

Transmitting Passion and December *JOE* Highlights

Abstract

When scholarly writing seems like a chore, academic authors may be motivated by approaching the task from a place of passion. I address this concept in the opening section of this Editor's Page. In the "December *JOE* Highlights" section, I carry the notion forward by spotlighting articles in the issue that not only communicate the work underlying the written words but also convey the passion the authors applied to that work.

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Transmitting Passion

Typically the adage "write what you know" is applied to creative writing, often conveyed as encouragement to novices struggling to say something important, with the not-wholly-spoken message being "write what you know, and the writing will come easy." Of course, you don't hear this counsel in academic circles because the practice of writing what one knows is the cornerstone of academic writing. Scholars spend their careers publishing on matter they know inside and out. Yet the writing doesn't always come easy. With the pressure to publish and the pull of numerous other obligations, writing can feel like a chore. Perhaps the appropriate encouragement for this scenario is this twist on the aforementioned saw: Write what you love.

Enthusiasm for one's job doesn't happen daily in the life of any worker, but many Extension professionals are lucky enough to feel passion for their work on a regular basis. When you find yourself in one of those moments, stop to recognize that you're experiencing something worth sharing. Start jotting down notes right then and there, and don't stop. As you proceed with relevant tasks, continue to scribble observations about what you're doing, gaps in the literature you're seeing, responses you're encountering, and even emotions you're feeling. Upon waking at 3 a.m. cognizant of the solution to a stubborn problem or a modification needing to be made or the link that unites multiple divergent ideas, record your thoughts on a tablet, electronic or otherwise, at your bedside. Later, when you can indulge in a moment of reflection (or morning has come), consider what type of journal article you might write to transmit your enthusiasm to others. The *JOE* article categories, for example, represent assorted options that serve as potential outlets for your zeal. By trade, I have intimate knowledge of *JOE* articles, and I'm continually impressed by the important material present not just in Features but across article categories. Finally, once you're ready to craft a manuscript about "your baby," sit down with your profusion of notes (and your unchecked fervor), and you'll likely be surprised by how easily the words flow.

December JOE Highlights

My comments above were inspired by the passion demonstrated via many articles in this issue. Extension professionals are doing exciting, essential work. The authors of the Ideas at Work entry "[Addressing the Opioid Epidemic: Defining Cooperative Extension's Role](#)" remind us that Extension's purpose is to link "land-grant college programs, grassroots needs, and national priorities." When one's workaday world converges with opportunities to elevate a grassroots need or address a national priority, how can passion not follow? And when Extension professionals unleash their passion, solutions do follow.

Several articles herein exemplify the unleashing of passion to solve problems faced by vulnerable or underserved populations—communities devastated by the opioid crisis (see above), farm families wrenched by concurrent high-stress events, marginalized and minority-status youths exposed to discrimination or deemphasis of their identities, and older persons desiring to age in place and the caregivers struggling to help them do so. The issue kicks off with two articles focused on ensuring that *all* community members perceive Extension programs as settings in which they are welcome and understood: the Commentary "[Creating Inclusive Extension Programs](#)" and the lead Feature "[Embracing Diversity and Inclusion: An Organizational Change Model to Increase Intercultural Competence](#)." Other articles reflect the reality that educators across Extension are searching for ways to address rising farmer suicide rates—not only for broad "national priority" reasons but also in response to firsthand experience with tragedies that should have been averted. These articles are the Research in Brief "[Responding to Crisis: Farmer Mental Health Programs in the Extension North Central Region](#)" and the Ideas at Work entry "[Creating a Suicide Prevention Program for Farmers and Farmworkers](#)." In other pieces, authors share concepts born from passion for finding innovative ways to engage audiences occupying differing parts of the life span. These include the Tools of the Trade article "[#PassTheMicYouth Multimedia Program: Setting the Stage to Amplify Youth Voices](#)" and the paired offerings "['I Wish I Had Known'—Understanding Barriers to Accessing Aging-Related Resources](#)," a Research in Brief, and "[Senior Access Points: Increasing Awareness of Aging-Related Resources](#)" in the Ideas at Work category.

Other authors possess passion for advancing Extension as an organization and encouraging the success of their colleagues. Particularly interesting content based on their efforts includes the Feature "[Thinking Globally About Universities and Extension: The Convergence of University-Based and Centralized Extension Systems in China](#)"; the Ideas at Work articles "[Preparing Extension Educators for Community-Based Research and Grant Partnerships](#)" and "[Go Among the People: Travel as Nontraditional Professional Development](#)"; and the Tools of the Trade entry "[Tools for a Statewide Performance Appraisal System for Extension Professionals](#)."

The issue is rounded out with useful information on engaging public audiences in climate conversations, demonstrating Extension's public value, addressing barriers to adoption of agricultural innovations, and other relevant topics.

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