

### **“Why have an Electronic Journal?”**

*“Printed journals require major funding for mass distribution. These costs limit the length of articles, the content of a journal and its area of distribution. The distribution of a printed journal is therefore restricted and certainly excludes interested parties in the global community unaware of the publication or unable to obtain it in a timely fashion. As global communication spreads and the need increases to disseminate greater amounts of information to more people, funding constraints (not to mention the limitation imposed by our shrinking forests) will determine how much and to whom printed material will be delivered. There is a clear need for an economical journal that is widely distributed, easily accessible, and which delivers information to interested readers and contributors.”*

***The Online Journal of Cardiology***

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## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Alabama Federation Council for Exceptional Children (AFCEC) on-line publication is to help improve the educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities. Accordingly, through its widely distributed, rapidly disseminated, and easily accessible electronic publication outlet, AFCEC joins the Council for Exceptional Children as an “*active force*” for helping to assure that “*there is a highly qualified cadre of professionals with the knowledge, skills, resources, and conditions necessary to practice effectively.*” (<http://www.cec.sped.org/>). It is toward this end that AFCEC’s electronic publication unit is directed. Further, access to its materials contained within are unlimited except for the user fee paid for Internet connection.

In addition to printed newsletters, AFCEC’s information dissemination strategy includes on-line publications of three types: (a) research abstracts, (b) a journal, and (c) ‘other’ select publications approved by AFCEC’s Editorial Board. In keeping with CEC’s audience for publications and products, the targeted readers for these electronic publications are anyone involved in the development and education of children, youth, and young adults with exceptionalities, such as (a) teachers, (b) administrators (program/agency), (c) students, (d) parents, (e) related support service providers, and (f) professional members of higher education.

The AFCEC on-line publication outlet welcomes both practical and research prepared manuscripts. Regardless of type, the content focus is exceptional infants, toddlers, children, youth and young adults, and/or their significant others (e.g., parents). Exceptionality may be addressed from one or more vantage points:

• problems and/or issues	• policies and/or legislation
• methods and/or strategies	• education and/or training
• practices and/or programs	• personnel (special education and/or support)

Within this framework, practical articles should be written primarily for teacher application in the educational setting. Research articles, on the other hand, are to represent data-based studies and scholarly manuscripts (e.g., topical literature review and analyses papers, and policy analyses and formulation papers).

## TYPES of ON-LINE PUBLICATIONS

➤ **ABSTRACTS.** An abstract is a brief summary of the manuscript's content (e.g., article) to which it refers. For AFCEC's on-line publications, abstracts pertaining to already officially printed manuscripts and documents are highly encouraged if (a) the research is conducted in Alabama, and/or (b) the author is a resident of Alabama. Of course, the on-going compilation of this material provides a window to the research being conducted in Alabama, as well as profiles the state's literature contributors to the areas of exceptionality and special education. An AFCEC editorial review is not necessary, since these abstracts already have been edited through and approved by a professional body of reviewers (e.g., dissertation committee).

**Published abstract.** An example of an abstract for a published manuscript is an article printed in a nationally refereed journal (e.g., *Exceptional Children, Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*). In order for the article's abstract to be included in AFCEC's on-line publication, Alabama would need to be the setting in which the study was conducted, and/or the state in which the author(s) had residence. Having met one (or both) of these criteria, the article's abstract would be made electronically available through AFCEC's website, and appear in the same narrative that it was printed in its original published form (see example below).

Dunn, C., & Schumaker, L. (1997). A follow-up study of former special education students from a rural and urban county school system. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 20(1), Spring 1997, 43-54.

This study examined the employment status of young adults with mental retardation, behavior disorders, or learning disabilities who had exited an [Alabama] rural (n = 25) or urban (n = 43) county school system within the past year. Additionally, the relationship between employment and demographic and secondary school variables were evaluated. The employment rate for students from the rural school system was 72%, while the employment rate for students from the urban school system was 81.4%. Subjects in rural settings were employed primarily in trade and industry (43.5%), whereas the subjects in the urban area were employed almost equally in service occupations (23.3%), and trade and industry (27.9%). The results of Chi-square analyses were significant for employment status and gender, employment status and disability, and employment status and paid employment during school.

**Unpublished abstract.** An example of an abstract prepared for an unpublished manuscript is the abstract of a dissertation whose study was conducted in Alabama, and/or the author was a doctoral graduate from a university within the state. Having met one (or both) of these criteria, the dissertation's abstract would be made electronically available through AFCEC's website, and appear in the same narrative that it was printed in its original printed form (see example below).

Austin, P. E. (1999). *Post-school outcomes of Alabama students with disabilities*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Alabama.

The purpose of this study was to examine the Alabama Post-School Tracking System for Students with Disabilities in order to appraise the outcomes and address the effectiveness of transition services in the state. The study acquired information about the current transition services available to students with disabilities to determine the relationships between the types of transition services and supports offered, and the impact of

these services on the post-school outcomes of former students with disabilities. The subjects of this study consisted of three groups of individuals: (a) former students with disabilities, (b) special education coordinators, and (c) school-based job coaches. Information was collected through the use of three survey instruments in order to gather the needed data from each group. Post-school outcome information was collected on 378 former students who exited school during the 1996-97 school year. Information about the current status of transition services available in Alabama's public schools was gained from 89 special education coordinators and 23 school-based job coaches. The data were subjected to a variety of statistical tests to determine the relationships between the variables. Results of the data analyses found three relationships to be significant.

- **JOURNAL.** AFCEC's electronic journal is one of two types. The first type of journal is that of a **special journal issue** in which a Guest Editor is approved by the Publication Committee as being responsible for assembling the content. AFCEC strongly encourages special education professionals who reside in Alabama to consider this special education leadership role in serving AFCEC. The opportunity to be a Guest Editor and the guidelines for Special Issues are addressed elsewhere (see [protocol and procedure](#)).

The second journal type is that of a **regular journal issue** in which AFCEC's Publication Committee is responsible for assembling the content. Of course, the regular journal is to be comprised of articles that represent a diverse set of topics that are less thematically related than those appearing in Special Issues. AFCEC strongly encourages special education stakeholders to submit manuscripts for this on-line publication. Interested contributors can learn about the guidelines for submitting to the regular issues elsewhere (see [protocol and procedure](#)).

The Regular Journal's format represents the preference of AFCEC's standing Publication Committee, which in turn is approved by AFCEC's Executive Board. As such, the journal format may be subject to change in accordance with the changes of one or both AFCEC bodies. Format features may include (a) number of manuscripts per journal issue, (b) type of manuscript (practice and research), and (c) special sections in journals (e.g., brief reviews, resources).

Finally, regardless of whether the manuscript is prepared for the **Special Issue** or **Regular issue**, the article may include original program descriptions and evaluations, scholarly reviews, and research papers (quantitative and qualitative). As well, consideration may be given to previously published manuscripts if there is written permission by the author(s) and publishing source.

- **OTHER Possible AFCEC manuscripts.** Given the electronic publication's flexibility, quick dissemination, and inexpensive cost, other types of more lengthy manuscripts occasionally may be appropriate for dissemination. Such documents, for example, could include Monographs, Policy Manuals, Final Reports, and extensive literature reviews in special education. The publication of such electronic material would be at the approval of AFCEC's Publication Committee.