



EECERA

Writing for Journal Publication

1. The importance of journals in academic scholarship and professional development

Journals provide:

- a major forum for the dissemination of current and ground breaking knowledge in any discipline;
- a forum for shorter, focused papers which can be distributed and assimilated quickly;
- a mechanism for peer review of quality;
- a means to assess the impact of research and scholarship;
- an opportunity to publish alongside others in the field and to set work in a wider context;
- a useful framework for disciplined and scholarly writing and reporting of research;
- a means of establishing and promoting new and innovative work within the academic community and establishment.

EECERJ aims to provide a forum to promote and disseminate original research in early childhood education throughout Europe and beyond. It grew out of a desire to ensure the European voice was not submerged with the dominance of English as a language and US publishing houses. It was the first journal with a European focus and makes an important contribution in keeping this work alive and visible. It was also established with the intention of crossing traditional disciplinary boundaries, embracing all related fields including psychology, sociology, child health and social work, and with the intention of bridging the research, policy and practice divide.

EECERJ has a distinguished and very experienced panel of referees and translators whose work is overseen by the Journal's Editorial Board, whose job is to monitor the academic quality and relevance of the published papers.

2. Selection of appropriate journal for submission

Journals normally set out in a preface their rationale and coverage, and what kind of papers they welcome. Potential authors should read these statements carefully to see whether their work matches the focus of the journal. If in doubt contact the Editor and ask. It is pointless submitting papers which do not fit the journal's coverage.

EECERJ publishes papers which:

- offer an original contribution to the field of early childhood education and care (birth to eight);
- have a clear application to early childhood education and care policy and practice;
- provide reports of research in progress, discussion of conceptual and methodological issues and review articles;
- sometimes challenge orthodoxy and stimulate dialogue and reflexive action in the field.

3. Submission requirements and protocols of journals

Refereed journals normally have transparent and equitable protocols for the submission and refereeing of papers for publication. They normally use acknowledged researchers and

academics in the field in their review process and provide the author with individual feedback on the quality of the paper.

EECERJ has open and stated protocols for the submission and refereeing of papers which are stated in its Notes for Contributors. These Notes set out guidelines on length, content and format of papers, including tables and referencing conventions (Harvard System). Instructions on how to submit the paper to the Journal Editor are provided. EECERJ authors are required to provide:

- 3 complete copies of the manuscript of between 4-8,000 words
- A copy on computer disc in Word, Word Perfect or e mail submission (on-line soon)
- An abstract of 100-150 words in English, French, German and Spanish on a separate sheet
- The full postal address of the author.

On submission of the manuscript, the author receives an acknowledgement, and the paper is sent out to two independent and anonymous reviewers, from two different countries, who are members of the Editorial Board or the Panel of Referees and Translators. One referee will be a specialist in the subject of the paper. Once reviews are returned, a decision is made about the publication of the paper by the Journal Editor, and the decision sent to the author, along with the two anonymous review reports. It is hoped that this report will provide a development opportunity for the author. If there is a difference of opinion between the two referees a third review is sought. The aim is that the time from submission to the Journal and decision on publication should not be longer than 6 months.

4. Assessment criteria used to judge the quality of journals

All journals with a refereeing process provide their reviewers with criteria on which to base their assessment of papers. These criteria will vary from journal to journal but will normally focus on similar aspects, including the paper's content, format, level of scholarship, contribution to the field, clarity and relevance. They will also often invite the reviewer to comment more freely on the paper, drawing on their wider experience and expertise, to set the paper in the context of other work in the field.

EECERJ issues its referees with a set of criteria by which submitted papers should be judged. These criteria are:

- Relevance of content to the journal
- Theoretical and conceptual foundations
- Depth and rigour of method and reporting
- Originality and contribution to field
- Ethics
- Length
- Format, including tables, figures, abstract and key words
- Scholarship, including academic conventions
- Full and accurate referencing and citation
- Clarity and fluency

Referees are also invited to comment freely about the paper, suggesting points of further improvement or development. They are also invited to rate the paper on a 4 point basis:

- A1: Excellent, publish forthwith;
- A2: Worth publishing, with minor changes;
- B: Marginally worth publishing with major modifications;
- C: Not suitable for publication.

5. Writing and drafting strategies

All authors develop their own writing strategies but there are certain features of good writing habits:

- The paper is carefully planned to ensure it covers all the key points which are required by an academic paper and also the particular requirements of the chosen journal for submission;
- The author takes opportunities to discuss with peers the content and presentation of material;
- The paper goes through several drafting cycles, where it is shared with colleagues, critique is invited and responded to in subsequent drafts;
- The author has the paper proof read by a reader who is fluent in the language of publication;
- The author and proof reader checks references and presentation requirements meticulously to ensure academic conventions are fully complied with before submission.

6. Key elements of content in papers

The content of academic papers will vary according to the type of paper eg research report, review articles, theoretical or conceptual discussions, methodological developments. They will also vary according to the preferred content of the chosen journal. Authors should plan a paper carefully to ensure the content is appropriate and complete.

EECERJ papers should include:

- An abstract in the four specified languages;
- A clear rationale and focus for the paper;
- Theoretical and conceptual foundations;
- Relationship to other work in the area;
- Clear explanation of methodology (if a research report);
- Discussion of ethics, reliability and validity;
- Clear presentation of findings;
- Discussion of implications for ECEC policy and/or practice;
- Full and accurate references and citations;
- Key words.

7 Stylistic considerations and the application of academic conventions

The key features of quality papers are clarity and fluency. Editors and reviewers are looking for papers that communicate with precision, without ambiguity and are economical in conveying meaning. They are looking for writing which is uncluttered with jargon and complex expressions, and where technical terms are used prudently, with clear definitions. This is especially important where many of the readers are likely to have other first languages. Use of extensive footnotes is discouraged.

Authors should also be diligent in the application of academic conventions for presentation and formatting, including full acknowledgement of sources, accurate and full referencing, using the Harvard system for citation.

8. Strategies for formatting papers

All journals provide guidance for authors on the presentation and formatting of papers, which cover such things as language, length, font, layout, margins.

EECERJ requires papers to be:

- between 4-8,000 words;
- in English;
- typed on one side of A4 paper, with page numbers;
- double spaced with ample margins;
- preceded with the title of the paper, names(s) of the author(s) and the address where the work was carried out, and five key words;
- accompanied by a separate sheet with an abstract of 100-150 words in English, French, German and Spanish, and the full postal address and e mail of the author.

9. Writing abstracts and identifying key words

Most journals require the authors to provide an abstract of the paper. This allows potential readers to make a judgment on the content and relevance of the paper to their needs, and so is essential to citation success. It is also often the part of the paper that is published for wider dissemination. The key words are also an important mechanism by which potential readers search for relevant papers in indexing systems and so careful consideration should be given to which words capture the main content of the paper.

EECERJ requires this to be a concise (100-150 words) resume of the content of the paper. It should include its title, focus, theoretical sources, methodology, key findings and applications. It also requires 4 or 5 key words for indexing purposes.

10. Desirable features of an EECERJ paper

The desirable features of a paper are those that are implied in the assessment criteria. EECERJ is looking for papers that:

- are topical and relevant;
- are groundbreaking and original;
- make a contribution to the development of European ECEC policy and practice;
- are fluent and clearly written;
- are scholarly and rigorous in method and reporting;
- promote quality services for young children and families;
- promote equality and inclusion.

Professor Christine Pascal
Co-ordinating Editor, EECERJ
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