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## Evaluating a Modified DACUM Approach for Competency-Based Curriculum Development

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# Evaluating a Modified DACUM Approach for Competency-Based Curriculum Development

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## **Abstract**

This study explored a modified approach to DACUM (Developing a Curriculum), a systematic method for curriculum development grounded in the principles of competency-based education (CBE). As industries place increasing emphasis on workforce readiness, CBE ensures that students acquire and demonstrate mastery of specific skills relevant to their professional fields. In competency-driven sectors, such as the packaging industry, CBE-informed curricula enhance employability and productivity by aligning educational outcomes with industry demands.

Traditional DACUM methodologies involve 5-12 subject matter experts (SMEs) participating in intensive multi-day workshops to identify job competencies. In contrast, this study examines a streamlined DACUM approach applied to the corrugated packaging industry, employing a single SME to delineate the responsibilities of a Design/Customer Service Manager. The modified method utilized a series of shorter, focused sessions rather than a multi-day or full-day workshop. The study identified 62 task-based items categorized into seven distinct areas, which were subsequently validated through surveys conducted with additional industry experts.

The findings indicate that this adapted DACUM approach effectively generates meaningful insights into role-specific competencies, demonstrating its potential as a practical alternative to the traditional model.

Keywords: Curriculum development, Workforce Development, DACUM (Developing a Curriculum), Corrugated packaging industry, Occupational analysis, Packaging industry workforce

## Introduction

Workforce development in higher education is crucial for addressing the increasing demand in sectors such as manufacturing. Through a shift to competency-based education (CBE), higher education institutions equip students with theoretical knowledge and targeted skills that align closely with industry needs, bridging the skills gap and ensuring graduates are prepared to meet the evolving demands of the workforce (Gervais, 2016).

In fields where technical expertise and practical application are vital, such as the corrugated packaging industry, the DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) method provides an effective approach to identifying essential competencies. The DACUM process leverages input from subject matter experts (SMEs) to outline specific duties and tasks of key roles, fostering stakeholder engagement and reinforcing partnerships between industry and academia, which are essential for developing workforce-ready graduates (Norton & Moser, 2013). Although the DACUM methodology presents challenges related to assembling a workshop panel and the significant time commitment required by the panel.

This study investigated a modified DACUM method, focusing on the effectiveness of a DACUM approach with one subject matter expert (SME) and an altered data collection timeline. By examining this streamlined approach, this study aims to identify whether a modified DACUM can serve as a practical and effective tool for competency identification in industry-specific occupations, contributing to the alignment of educational and training programs with industry needs.

## Literature Review

Competency-based education ensures students demonstrate mastery of essential knowledge and skills, preparing a workforce capable of meeting evolving demands. Its origins date back to the 1940s when Ralph Tyler (1949) emphasized the importance of aligning curriculum with clear objectives. This approach focuses on acquiring field-specific competencies crucial for success and assessing learning outcomes effectively.

Faculty expertise is pivotal in the development of career-readiness curricula. While faculty often express a willingness to support career readiness initiatives, they may encounter challenges due to insufficient guidance or resources for designing and implementing CBE curriculum (Gatta et al., 2024). Furthermore, the development of connections between academic departments, faculty, and external stakeholders is essential for aligning curriculum

with workforce expectations. In a recent *Packaging World* article, Flanagan (2023) emphasized the role of higher education in developing a skilled workforce. Flanagan (2023) highlights the partnership between Purdue University Northwest and Morrison Container Handling Solutions, which collaborated to establish a mechatronics engineering program. The mechatronics engineering program was designed to develop students' knowledge in automation, blending theoretical learning with practical industry applications. To address these challenges and ensure alignment between curricula and workforce needs, it is essential to examine CBE curriculum development methods that effectively identify and integrate industry-specific competencies into academic programs.

The DACUM curriculum development method is a thorough approach used to analyze jobs/occupations, enabling researchers to quickly and thoroughly assess an occupation's requirements with input from industry experts, ensuring alignment with workforce needs and standards. With a structured and efficient approach, the DACUM method is attractive to higher education curriculum developers. The DACUM method's stakeholder-driven approach enhances the relevance of instructional content by capturing the most current practices from industry experts actively involved in the field. By connecting with industry, the DACUM method is grounded in real-world applications, aligning educational outcomes with evolving professional standards and practices. Beyond higher education, the DACUM method has been widely applied to identify gaps in workforce skills, address the implications of technological advancements, comply with regulatory requirements, and support ongoing professional development. It also plays a critical role in standardizing practices and clarifying role expectations (Norton & Moser, 2013).

The DACUM workshop follows a structured approach, facilitated by a trained facilitator, who guides SMEs through a multi-day workshop to identify the duties and tasks associated with an occupation (Norton & Moser, 2013). The process begins by forming a group of 5 to 12 SMEs, documenting their credentials, and orienting them to the objectives and goals of the data-gathering workshop. Over the course of 2-3 days, the SMEs analyze an occupation by constructing an organizational chart, and brainstorming tasks, which are subsequently categorized into broader duties. Following this, the SMEs outline the required competencies, essential knowledge and skills, tools, materials, equipment, and desirable behaviors, along with identifying future trends

and concerns (Norton & Moser, 2013). Figure 1 outlines the complete steps involved in the DACUM workshop.

**Figure 1**  
DACUM Workshop Steps



Note. Adapted from DACUM Handbook (4th ed.), by R. E. Norton and J. R. Moser, 2013, CETE College of Education and Human Ecology, The Ohio State University.

Upon completion of the DACUM workshop, which generates a DACUM chart detailing the duties and tasks, the chart is subsequently validated by another group of industry experts. Culminating in a comprehensive report that includes all relevant occupational information. Once finalized, the DACUM chart serves as a crucial tool for analyzing tasks, informing the development of training strategies, and guiding curriculum design and development (Norton & Moser, 2013).

While the DACUM method is a well-established and reliable approach for occupational analysis, challenges associated with assembling a workshop panel present significant limitation. The DACUM process draws on the insights of experienced high-performing employees, yet high-performing employees' availability is often

limited. Furthermore, the DACUM approach requires the physical presence of all SMEs in a single location, which poses substantial logistical challenges (Willett & Hermann, 1989). There have been attempts to ease the time commitment by developing online platforms to collect data, yet they have faced similar hurdles. Issues with availability, compounded by slow response rates, have hindered the digital adaptation of the DACUM method (Gayeski et al., 2007). The Ohio State University Center for Educational and Training Development with over 25 years of DACUM workshop facilitation worldwide, has introduced a One-Day Individual DACUM workshop that addresses SME availability challenges. Streamlining the process to a single day and involving only one SME, reduces the challenges of SME availability. This departure from the standard DACUM approach emphasizes the need for

a more integrated and collaborative dynamic between the SME and facilitator, ensuring the preservation of core objectives while enhancing efficiency (Moser, 2021). A similar recommendation was made in a study comparing various occupational analysis techniques, where the authors advocated for the combined use of DACUM and information search to enhance the comprehensiveness of competency identification. This integrated approach allows for a robust analysis by leveraging the strengths of each method, effectively capturing both routine and refractory competencies (Willett & Hermann, 1989). Furthermore, in a One-Day Individual DACUM, the facilitator adopts a more hands-on approach and must possess a thorough understanding of the occupation being analyzed. This knowledge can be acquired through prior experience or by conducting comprehensive information searches, as Willett and Hermann (1989) suggest.

Although the One-Day Individual DACUM approach addresses the challenge of involving multiple SMEs, it still demands a significant time commitment from the participating SME. Requiring 6-8 hours from an SME's busy schedule presents a substantial obstacle to the feasibility of conducting a DACUM study. When fostering partnerships between industry and education, numerous barriers can impact the success of these collaborations, one of which is the misalignment of time management. The differing timetables of academic institutions and industry organizations often create challenges in coordinating collaborative efforts effectively (Nsanzumuhire & Groot, 2020).

To date no research has been conducted to evaluate the validity of data collected through a modified DACUM approach. This gap highlights the need for empirical studies to assess the reliability and accuracy of competency identification within this streamlined approach.

## Methodology

The methodology for this research was grounded in the established DACUM framework for competency analysis (Norton & Moser, 2013) and the One-Day Individual DACUM method (Moser, 2021), with a modification to the timeline for data collection. This adapted process was designated by the researcher as the Iterative Individual DACUM (IID) method.

The DACUM workshop was facilitated by a trained DACUM practitioner with extensive expertise in the occupation under analysis. The process adhered to the procedural guidelines outlined in the DACUM Handbook (Norton & Moser, 2013) and the One-Day

Individual DACUM method (Moser, 2021). To address the inherent limitations of both the standard DACUM approach and the One-Day Individual DACUM method, the workshop was adapted to involve a single subject matter expert (SME) over a series of three 1.5-hour meetings. This approach was further supported by ongoing phone and email communications to ensure comprehensive input and refinement.

The participating SME is employed by a national corrugated packaging company with 16 locations across the United States, specializing in structural and graphic design, assembly and fulfillment, warehousing, project analysis, and project management within the corrugated industry (Buckeye Corrugated, Inc., 2023).

The IID workshop meetings involved the SME and the facilitator engaged in a brainstorming session, identified in the DACUM Handbook (Norton & Moser, 2013), to generate a comprehensive list of duties and tasks performed within the occupation. The tasks were then organized into logical categories, reviewed, and refined to ensure accuracy and relevance. The final output included a DACUM chart and competency profile that outlines the essential skills, knowledge, and behaviors required for the role.

Upon completion of the workshop, an internet-based survey was developed and distributed to a separate group of SMEs employed by the participating company to test the validity of the findings. Participants were asked to provide their job titles and evaluate the 62 task items based on their importance and the frequency with which they are performed. Fourteen participants, recognized as experts in customer service and/or packaging structure and design, were selected from the participating company.

The survey questions included:

1. Which of the following is your position title?
  - Customer Support & Design Manager
  - Designer
  - Design Manager
  - Customer Service
  - Customer Service Manager
2. Do you perform this task?
  - 0 - NO
  - 1 - YES
3. How important is the performance of this task in your position?
  - 0 - Not important
  - 1 - Slightly important
  - 2 - Somewhat important
  - 3 - Moderately important

- 4 - Important
  - 5 - Extremely Important
4. How frequently do you perform this task?
- 1 - About once a year
  - 2 - About once a month
  - 3 - About once a week
  - 4 - About once a day
  - 5 - Several times a day

## Results and Discussion

The completion of the DACUM workshop resulted in the identification of 62 task-based items by the SME, which were systematically organized into seven overarching duty categories. The comprehensive DACUM chart is presented in Figure 2.

The IID verification survey was distributed to 14 individuals involved in customer service and/or packaging structure and design roles within the participating company. The survey achieved a 100% response rate; however, two respondents were excluded due to their lack of expertise. Respondents were categorized based on their self-identified job titles and their performance of the identified duties. For example, respondents identifying as Managers were associated with supervisory and management

responsibilities such as, Duty A: "Supervise Divisional Staff." The identified duties included: Duty A: Supervise Divisional Staff, Duty B: Perform Project Management, Duty C: Perform Management Administrative Tasks, Duty D: Provide Customer Service, Duty E: Perform Packaging Design, Duty F: Perform Production Proofing, and Duty G: Participate in Professional Development. The workshop SME, with extensive knowledge of the company's roles and responsibilities, reviewed and validated the alignment of job titles with corresponding duties to ensure accurate categorization.

**Table 1**  
*Job Title and Duties Performed*

Title	N	Duties Performed
Designer	4	D,E,F,G
Customer Service	4	D,G
Design Manager	2	A,B,C,D,E,F,G
Customer Support & Design Manager	1	A,B,C,D,E,F,G
Customer Service Manager	1	A,B,C,D,G

Participants were asked if within their job function, they engaged in tasks within duties A - G. Furthermore, they were asked to rate the importance and frequency of the tasks they participated in. The results from the validation survey can be found in Tables 2 – 8.

**Figure 2**  
*DACUM Chart for Corrugated Packaging Creative and Client Services Manager*

**DACUM Chart for Corrugated Packaging Creative and Client Services Manager**

DUTIES	TASKS												
<b>DUTY A SUPERVISE DIVISIONAL STAFF</b>	A1 Assemble hiring components	A2 Conduct interview	A3 Complete divisional onboarding (e.g. general associate information)	A4 Perform divisional job training (e.g. Part, ArtiosCAD)	A5 Complete staff performance evaluations	A6 Develop performance improvement plan(s)	A7 Conduct staff reviews (e.g. by-yearly review)	A8 Approve staff timecard(s)	A9 Consult project workflow with staff (e.g. customer service, scheduling, shipping)				
<b>DUTY B PERFORM PROJECT MANAGEMENT</b>	B1 Evaluate first-time run project	B2 Develop first-time run project plan	B3 Monitor first-run project (e.g. completion time, accuracy)	B4 Assess structural design proof(s)	B5 Assess graphic design proof(s)	B6 Monitor data entry	B7 Oversee project inventory	B8 Conduct production meeting(s)					
<b>DUTY C PERFORM MANAGEMENT ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS</b>	C1 Support daily office functions (e.g. visiting welcome, tours)	C2 Develop operating budget	C3 Translate job specs for quoting	C4 Monitor PDRT system	C5 Procure tooling	C6 Prepare first-time run order overview	C7 Review open orders	C8 Review backlog workflow	C9 Manage inventory (e.g. packaging glue)	C10 Develop SDPs	C11 Coordinate purchase orders	C12 Monitor warehousing	
<b>DUTY D PROVIDE CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	D1 Correspond with customer (e.g. email, phone)	D2 Prepare daily booking report	D3 Consult customer needs (e.g. scheduling, shipping, production)	D4 Review structural/design proof(s) with client	D5 Process job specifications	D6 Develop delivery time	D7 Complete order entry	D8 Order client warehouse inventory					
<b>DUTY E PERFORM PACKAGING DESIGN</b>	E1 Identify structural design specs	E2 Develop structural design	E3 Perform structure proof(s)	E4 Develop graphic elements	E5 Develop design Rendering (e.g. 2D, 3D)	E6 Build client proof(s) (e.g. 3D Rendering, Hard proof(s), soft proof(s))	E7 Maintain software (e.g. installation, maintenance)	E8 Develop software building templates	E9 Maintain software database	E10 Participate in Sales/Marketing plans (e.g. joint calls, relationship development)	E11 Participate in marketing strategy	E12 Maintain cutting table	
<b>DUTY F PERFORM PRODUCTION PROOFING</b>	F1 Approve graphic elements proof(s)	F2 Approve structural proof(s)	F3 Review ink approval specs proof(s)	F4 Approve plate press proof(s)	F5 Approve printing plates (e.g. plate inspection)	F6 Approve cutting die strike proof(s)	F7 Approve cutting die						
<b>DUTY G PARTICIPATE IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>	G1 Attend networking events	G2 Pursue continuing educational opportunities	G3 Attend mandatory job trainings	G4 Participate in performance evaluation process	G5 Participate in corrugated award competitions								

**Table 2***Duty A Supervise Division Staff*

Task	Perform		Importance		Frequency	
	N	% Yes	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Assemble Hiring Components	4	75	5.0	0.0	1.25	0.5
Conduct interview process	4	100	5.0	0.0	2.6	.89
Complete divisional onboarding	4	75	3.6	2.07	1.25	0.5
Perform divisional job training	4	100	5.0	0.0	2.6	.89
Complete staff performance evaluations	4	100	5.0	0.0	1.8	.45
Develop performance improvement plan(s)	4	100	5.0	0.0	1.2	.45
Conduct staff reviews	4	100	5.0	0.0	1.6	.55
Approve staff timecard(s)	4	100	5.0	0.0	3.0	0
Consult project workflow with staff	4	100.	4.75	0.5	4.8	.44

**Table 3***Duty B Perform Project Management*

Task	Perform		Importance		Frequency	
	N	% Yes	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Evaluate first-time run projects	4	75	4.33	1.15	3.67	1.53
Develop first-time run project plan(s)	4	75	4.67	.58	4.0	1.0
Monitor first run project	4	75	4.67	.58	4.0	1.0
Assess structural design proof(s)	4	75	4.67	.58	4.0	1.0
Assess graphic design proof(s)	4	75	4.67	.58	4.0	1.0
Monitor data entry	4	100	4.0	1.0	4.75	0.5
Oversee project inventory	4	100	4.5	1.0	4.0	1.41
Conduct production meeting	4	100	4.75	.50	4.5	1.0

**Table 4***Duty C Perform Management Administrative Tasks*

Task	Perform		Importance		Frequency	
	N	% Yes	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Support daily office functions	4	100	4.75	0.50	2.75	0.96
Develop operating budget	4	100	4.75	0.50	1.0	0.0
Translate job specs for quoting	4	100	4.75	0.50	4.75	0.50
Monitor PORT system	4	100	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0
Procure tooling	4	75	5.0	0.0	3.67	1.53
Prepare first-time run order overview	4	100	4.75	0.50	4.25	0.50
Review open orders	4	75	5.0	0.0	4.67	0.58
Review backlog workflow	4	100	5.0	0.0	4.75	0.50
Manage inventory	4	50	5.0	0.0	2.50	0.71



**Table 4 Continued***Duty C Perform Management Administrative Tasks*

Task	Perform		Importance		Frequency	
	N	% Yes	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Develop Standard Operating Procedures	4	100	5.0	0.0	2.25	0.50
Coordinate purchase orders	4	100	4.75	0.50	4.0	0.82
Monitor warehousing	4	50	5.0	0.0	4.5	0.71

**Table 5***Duty D Provide Customer Service*

Task	Perform		Importance		Frequency	
	N	% Yes	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Correspond with customer	12	92	4.78	0.44	4.40	0.84
Prepare daily booking report	12	25	5.0	0.0	3.33	1.15
Consult customer needs	12	50	5.0	0.0	4.17	0.98
Review structural/design proof with the client	12	50	4.0	1.55	3.50	1.38
Process job specifications	12	33	5.0	0.0	4.67	0.58
Develop delivery time	12	33	5.0	0.0	4.50	1.0
Complete order entry	12	50	5.0	0.0	4.83	0.41
Order client warehouse inventory	12	50	5.0	0.0	4.20	0.84

**Table 6***Duty E: Perform Packaging Design*

Task	Perform		Importance		Frequency	
	N	% Yes	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Identify structural design specs	7	100	4.71	0.49	4.57	0.79
Develop structural design	7	86	4.83	0.41	4.67	0.82
Perform structure proofing	7	86	4.83	0.41	4.50	0.84
Develop graphic elements	7	86	4.00	1.55	3.50	1.38
Develop design rendering	7	86	3.57	1.72	3.33	1.37
Build client proof(s)	7	86	4.00	1.67	3.67	1.51
Maintain software	7	57	3.75	1.89	1.75	0.96
Develop structure building templates	7	71	3.60	2.07	2.40	1.52
Maintain software database	7	57	4.75	0.50	3.25	1.50
Participate in sales/marketing plans	7	71	4.00	1.0	2.60	0.55
Participate in marketing strategy	7	57	4.00	1.15	2.50	0.58
Maintain cutting table	7	57	4.25	0.96	2.75	1.26

**Table 7***Duty F: Perform Production Proofing*

Task	Perform		Importance		Frequency	
	N	% Yes	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Approve graphic elements proof(s)	7	57	4.75	0.50	4.25	0.96
Approve structural proof(s)	7	71	4.80	0.45	4.40	0.98
Review ink approval specs proof(s)	7	57	4.75	0.50	4.00	1.15
Approve plate proof(s)	7	57	4.80	0.45	3.40	1.34
Approve printing plates	7	57	4.75	0.50	3.00	1.15
Approve cutting die strike proof(s)	7	57	4.75	0.50	3.00	1.15
Approve cutting die	7	57	4.75	0.50	3.00	1.15

**Table 8***Duty G: Participate in Professional Development*

Task	Perform		Importance		Frequency	
	N	% Yes	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Attend networking events	12	42	4.40	0.89	1.60	0.89
Pursue continuing educational opportunities	12	42	4.60	0.55	1.60	0.89
Attend mandatory job training	12	83	4.44	1.01	1.80	0.42
Participate in the performance evaluation process	12	67	4.38	1.19	1.00	0.00
Participate in corrugated award competitions	12	8	5.0	0	1.00	0.00

The completion of the IID workshop resulted in a structured and detailed competency profile for the role of a Creative and Client Services Manager in the corrugated packaging industry. The IID process identified 62 task-based items, which were systematically organized into seven core duty categories. Validation of the IID process through a survey provided comprehensive feedback from experienced industry professionals. The survey responses affirmed the relevance and accuracy of the identified duties and tasks, with high importance and frequency ratings reported across most categories. Indicating the IID method effectively captures the competencies required for the role. These results suggest the potential of the IID method as a viable approach for competency analysis in industry-specific contexts. The IID method's ability to adapt to industry-specific needs while maintaining rigorous validation makes it a valuable tool for aligning academic curricula with workforce demands

## Discussion

The results from this study underscore the effectiveness of collecting valid data through a modified-DACUM approach. By reducing the number of SMEs, the duration of the workshop, and the facilitator taking an active role in the workshop (Willet and Hermann, 1989) (Moser, 2021) the IID approach produces valid results for occupational analysis.

The validation survey shows the mean and standard deviation of these ratings provided a quantitative measure of consensus regarding each item's relevance. Tasks with high mean importance ratings and low standard deviations were deemed essential indicating strong agreement among participants. The survey revealed considerable variation in how frequently different tasks were performed, highlighting the diverse responsibilities associated with the role. Certain tasks such as "Translate Job specs for quoting" showed a high frequency rating, (M=4.75, SD=0.50; M=4.75, SD=0.50), indicating they were core to daily operations. While other tasks such as "Develop operating budget" were performed less frequently but remained essential

with an importance ( $M=4.75$ ,  $SD=0.50$ ;  $M=1.0$ ,  $SD=0.0$ ). The standard deviations for task frequency ratings also varied, with higher standard deviations for less frequently performed tasks, suggesting that these tasks may be more specialized or context dependent.

The survey results highlight a significant discrepancy between the high importance professionals place on development activities and their infrequent performance. Tasks such as pursuing continuing education ( $M = 4.60$ ,  $SD = 0.55$ ;  $M = 1.60$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) and attending networking events ( $N = 12$ , 42%;  $M = 4.40$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ;  $M = 1.60$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ) are deemed important but rarely performed with only five of the 12 participants participating in either. This pattern suggests barriers such as time constraints or insufficient institutional support. Addressing these challenges is essential to align professional development opportunities with their perceived importance.

Although the limitations of this study warrant further examination. One notable limitation of the current study lies in its limited stakeholder representation, which may not fully capture industry-wide standards. Including a more diverse array of organizational perspectives in future studies could address this limitation, improving the generalizability and credibility of the findings. Incorporating multiple viewpoints would not only enhance the validity of the competencies identified but also strengthen the broader curriculum development efforts, fostering an alignment between academic training and industry expectations in the packaging field. While this study provides preliminary evidence that a single SME can identify key competencies, future research should assess the consistency of these findings across a larger sample of SMEs. Comparative studies that compare outcomes from traditional and modified DACUM sessions could further clarify if the streamlined approach can achieve comparable reliability and comprehensiveness.

## Conclusion

The IDD workshop, facilitated by a trained DACUM facilitator and structured by the DACUM Handbook guidelines with modifications to the number of SMEs, the duration of the workshop, and the facilitator's participation, identified 62 task items organized into seven duty categories. Duty and task were validated by a survey of industry experts, who assessed the importance and frequency of these tasks within their roles. Results showed high consensus on task importance for all 62 tasks. Task frequency varied depending on the nature of the tasks. The results underscore that a well-structured modified DACUM

approach effectively identifies the essential duties and tasks of specialized roles yielding valuable insight.

The findings from this study offer insights for higher education institutions seeking to develop or evaluate programs. By addressing the challenges associated with the traditional DACUM workshop, the IID approach provides institutions with an efficient framework for the development of CBE curricula.

Future research should explore several avenues to validate the modifications made to the DACUM study. A comparative study between the traditional DACUM approach and the modified version could assess differences in outcomes, such as the precision of task identification, participant satisfaction, and time efficiency. Gathering qualitative feedback from subject matter experts, validation survey participants, and stakeholders could reveal insights into the findings. Finally, assembling an expert panel to review the modified DACUM process and its outcomes would offer a comprehensive validation measure by evaluating the approach's completeness and relevance.

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# Visual Communications Journal Submissions Guidelines

## Submittal of Manuscripts

- » Articles deemed worthy for consideration by the editor undergo anonymous peer review by members of the VCJ editorial board. Authors of articles that have been peer-reviewed are informed within three months from the date of submission.
- » Authors who submit an article that does not merit review by the editorial board are informed within approximately four weeks of receipt of the article so they may explore other publishing venues.
- » Manuscripts shall be no more than 25 unjustified, double-spaced pages with 1-inch margins including references. Abstracts are required and should be no longer than 250 words. Keywords are required and should conform to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association 7th Edition (APA 7th).
- » Typescript should be 12-point Times New Roman or a close approximation. Figures, tables, photographs, and artwork must be of good quality and conform to APA 7th edition style, specifically complying with the rules of style for form, citation style, and copyright.
- » All figures, tables, photographs, and artwork must be embedded in the submitted manuscript for review. Figures, tables, photographs, and artwork must be prepared as individual files at the time of manuscript submission.
- » Articles received by **January 15th** will be considered and reviewed by the editorial board for publication in the spring edition of the VCJ. Articles received by **June 15th** will be considered and reviewed by the editorial board for publication in the fall edition of the VCJ.
- » Submit papers and correspondence to: Xiaoying Rong <xrong@calpoly.edu> or check www.GCEAonline.org for contact information for the GCEA Vice-President of Publications.

## Types of Articles

- » The Visual Communications Journal accepts five levels of articles for publication:
  1. Edited articles are accepted or rejected by the editor. These articles are not submitted to a panel of jurors. The decision of the editor is final.
  2. Juried articles are submitted to the editor and are distributed to jurors for acceptance/ rejection. Juried articles are typically reviews of literature, state-of-the-art technical articles, and other non

empirical papers. Jurors make comments to the author, and the author makes required changes. The decision of the review board is final.

3. Refereed articles are submitted to the editor and are distributed to jurors for acceptance/ rejection. Refereed articles are original empirical research. Jurors make comments to the author and the author makes required changes. The decision of the review board is final.
4. Student articles are submitted by GCEA members and are accepted/rejected by the editor. These articles are not submitted to a panel of jurors. The editor's decision is final. Please be aware that poorly written student papers will be rejected or returned for editing.
5. Book reviews deemed worthy for consideration by the editor will be reviewed by the editor. Book reviews shall be limited to 1500 words. The editor's decision is final.

## Eligibility for Publication

- » Members of the Graphic Communications Education Association, or students of GCEA members, may publish in the Visual Communications Journal.
- » Those wishing to publish should join GCEA before submitting their paper for review.

## Audience

- » Write articles for educators, students, industry representatives, and others interested in graphic arts, graphic communications, graphic design, commercial art, communications technology, visual communications technology, printing, photography, or digital media. Present implications for the audience in the article.

## Manuscript Form and Style

- » Manuscripts should conform to APA 7th edition style
- » Papers must be submitted in Microsoft Word format.
- » The approximate location of all tables and figures should be clearly indicated in the text.
- » Author's name, highest degree, affiliation, title, abstract and keywords shall be listed on the first page only. Article text should begin on the second page.

- » Articles should be proofread carefully before submitting. Articles with severe spelling and grammatical issues shall be rejected.

### **Figures (Graphics)**

- » All figures should contain a number and caption conforming to APA 7th edition style
- » Screen captures should be as large as possible.
- » Photos should be 300 ppi to span one column (3-inches) or 2 columns (6.5-inches).
- » Line art should be in a vector format.

### **Tables**

- » Tables shall conform to APA 7th edition style
- » Tables will be formatted by the designer to fit in one column (3" wide) or across two columns (6.5" wide).

### **Publication and Format**

- » The Visual Communications Journal is published and distributed twice a year, in the spring and in the fall. Each article of the Journal is published online at [www.GCEAonline.org](http://www.GCEAonline.org).

### **Notice of Limitation**

- » Articles submitted to the Journal cannot be submitted to other publications while under review. Articles published in other copyrighted publications may not be submitted to the Journal, and articles published by the Journal may not be published in other publications without written permission of the Journal.

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