

“Never Give Up!” Great Writing Advice From Faculty and Staff Authors

Dr. Thompson’s Mentoring Tip of the Week

March 25, 2013

Dear Colleague:

On March 21, 2013, I hosted the School of Education’s “Second Annual Faculty Author Reception.” Last year, when I initially thought of this event, I had three goals in mind: (1) to honor faculty and staff whose books, journal articles, essays, or book chapters had been published during the current academic year, (2) to encourage faculty and staff who are working on various writing projects to continue to write, and (3) to motivate individuals who want to write but haven’t been writing, to get started on writing projects. This year, more than twice as many faculty and staff had their work published, and the highlight of the reception was hearing each author share a writing tip. Ten of the authors took time to email me their tips so that I could share them with you. I’m certain that their wonderful advice will motivate you to keep writing if you’re already writing and if you aren’t to start writing as soon as possible.

What the Faculty and Staff Authors Said

Author: Dr. Tawannah Allen, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Leadership, and Director of Doctoral Studies

Writing Tip: “Focus your writing agenda on your community service activities and projects. This way, you’re writing, researching, and providing service on items you enjoy. Then, the writing is meaningful.”

Author: Dr. Miriam Chitiga, Associate Professor and Interim Chair, Department of Educational Leadership

Writing Tip: “Follow your heart, when it comes to selecting research areas. As a naturally inquisitive educator, I am intrigued by less researched issues that can affect student learning and academic success. Therefore, go out there and develop systematic studies on what you consider important to the advancement of a better understanding of student learning. In order to increase the impact of your research, select journals that are read by the most relevant constituencies for your work. For example, if you are writing about African American college students, find journals that those teaching the population represented in the study are most likely to read. This increases both the chances of acceptance for publication and of your work being used by someone! And, if you are really fortunate, some of your participants may even get hold of the journal in their college library or in an instructor's office! Happy researching and writing!”

Author: Dr. Virginia Dickens, Professor, Department of Middle Grades, Secondary and Special Subjects

Writing Tip: Write it down!

“Never underestimate the power of the story that ‘uniquely you’ have to tell. No one else has exactly your perspective, exactly your insights, or exactly your enthusiasm for the story you have to tell. While this is true of professional writing, even when it feels less creative, this is even more true for writing personal and family stories that need to be told (and will be lost if they are not). Those life changing or funny or thought provoking or tragic occurrences in your life---or the lives of those you love—may seem insignificant

against the larger than life stories we view on the evening news. But our stories are, nevertheless, the history of who we are as individuals and as family groupings.

Just as we search genealogy and other resource web sites for bits and pieces of information about those who came before us, imagine how those after us will do the same (our children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and on and on). Let's make it easier for them, and more enriching, by writing down the details of our family happenings (how your father and I met, what it was like the night you were born, why Aunt Ruthie never married, how and why Uncle Russell was never the same after he returned home from Viet Nam, what it felt like to say goodbye to my sister, Janie, as we lost her to cancer, etc. etc. etc.). Imagine your great grands in fifty years finding your writings and knowing the stories they otherwise would never have known unless you ...write it down."

Resources:

Maybe Someone Should Write That Down

<http://youwhoineverknew.wordpress.com/tag/writing-family-stories/page/2/>

What's Write for the Family (G. Keer) http://www.parents-choice.org/article.cfm?art_id=180&the_page=consider_this

Writing Triggers for Family Memories

<http://www.squidoo.com/writing-triggers-for-family-memories>

Author: Dr. Peter Eley, Assistant Professor, Department of Middle Grades,

Secondary and Special Subjects

Writing Tip: "1. Any work you do consider writing it up. 2. When inspiration hits write. 3. Consider collaboration; it requires accountability."

Author: Dr. Mary J. Ferguson, Adjunct Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Leadership

Writing Tip: “Inspiration is God-sent. Once an idea is given to your spirit, you should write it down, whether it's on a napkin, a shoebox, or a paper bag. Write your aha moment down. Once it passes you by, it may never return.”

Author: Dr. Ji Young Kim, Assistant Professor of English, Director of Composition, and Coordinator of ESL Add-on Licensure Program

Writing Tip: for publishing in a high-quality journal

“Revise, Revise and Revise! If the journal wants to publish your article without any revision, it would be fantastic. However, in most cases, reviewers offer revision comments, including suggestions and criticism. Make every effort to comply with their requests. They want to see your submitted article improved. When you send your revised paper back to the journal, expect additional revision requests. Even if you get more revision requests, remember it is good news: The journal wants to publish your article. Be patient with the revision requests and communicate with the reviewers. They want to see your paper improved and published.”

Author: Dr. Priscilla Manarino-Leggett, Professor, Department of Elementary Education, and Coordinator of Reading Education Program

Writing Tip: “Never give up. Do not let revising make you discouraged. We revised our manuscript three times! Also, write about what you are doing and enjoy doing! We all are doing so many wonderful things. We just have to take the time to share the information; it does not always have to be a research study! Also, choose the journal you

would like to get into and write to their specification and audience. Check conferences. Many of them have online journal proceedings which are peer reviewed. Your presentation can end up getting published in their journal. Collaboration is fun, so work with your colleagues in your school or across schools or colleges. Good luck!”

Dr. Dionne McLaughlin, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Leadership, and Director, Masters of School Administration Program

Writing Tip: “Have a clear sense of what you want to write about, and then find a journal that matches your interests. Keep your eyes open. You may come across a journal that is a great match for your research that you were previously unaware of. I was searching for journals and came across the *Teacher Education Journal of South Carolina*. It is also helpful to pay attention to small things. If you are submitting to a journal that has a membership, join. I love writing, so it makes a difference to write about something that you are passionate about. This year, I wrote an article for the *Teacher Education Journal of South Carolina* titled, ‘The Cultural Symphony in Schools: Effectively Teaching African American and Latino High School students.’ It also helps to always have a project going. The project I am currently working on is a multi-state study on the decision-making practices of expert high school principals.”

Author: Dr. Cynthia Shamberger, Assistant Professor of Special Education, Department of Middle Grades, Secondary, and Special Subjects

Writing Tip: “My tip is to get my fingers on the keyboard and words on the page. Often, the first words are a written prayer in bold red font (so I remember to remove it later). I also give myself 15 minutes to write something. After that, I stop

and move on or look up and see that 30-45 minutes have passed, and I've been writing away!"

Author: Mrs. Jenny Washington, Director, Office of Teacher Education

Writing Tip: "Keep a journal or a notebook and a pen with you at all times, so you can write as topics and thoughts come to your mind. You do not have to worry about the format in your journal. Just write. I even keep one on my nightstand, because my best inspiration seems to occur in my dreams. I wake up and write my thoughts down, so I do not forget them."

Conclusion

I hope that you enjoyed reading the great writing tips from the faculty and staff authors who recently had their work published. With this in mind, hang in there, have a great week, **keep writing**, and be on the lookout for next week's mentoring advice.

Blessings and peace,

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