

Editor's Commentary

Spring 2025

What Has the AURCO Journal Been Publishing?

I broke a “rule.” When I started as editor of the AURCO Journal 13 years ago I stopped submitting manuscripts because it was a conflict of interest. While I know the current system could *mostly* manage a submission from the editor, the decision to refrain from publishing is still correct.

Then a moment of ethical ineptitude struck. I published a paper in last year’s edition for the 30th anniversary. Thankfully, it was reviewed and accepted. No one called the journal police. The rationalization for the questionable act was centered on the type of article it was. The rational, as it went, was a wonderful way of marking 30 years of publication. Plus, it was super important!

The paper was a sort of meta-analysis of the AURCO Journal’s publication history. It seemed I was in a good position to examine three decades of publications and match them with the journal’s stated mission. The paper titled, “A 30 Year Review of the AURCO Journal” looked at publishing patterns over the lifetime of the journal. Specifically, it examined the guiding criteria for publication. Those suggested guidelines are as follows:

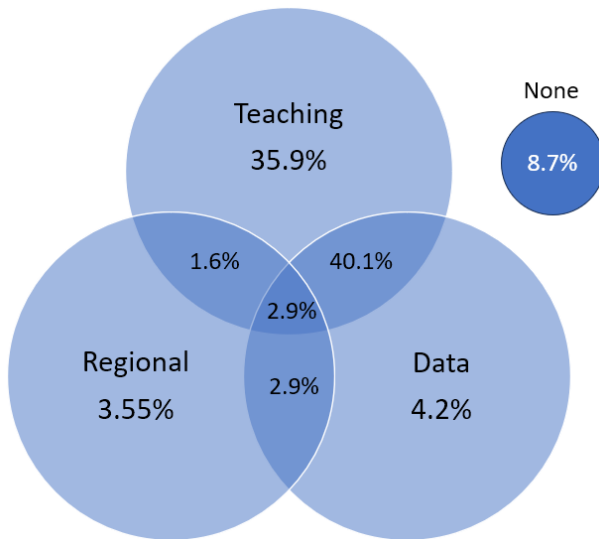
- Teaching or pedagogical emphasis
- A regional campus focus
- Original data

The question was: has the AURCO Journal been published according to these goals? The *general* results showed that published papers were heavily focused on one of the three desired aims of the journal. Papers with a single focus along one of these criteria went like this:

- Teaching or pedagogical emphasis – 44%
- A regional campus focus – 45%
- Original data – 3%

In total, 91% (the percentages above are rounded up) of all articles published in the ARUCO Journal over 25 years (I did not have access to the first 5 years of journals) met at least one of these criteria. That is impressive. It should be emphasized these percentages belong to articles with *only* a single criterion. In other words, a single criterion without the other two being present in the article is what you see above.

If you look at the intersection of articles, in other words, how these criteria overlap, the picture becomes more accurate. The Venn diagram below shows the percentages of articles published in terms of all the criteria. In other words, some papers met a single aim while others had two or three.



There is a lot more to say than, “91% of our articles are on task!” I will tell that to anyone who will listen but other trends stand provide a fuller picture of our publishing history. The fact that only 10.95% of articles focus on regional campus issues surprised me. Please see the article for nuances and more information.

There are other trends to consider but maybe one of you can examine those things. If not, I may need to break the rules again. Maybe I’ll do that for the 60th anniversary.

Thank you,
~Steven Toepfer, *AURCO Journal Editor*