

# Publishing cooperative and work-integrated education literature: *The Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education*

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The Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education (APJCE) was founded in 1999, with the first volume published in 2000. The journal strongly adhered to the philosophy of having freely and readily accessible information, and opted to be a free, fully online, open access journal. Over the last 12 years, the journal has grown and has become well-established in the cooperative (co-op) and work-integrated learning (WIL) community. The number of publications per year has steadily increased and the number of submissions has shown strong growth, especially in the last three years. APJCE articles are increasingly cited in other journals and significant book publications, and both its author and user bases have become more international. This article will discuss the advantages from the APJCE perspective of being an open access journal and provide an analysis of the growth of APJCE. The article will also discuss the performance of the journal in the context of co-op/WIL literature internationally and discuss some recent developments for the journal. (*Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education, 2012, 13(4), 181-193*)

Keywords: Publishing, literature, citations, journal performance.

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The Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education (APJCE) was founded by Prof. Richard Coll, University of Waikato, in 1999, with the first volume published in 2000. The founding of the journal was driven by several prominent factors at the time. At the end of the 1990s, co-op research seemed to be waning, with little new research being published. However, overviews of the regional and international conferences suggested that much research, albeit mostly program evaluation type research, appeared to be occurring. Furthermore, despite co-op research having historically a strong presence in the US and to some extent Europe, little co-op research was occurring in the Asia-Pacific region (with activities limited to New Zealand and Australia), which contrasts to the strong growth of co-op programs in this region, particularly in Asian countries. This suggested that research activity in this region was perhaps in its infancy, with practitioners engaged in co-op research having little experience in publishing their research work in journals. Thus, APJCE was set up with the intention of becoming a developmental journal to encourage up-and-coming researchers to publish works that are often presented as conference papers but who either struggled to advance this written work to become a published journal article or had encountered discouragement in the reviewing process. The journal took a hands-on, constructive approach to reviewing to better enable up-and-coming researchers to successfully publish their work, and not appear to be discouraging or overly critical. The journal editors also

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<sup>2</sup> The review was managed by a third party and his review staff to maintain anonymity of reviewers and integrity of the reviewing process

adhered strongly to the philosophy of having information and knowledge freely available to the wider community, therefore, chose to be a fully online journal.

#### PUBLISHING AND ACCESSIBILITY

The success of a journal depends significantly on its profile, the number of citations its articles can attract, and the number and the quality of articles published. The profile can be considerably improved by allowing unlimited, free and open access, and as the profile tends to increase the number of manuscripts submitted, allowing for a progressive raising of the level of quality of published articles. In 1999, when the APJCE editor decided to go to a fully online and open access journal, open access was still a topic of much discussion (Chu, 2000). However, some journals had already begun to venture, with various degree of success, down this path. Nowadays, many journals publish online using a variety of models (McVeigh, 2004), with many educational institutional libraries now limiting the number of serials physically stocked on the shelves and instead using online access for subscribed journals.

There are two broad models for online journals; a commercial model (a fee charged to publish and view the articles) and an open access model (free to view) (Willinsky, 2003). The commercial model was prevalent in the past, and still well-established today (Willinsky, 2006), with the pay-per-view mode most common. However, under this model, access for academically based researchers and their students usually is arranged contractually (by bundling multiple journals as a package) between tertiary education institutions' libraries and the publishing houses. Open access is loosely described as 'free *access* to refereed literature', with the driving factor being not economics but rather that of readily sharing knowledge within a community (Anderson, 2004). There are two general sub-models of open access journals; one charging a fee for authors to publish, the other neither charging a fee to the authors to publish their works nor to the readers to access the articles. However, full free open access journals may be free for the readers and the authors, it is not for the publisher. These open access journals are under continual pressure to maintain low production costs by, for example, having only electronic production and no payment for the editors, and there is a continual need for 'charitable inputs' (Willinsky, 2003). Many fully free, open access journals, therefore, are supported by professional associations or hosting institutions to help cover costs (Bjork, 2004).

In the case of APJCE, neither the readers nor the authors pay a fee to access or publish in the journal (i.e., a fully open access, online journal), with APJCE adhering to a strong philosophy of making knowledge readily and freely available to its community and general populace. The fairly modest costs of preparing and producing (e.g., copy editor, website maintenance and hosting, domain name licensing) are covered by New Zealand Association for Cooperative Education (NZACE) and the University of Waikato.

Journals that have moved to open access often claim increased visibility of the published works as the main advantage (Antelman, 2004; Giglia, 2010). By 2001, comparative work already showed that conference proceedings for computer sciences, for whom conference proceedings are considered important, published online was 4.5 times more effective in garnering citations than comparative conference proceedings produced only in print form (Lawrence, 2001). Further work showed that not only are online articles more frequently cited, they also tend to be cited earlier than print-only articles (Giglia, 2010; Harnad et al., 2004; Lawrence, 2001; McVeigh, 2004). Furthermore, Harnad and Brody (2004) and Antelman (2004) suggest that the 'research impact' tends to be greater for articles available

via free open access journals compared to those limited to print or pay-per-view online access, and this trend may still be developing (Giglia, 2010; Swan & Brown, 2004).

The increase of online journals has also modified researchers' behavior (Swan & Brown, 2004). Despite researchers preferring to read from print versions of journals (King, Tenopir, Choemprayong, & Wu, 2009), authors tend to use online publications more readily than hard copy publications (Bjork, 2004; Spencer & Millson-Martual, 2006; Wilson & Tenopir, 2008). However, some sectors, such as medicine, still preferentially cite print-only literature (de Groote, 2008). Research also has shown that, increasingly, researchers read online articles from a wider scope of journals (Tenopir & King, 2001), relying more on search engines to find these (Rowlands et al., 2008); however, they tend to read less in-depth (Liu, 2005), and only print these online articles for further reading if deemed interesting (King, et al., 2009; Tenopir, Hitchcock, & Pillow, 2003). With educational institution libraries increasingly sourcing only online access to journals, findings from King, Tenopir, Wilson, and colleagues, seem to be mapping a long term trend towards all journals becoming online access journals.

## COOPERATIVE AND WORK-INTEGRATED EDUCATION LITERATURE

### *Maturing of the co-op/WIL literature*

Bartkus and Stull (1997) analyzed the co-op/WIL literature in 1997 and described it as sketchy, limited, and uncertain, with a predominate focus on best practice, essentially echoing views held by Wilson (1988) 10 years earlier. However, when analyzing the co-op literature for the second edition of the *International Handbook for Cooperative and Work-integrated Education* in 2011, Bartkus and Higgs described the literature as stronger than when assessed for the first edition in 2004 (Bartkus & Higgs, 2011; Bartkus & Stull, 2004), with a greater focus on theoretical framework development. This strengthening of the literature reflects greater focused research activity over that period of time by researchers, which has subsequently also been reflected by the growth APJCE has experienced. Of significance, an overview of the international co-op/WIL international community shows it has grown to a stage that two central journals can be sustained, the APJCE and the *Journal of Cooperative Education and Internships* (JCEI), which is an indication of the maturation of co-op/WIL over the last 15 years (Zegwaard & Coll, 2011a).

A further indication of the maturation of co-op/WIL literature is the increasingly co-op/WIL-orientated literature being published in discipline specific educational journals other than APJCE and JCEI. For example; Coll and Zegwaard (2006) in *Research in Science and Technological Education*, Eames and Bell (2005) in *Canadian Journal of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education*, Schafer and Castellano (2005) in *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, Tully, Kropf and Price (1993) in *Journal of Social Work Education*, and Zegwaard and Coll (2011b) in *Science Education International*. In fact, Bartkus (2007) and Coll and Kalnins (2009) list more than 100 other journal articles containing co-op focused literature but published in 'non-co-op' journals. The strength of the current of the co-op/WIL literature within and beyond the two central journals indicates that co-op/WIL has matured and co-op practitioners should move away from the historically defensive position it has taken (Coll & Zegwaard, 2011b; Zegwaard & Coll, 2011a). Some of the challenges largely avoided in the literature 15 years ago are now subject to much development, for example, theoretical framework development (Eames & Cates, 2011), curricular development and pedagogy (Johnston, 2011), integration (Coll & Zegwaard, 2011a), and assessment (Hodges, 2011; and much recent literature in APJCE).

*APJCE growth and development*

APJCE initially accepted five forms of manuscripts: research, topical issues/discussion papers, best practice, book reviews, and correspondence. There have been no correspondence publications since 2003 and as the journal has grown, it is not something the journal now seeks. The prevalent form of manuscript submitted is topical issues/discussion papers, with a select few research-based papers. Of late, there have been several book reviews published; however, these are likely to remain limited to two or three a year. Initially, best practice papers were sought as this tends to be where beginning researchers start; however, such papers are now discouraged unless describing a unique or particularly unusual setting. Often, best practice papers are modified to discussion-type papers by restructuring to avoid focusing on the context (e.g., placement program) and instead focusing on a particular unique aspect or the issue being investigated and discussed.

At the beginning of 2010, the growth in publication rate was at a volume that APJCE required a copy editor to undertake the tasks of preparing the manuscripts for publication and interaction with authors at the final stages of publishing to clarifying details. The website, at this stage having become dated after 10 years use, was significantly updated and restructured to allow for better functionality and accessibility of what has become a significant collection of articles. As of mid-2012, there are more than 135 articles available. The editorial board has also grown over the years and now consists of 31 members from a variety of countries. The editorial board structure is a flat structure (editor-in-chief, editorial board) which is reflective of a fairly efficient editorial board and the volume of manuscripts submitted to APJCE. Some journals, particularly journals with a high volume of manuscript submission, have a multi-tiered editorial board structure (editor(s)-in-chief, assistant editors, editorial board, and reviewers). For example the *International Journal in Science Education* has an editorial staff of more than a 100 people, reflective of the vast volume of manuscripts reviewed by its editorial staff and reviewers. Journal rankings are affected by the makeup of the editorial board, with emphasis on senior researchers. Thus, APJCE has, in the last two years, expanded its editorial board to reflect the increase in submission rate and shifted towards predominantly PhD holders for reviewers. As of February, 2012, 19 members of the editorial board are PhD holders and eight hold positions of either Associate Professor or full Professor.

Journals are often ranked by a variety of associations, organizations, and governmental departments. In 2010, APJCE was ranked by the Australian Research Council (ARC) as a B journal, which places the journal in the top 20 percent and particularly favorable in relative to comparable journals. The journal rankings by ARC were somewhat controversial and lead to some undesired outcomes, therefore, ARC no longer uses rankings, instead making available a list of eligible journals on which APJCE is included. Large international databases of eligible academic and scholarly journals such as Scopus, by Elsevier, and ERIC (Education Resources Information Center) are currently reviewing the eligibility of APJCE for inclusion. Inclusion in these sorts of databases will grant APJCE a higher profile and is likely to increase the number of citations its articles receives. Also, these databases are often consulted by reviewing panels for indications of the significance of the journals the researchers have published in. Recently APJCE was added to the Cabell's Directories, administrated by Cabell Publishing Inc.

The journal has enjoyed a productively close relationship with the Australian Collaborative Education Network (ACEN). With the recent growth of WIL in Australia, it is not surprising

that the largest cohort of authors recently published in APJCE are Australian-based. APJCE collated a special edition based around the theme of the 2010 ACEN conference and producing this special edition within two months of the conference.

## REVIEWING PROCESS

APJCE follows the editorial guidelines laid out by the International Committee of Publication Ethics (COPE). The journal undertakes a double blind peer review process, with all manuscripts reviewed by at least two members of the editorial board. Members of the editorial board are listed on the APJCE website, thus authors know who is on the editorial board. However, authors will not know who reviewed the paper nor will reviewers know who the author(s) are. Before the submitted manuscript is sent to members of the editorial board, the Editor-in-Chief conducts a review of the manuscript, usually to determine the relevance of content to the APJCE audience.

Manuscripts sent out for review are typically returned to the author with comments within two months. Usual review outcomes require some amendments to be made to the manuscript, either minor or major, and typically attempt to seek further information or more critical in-depth discussion around the issue. An outcome of 'accepted with no modification' is highly unusual for any journal. An outright rejection of a manuscript after undergoing the reviewing process is also unusual, rather, in cases where manuscripts are required to undergo very substantive revision (e.g., 'major revision with resubmission'), authors are given the opportunity, with some support from APJCE, to revise the paper and resubmit.

For manuscripts that require some amendments, typically these are returned to the editor-in-chief within a month, depending on the scale of amendments required. When the amended manuscript has been returned, an analysis is undertaken to determine if the editorial board's comments have been reasonably addressed or responded to, and if so, the manuscript is passed on to the copy editor for preparation for publication. At times, the reviewer(s) will be asked to judge whether the amendment requested by them has been addressed sufficiently, then passing this advisement to the editor-in-chief, before the manuscript is either returned to the author for further amendment or sent to the copy editor. Publication of articles occurs as articles become available after preparation. With APJCE being a fully online journal, articles can be published as a rolling publication rather than when a full issue is available.

## JOURNAL STATISTICS

APJCE maintains a database of all submitted manuscripts for tracking and statistical purposes, and along with data from Google Scholar (which provides citation statistics) and Google Analytics (which provides APJCE website visits, download statistics, users' country of origin), a valuable insight into the journal performance can be obtained.

### *Submission, rejection, and publication rates*

From somewhat modest beginnings, the number of publications per year grew in two stages, from 2000 to 2002, and particularly from 2006 to present (Figure 1a), with an increasingly wider international source of authors. The lull in 2005 reflects a decrease in the number of submissions in the previous year (Figure 1b).

The increased publication rate in 2009 was mostly in response to the special edition based on the theme of the WACE Manly, Australia, conference, whilst the increased submission rate in

the 2010, was in response to the special edition based on the theme of the 2010 ACEN conference and probably the 2010 release of the ARC rankings.

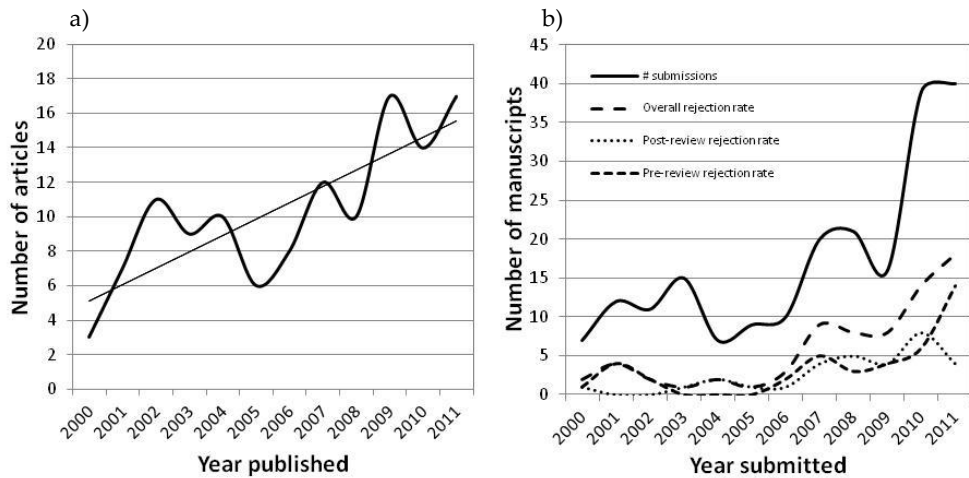


FIGURE 1. Where a) is the number of publications per year; and b) is the number of submissions, the corresponding overall number rejected, and number rejected post-review, where 'rejected' means manuscripts with review outcome of 'rejected' and 'major revision with resubmission' which subsequently are not resubmitted.

Journals often indicate the manuscript rejection rate and at times are used as one of several measures of quality of the journal. Even though not all journals openly communicate their rejection rates, and appear to measure 'rejection' differently, rates of 40-50 percent appear common, with journals claiming to have a high impact factor reporting rejection rates well over 70 percent (Aarssen et al., 2008). APJCE uses a constructive approach to reviewing, with the aim of having as many manuscripts published as possible, with the proviso that these are ultimately publishable manuscripts, thus does not see a high rejection rate as a measure of quality.

An outright rejection of the manuscript after review is unusual. However, some manuscripts require 'major revision with resubmission' (essentially a 'fatal review'). Some authors, with support, do carry out this major revision and resubmit, ultimately producing a publishable manuscript. For the purposes of reporting APJCE overall rejection rate in this article, the rejection rate is the sum of the number of manuscripts that are 1) rejected prior to review; 2) rejected after review; 3) and a review outcome of 'major revision with resubmission' which subsequently are not resubmitted. The overall rejection rate of APJCE is ~30 percent, tending towards slightly increasing over time, largely in response to a growing number of manuscripts rejected before editorial board review, nearly always on grounds of relevance (Figure 1b). There has been an increasing number of submissions of manuscripts with content focused on similar sounding but vastly different subject areas, such as cooperative learning, cooperative food groups, cooperative banking, causing the increase in manuscripts rejected before editorial board review.

*APJCE authors and website usage*

The initial intention of APJCE was to focus on the Asia-Pacific region. There were already established bodies of researchers in New Zealand and Australia, consequently reflective of the current make up of the editorial board, there was little published research activity in Asia. There are articles published in APJCE authored by researchers from Asia (e.g., Japan, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand). However, when analyzing the country of origin for all APJCE authors (Figure 2a), the number of authors from Asia is comparatively limited. Instead, a greater number of authors based beyond the Asia-Pacific region have published in APJCE, particularly from Africa (mostly South Africa) and Europe (mostly the UK and Germany). The bulk of APJCE authors are based in New Zealand and, particularly since 2009, Australia, which is reflective of the recent growth of WIL in Australia.

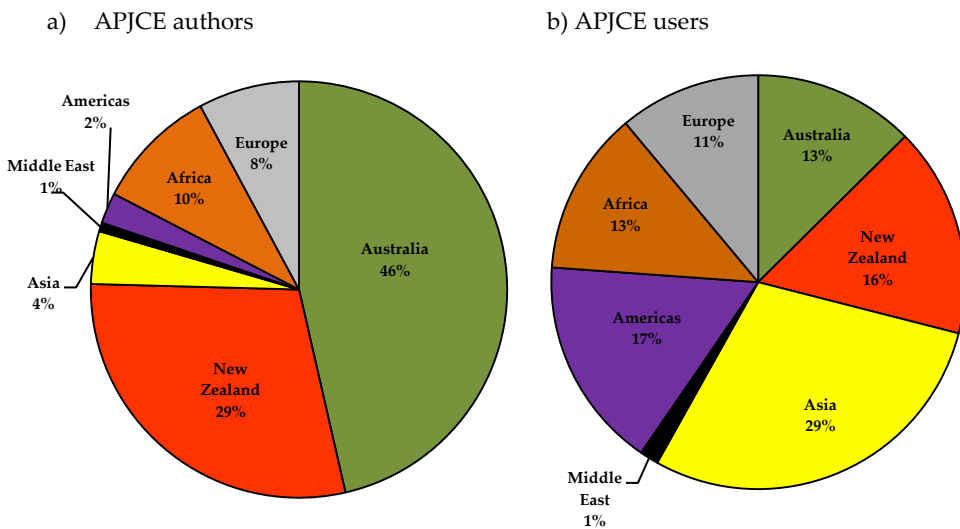


FIGURE 2. Where a) is the country of origin of all APJCE *authors*, where  $n = 296$  and is the sum of the number authors listed on each article, inclusive from Volume One to Volume 13, Issue Two; and b) is the country of origin of all APJCE website *users* from 10 July 2011 till 19 March, 2012, where  $n = 6,538$ .

For the period between July, 2011 (when the new APJCE website became accessible and Google Analytics data could be collected), and March, 2012, the APJCE website had 6,538 individual visits, creating 11,798 downloads<sup>3</sup>. The users that most often accessed the APJCE website were from the regions of Asia and the Pacific (the latter consisting almost entirely of New Zealand and Australia), reflecting APJCE's original Asia-Pacific focus, and just over a third of users were from outside the Asia-Pacific region (Figure 2b). Interestingly, despite the limited number of APJCE authors from Asia (Figure 2a), the number of website users from Asia is proportionally vastly higher. This may indicate, despite the anticipated increase in articles from Asia not materializing, that APJCE is instead fulfilling a significant need for (free) literature resources in this region, and suggests perhaps co-op/WIL in this region may

<sup>3</sup> Data covering the period of 10 July 2011 (date of new website initiation) to 19 March, 2012

still be at developmental stages with few research active groups supporting co-op/WIL programs in Asia. Similarly, the low number of authors from the Americas (North, Central, and South America) contrasts considerably to the amount of website usage from this region (mostly from the US and Canada). Unlike in Asia, co-op/WIL has had a long and well-established history in North America, and the contrast between the two data sets may be caused by either researchers publishing in other journals (e.g., JCEI) or co-op/WIL being at a stage of maturity in this region where a limited amount of research activity tends to occur. Whatever the reason for this difference, this region appears to have an appreciable desire for co-op/WIL literature.

When the data were analyzed by country, six countries dominate the APJCE website usage figures: New Zealand (16%), Australia (13%), the US (9%), the UK (6%), Canada (5%), and the Philippines (4%) – website usage from other Asian countries were evenly spread across a large number of countries. The top five of these countries are traditionally recognized as leading stakeholders in co-op/WIL research. Of particular note, the three of these countries are outside the Asia-Pacific region, indicating that APJCE has increasingly morphed into an international journal. User behavior, however, does tend to shift somewhat over time; for example, in December, 2011, there was a significant increase in users from India and Indonesia, the latter exceeding the number of users from the US for that same month.

Analyses on how individual users arrived at the APJCE website shows that 38 percent did so directly (e.g., using favorites or by directly entering web URL). Another 47 percent of users arrived via a search engine, with most commonly used search-words, in descending order, being the journal title (expressed in a variety of combinations), APJCE, graduate competencies, achievement and work placements, Karsten APJCE, and then sentence compounds mostly using ‘cooperative education’ and ‘work-integrated learning’ with modifiers such as, ‘importance’ ‘reflection’, ‘impact’, ‘assessment’, ‘benefits,’ and ‘employers views’. The remaining 15 percent arriving at the APJCE website were ‘referral traffic’ (e.g., via an internet link). As of March, 2012, the homepage (which contains all the APJCE articles) was the most common landing-page (91% of users first arriving here, the remainder on sub-pages such as ‘instructions for authors’).

#### *Citations of APJCE articles*

One measure of acceptance of any journal is the number of citations its articles receive, in particular, citations in other journals. Citations often tend to be within articles published in the same journal or self-citations in other journals. Increasingly, APJCE articles are observed being cited (which are not self-citations) in other journals (e.g., in *Research in Science and Technology*; *Science Education International*; *African Journal of Business Management*; *The Qualitative Report*; *Asia Pacific Education Review*; *The Journal of International Agricultural Education, Industry and Higher Education*; and *Journal of Planning Education and Research*).

The total number of citations of APJCE articles, according to Google Scholar, are also increasing, with the work by Rainsbury, Burchell, Hodges, and Lay (2002) being the most commonly cited APJCE article (Table 1). The method for counting citations employed by Google Scholar tends to overlook citations in books unless these are explicitly made available online, and favors older publications as these have had more time to be cited; however, some post-2005 APJCE articles are included on the list of top 10 APJCE citations. Despite the limitations, these data provide useful insights into the performance of the journal and its articles.



TABLE 1. Top 10 cited APJCE articles<sup>1</sup>, in descending order, according to Google Scholar™.

Authors	Subject
Rainsbury, Burchell, Hodges, Lay (2002)	Researching perceived important graduate competencies from students' and graduates' perspectives
Hodges, Burchell (2003)	Researching perceived important graduate competencies from employers' perspectives
Abeysekera (2006)	Curriculum design implications when incorporating WIL
Coll, Chapman (2000)	Research approaches and methodologies for co-op
Coll, Eames (2000)	Alternative models for the role of placement coordinators
Coll, Taylor, Grainger (2002)	Exploring current assessment practices of work-based learning for teachers
Martin, Leberman (2005)	Exploring learning perceptions by students and supervisors after practicum experience
Fleming, Eames (2005)	Work placement program structure impact on student learning
Zegwaard, Coll, Hodges (2003)	Competencies-based framework for assessing workplace learning
Walo (2002)	Assessing how student competencies are enhanced by WIL

<sup>1</sup>as at February, 2012.

The number of APJCE citations in prominent scholarly book publications within the field of co-op/WIL can also serve as a benchmark measure of the journal profile and acceptance. Using the recent *International Handbook for Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education* (Coll & Zegwaard, 2011c) as a benchmark case study, the profiles of relevant journals can be gauged and comparisons can be made to other journals active within or at the periphery of co-op/WIL. The *Handbook* has a total of 1,516 reference list entries (the sum of entries in each chapter's reference list), of which 82 cite from APJCE and 202 cite from JCEI (56 of these are post-2000, the founding year of APJCE), and a further 25 from other vocational orientated journals (Table 2). The most commonly cited journal article in the *Handbook* was an article from APJCE, by Zegwaard, Coll and Hodges (2003), and the most commonly cited book was the recent Australian publication entitled '*Work-integrated learning: Guide to effective practice*' by Cooper, Orrell, and Bowden (2010). The *Handbook* also notably made numerous citations to the various works of Dewey, Schon, Lave, Boud, Wilson, van Gyn, Billett, and Coll. Considering APJCE was founded in 2000, the profile and dominance in regards to number of citations in the *Handbook*, is not only notable but also a clear indication that APJCE has become well-established within the co-op/WIL community and accepted as a valuable and legitimate scholarly resource.

TABLE 2. Analysis of citations in the *International Handbook for Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education* (Coll & Zegwaard, 2011c).

Number of citations <sup>1</sup>	Mean of year cited <sup>2</sup>	Publication source/type
202	1995 <sup>3</sup>	<i>Journal of Cooperative Education and Internships</i>
82	2005	<i>Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education</i>
25	2005	Vocational journals, such as <i>Journal of Workplace Learning</i> , <i>Journal of Vocational Education and Training</i> , <i>Journal of Education and Work</i> , <i>Vocations and Learning</i>
121	2002	General educational journals, such as <i>Higher Education Review and Development</i> , <i>Research in Higher Education</i>
94	2003	Discipline specific educational journals, such as of <i>Criminal Justice Education</i> , <i>Journal of Engineering Education</i>
156	2001	Discipline specific journal, such as <i>British Medical Journal</i> , <i>Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Research</i>
836	2000	Selection of books, theses, reports, proceedings, or presentations

<sup>1</sup> the sum of entries in each chapter's reference list ( $n=1,516$ ), not the number of within-text citations.

<sup>2</sup> the average year of date of publication of article cited.

<sup>3</sup> the *Handbook* included historical aspects of co-op, of which JCEI is the only directly relevant journal source with historical publications of that era – this may have lowered the mean year of articles cited.

## CONCLUSION AND THE FUTURE

Since the founding of APJCE in 1999, both the submission and publication rates have steadily increased. The journal now holds a substantive collection of scholarly literature that underpins current thinking in the co-op/WIL community. As the wider co-op/WIL literature has generally matured, APJCE has carved out a significant well-established presence within the wider literature. For example, compare the numerous citations of APJCE articles in the 2011 *International Handbook for Cooperative and Work-Integrated Education* and outside the two central co-op/WIL journals, including journals beyond the periphery of co-op/WIL, such as subject-specific and general educational journals.

The open access, online model that APJCE has adopted has been a particular strength for the journal, as it has allowed for free accessible literature to the wider community. This may well be the underpinning reason for the high volume of website usage from Asian countries and perhaps also that from the US. The bulk of APJCE authors are based in New Zealand and, increasingly, in Australia, with a significant presence from Europe and Africa. However, APJCE users are internationally more evenly distributed than its author base, indicating that APJCE is filling a need for co-op/WIL literature well beyond the Asia-Pacific region and suggesting that the journal has morphed beyond its regional focus into an international journal.

As the submission rate has increased, the journal's rejection rate has proportionally increased to 30 percent, largely because a higher number of manuscripts are submitted with content

not relevant to the APJCE audience. With the restructuring of the website, APJCE is well situated to absorb further growth. The editorial board will need to be continually expanded, and perhaps require associate editors, as submission rates grow. With the inclusion of APJCE in databases of scholarly journals, such as Scopus, the journal's profile will be raised higher and may drive this growth further. Reflecting on the past growth and the potential future growth, which will no doubt bring its own challenges, it is encouraging to both the editors of APJCE and the authors who have published in APJCE that the journal has carved out a successful and well-established presence in the co-op/WIL community.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to acknowledge the editorial board who generously give their time and expertise to reviewing manuscripts; Jennifer Buckle, APJCE Copy Editor, for her work and gracious interactions with the authors; NZACE for the financial support; the University of Waikato for allowing use of available resources; and Richard Coll for his readily available advice for the journal.

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## About the Journal

The Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education publishes peer-reviewed original research, topical issues, and best practice articles from throughout the world dealing with Cooperative Education (Co-op) and Work Integrated Learning/Education (WIL).

In this Journal, Co-op/WIL is defined as an educational approach that uses relevant work-based projects that form an integrated and assessed part of an academic program of study (e.g., work placements, internships, practicum). These programs should have clear linkages with, or add to, the knowledge and skill base of the academic program. These programs can be described by a variety of names, such as work-based learning, workplace learning, professional training, industry-based learning, engaged industry learning, career and technical education, internships, experiential education, experiential learning, vocational education and training, fieldwork education, and service learning.

The Journal's main aim is to allow specialists working in these areas to disseminate their findings and share their knowledge for the benefit of institutions, co-op/WIL practitioners, and researchers. The Journal desires to encourage quality research and explorative critical discussion that will lead to the advancement of effective practices, development of further understanding of co-op/WIL, and promote further research.

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Before submitting a manuscript, please ensure that the 'instructions for authors' has been followed ([www.apjce.org/instructions-for-authors](http://www.apjce.org/instructions-for-authors)). All manuscripts are to be submitted for blind review directly to the Editor-in-Chief ([editor@apjce.org](mailto:editor@apjce.org)) by way of email attachment. All submissions of manuscripts must be in MS Word format, with manuscript word counts between 3,000 and 5,000 words (excluding references).

All manuscripts, if deemed relevant to the Journal's audience, will be double blind reviewed by two reviewers or more. Manuscripts submitted to the Journal with authors names included will have the authors' names removed by the Editor-in-Chief before being reviewed to ensure anonymity.

Typically, authors receive the reviewers' comments about a month after the submission of the manuscript. The Journal uses a constructive process for review and preparation of the manuscript, and encourages its reviewers to give supportive and extensive feedback on the requirements for improving the manuscript as well as guidance on how to make the amendments.

If the manuscript is deemed acceptable for publication, and reviewers' comments have been satisfactorily addressed, the manuscript is prepared for publication by the Copy Editor. The Copy Editor may correspond with the authors to check details, if required. Final publication is by discretion of the Editor-in-Chief. Final published form of the manuscript is via the Journal webpage ([www.apjce.org](http://www.apjce.org)), authors will be notified and sent a PDF copy of the final manuscript. There is no charge for publishing in APJCE and the Journal allows free open access for its readers.

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Types of manuscripts the Journal accepts are primarily of two forms; *research reports* describing research into aspects of Cooperative Education and Work Integrated Learning/Education, and *topical discussion* articles that review relevant literature and give critical explorative discussion around a topical issue.

The Journal does also accept *best practice* papers but only if it present a unique or innovative practice of a Co-op/WIL program that is likely to be of interest to the broader Co-op/WIL community. The Journal also accepts a limited number of *Book Reviews* of relevant and recently published books.

*Research reports* should contain; an introduction that describes relevant literature and sets the context of the inquiry, a description and justification for the methodology employed, a description of the research findings-tabulated as appropriate, a discussion of the importance of the findings including their significance for practitioners, and a conclusion preferably incorporating suggestions for further research.

*Topical discussion* articles should contain a clear statement of the topic or issue under discussion, reference to relevant literature, critical discussion of the importance of the issues, and implications for other researchers and practitioners.



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