

The Reading–Writing Relationship and June *JOE* Highlights

Abstract

In the first section of the Editor's Page, "The Reading–Writing Relationship," I express a straightforward insight that can help anyone improve his or her scholarly writing. In "June *JOE* Highlights," I describe articles in the issue related to the concept of community and note some of the wide-ranging program-area topics that are covered as well.

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The Reading–Writing Relationship

Having worked as a writer–editor for over 35 years, I know some exceptional professionals in my discipline. In discussions with these colleagues, a recurrent topic is the question of how to help others write well. A while back, I put this question to the wisest among those colleagues of mine, and she gave me what I'm sure is the best answer. Her response was immediate, forceful, and simple: "Tell them to read."

A charge of the *JOE* editor is providing *JOE* authors with professional development in the area of scholarly writing. Like my predecessor, I use the Editor's Page as one forum for carrying out that responsibility. In this instance, I'll simply pass along the insight of my colleague. If you want to be a good writer, read. If you want to be a good *JOE* author, read *JOE*. Read all the articles that interest you. Identify those you really like. Reread each, paying attention to how the topic is developed and how ideas are connected across the work, why certain sentences grab your attention or clarify challenging concepts, what phrases or words precisely convey meaning in the simplest way possible. Apply two levels of learning to your reading of scholarly literature. From aspects of an article's content, learn information you can use in performing your job. From elements of the article's composition, learn skills you can apply to advance your writing. Build expertise in introducing research problems, explaining methodologies, reporting data, and drawing logical, astute conclusions. The simple act of reading—frequently and thoughtfully—will make you a better writer.

June *JOE* Highlights

Community is a powerful and multifaceted notion for *JOE* readers. You forge both common and discrete paths within the Extension community, are both part of and separate from academia more broadly. You are committed to the communities countrywide that embody Extension's *raison d'être*. You embrace the world of virtual communities, invent communities of collaborators, and navigate the evolving concept of community engagement. A few notable articles in this issue examine the complex nature of community as it relates to Extension work. In

the Commentary "[Public Value and Partnerships: Critical Components of Extension's Future](#)," the author contends that Extension must start engaging in communities in ways that signal a rethinking of the organization's central public value and how to produce that value. The Tools of the Trade entries "[Public Scholarship: A Tool for Strengthening Relationships Across Extension, Campus, and Community](#)" and "[Inclusive Scholarship: Extension Program Participants as Poster Coauthors](#)" are relevant as well. In these articles, the authors call for reaching beyond borders that designate academic silos or parameters of scholarship to work in unexpected ways with communities of non-Extension faculty or Extension clientele. These are but examples of articles in this issue that touch on the community contexts in which Extension professionals operate.

Beyond the concept of community, topics of importance across the span of Extension programming are addressed. For example, the authors of the Feature "[Inclusion of Youths with Disabilities in 4-H: A Scoping Literature Review](#)" examine what has been done and must be done still toward achieving universality within 4-H. The authors of the Feature "[A Multiple Indicators, Multiple Causes Analysis of Farmers' Information Use](#)" explain the execution of a modeling process applicable to varied client decision-making scenarios. Two Research in Brief offerings—"The Family Mealtime Study: Parent Socialization and Context During Family Meals" and "[Variables Affecting First-Time Parents' Feeding Behaviors](#)"—address effects of parents' decisions and behaviors on children's health. In both articles, the authors identify implications for Extension parenting and nutrition programming. "[Gray for a Day: Implementing a Curriculum to Promote Empathy for Older Adults](#)," in the Ideas at Work category, describes a simulation-based curriculum that encourages understanding of the sensory and functional challenges that come with aging. The curriculum can be used with audiences from 4-H youths to older adults themselves. The authors of the Tools of the Trade entry "[Use of a Timely Topics Web Tool to Enhance Research-Based Extension Program Impact](#)" present a website design element that elicits hotspot-based interactivity with online content. They report data suggesting that such a feature can attract new users to a website, increase the time users spend on the site, and generate other results that increase the visibility of program information. This sampling of topics is indicative of the varied and useful information presented in this issue of *JOE*.

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