in-text citations when allowed.

Ethics and Compliance

- Confirm IRB approval or exemption, if applicable, for any human subject's data, and include the statement in the "Methods" section.
- Make sure your work is original and not submitted to another journal.
- Secure permissions for any reproduced figures, photos or instruments.

Manuscript Prep

- Choose the appropriate article category or section for the journal and align the structure and headings accordingly.
- Ensure blind-review compliance where required. Remove identifying details from the manuscript file, place names and affiliations on the title page or in the submission system only.
- Use clear tables and figures that match text and analysis. Follow the journal's layout rules for placement and captions.

Team Process

- Identify coauthors early. Clarify contributions and order.
- Assign internal peer review with another agent or faculty colleague who has not worked on the draft.
- Schedule two editing passes: one for content

- and another for APA formatting.
- Use a tracked changes round and finalize a clean version.

Submission Package

- Prepare a cover letter that clearly states the article type, scope, relevance to the journal's audience, ethical compliance and include

- suggested reviewers if requested.
- Double check the journal's online portal requirements, file types and metadata fields before uploading.

Part 2

Article Preparation Worksheet (Template)

This worksheet guides you from a real extension situation through a publishable study design. Start by describing the situation and specific problem, set measurable objectives, then select a design and methods that match your data and audiences. When the worksheet is complete, convert it to manuscript sections in APA style, circulate for coauthor review, then format your target journal and submit.

Choosing a Research Approach

Select the approach that best matches your program, evaluation data and objectives. You can use qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods when appropriate (e.g., quantitative outcomes with qualitative interviews for context).

Quantitative Approaches:

- Descriptive, correlational, causal-comparative, meta-analyses, longitudinal designs
- Experimental and nonexperimental designs
- Quasi-experimental designs
- Instrument development

Qualitative Approaches:

- Case study/multiple case studies
- Phenomenology
- Narrative research
- Ethnographic
- Grounded theory

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework (optional but recommended)

Identify a framework to guide your study design and interpretation. Common frameworks used in agricultural education and extension include:

- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory
- Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior
- Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory
- Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory
- Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory

SECTION 1: Situation Statement (your why)

Briefly describe the real-world problem or need your program addressed, including contributing factors and barriers.

Examples:

- Children are experiencing significant mental health issues due to ...
- Childhood obesity and related health conditions are ...
- Agricultural programs have historically struggled to recruit and retain minority populations ...

SECTION 2: Purpose/Problem Statement (your research question)

State the main purpose of your project or study using research language.

Examples:

- To explore the impacts of a mental health awareness program on participating youth.

- To determine variables influencing youth participation in 4-H camp.
- To examine barriers to minority participation in the 4-H program.

Format suggestion: The primary purpose of this study is ...

SECTION 3: Objectives

List specific, measurable objectives that align with your methods and analysis. Use action verbs (describe, examine, compare, identify).

Examples:

- To describe the individuals participating in an overnight youth camping experience.
- To examine relationships between age and scores on pretests/posttests following a youth mental health program.
- To compare participants' demographic characteristics with their scores on a post-program instrument.

SECTION 4A: Research Design

Select the design that best matches your program, evaluation data and objectives.

Choose a Research Approach

- Quantitative approach
- Qualitative approach
- Mixed-method approach

Conceptual Framework (optional but recommended)

- Use any of the frameworks mentioned above to guide your study design and interpret the result.

SECTION 4B: Methods

Target Population (who findings apply to)

Define your target population.

Examples:

- 4-H youth
- Louisiana youth
- All 4th–6th graders

Sample (subset/who was studied)

Define your sample and recruitment/selection.

Example: 4th–6th graders in Livingston Parish

Data Collection

Describe data collection instruments, timing, and procedures.

- **Quantitative:** surveys/questionnaires, tests/assessments, pre/post measures, existing statistical data, structured observations
- **Qualitative:** semi-structured interviews, focus groups, observations/field notes (ethnography), photos, documents, artifacts, journals

Data Analysis Techniques

Describe your analysis plan and software if applicable.

- **Quantitative:** descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviation), inferential tests (T-tests/analysis of variation), correlations, regression
- **Qualitative:** textual coding/thematic analysis, content analysis, analytical memo writing

Findings or Results

Summarize and report the results of your analysis. Quantitative studies typically include tables/figures with key statistics, while qualitative studies describe themes with illustrative quotes or artifacts.

Discussion/Implications for Practice

Discuss implications, limitations and next steps. Interpret the findings in context, note limitations and explain how results can improve extension programming and outcomes.

Recommendations for Practitioners

Provide actionable guidance for agents/educators based on findings.

Recommendations for Future Research

Suggest research questions or design improvements for future studies.

Quick Notes Table

Section	Details	Notes
Situation Statement		
Purpose/Problem Statement		
Objectives		
Research Design		
Methods (Population/Sample)		
Methods (Data Collection)		
Analysis		
Findings/Implications		



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