

2013

## Mentoring New Faculty on the Road to Tenure

Fred C. Lunenburg  
*Sam Houston State University*

Beverly J. Irby  
*Texas A&M University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/slr>



Part of the [Educational Leadership Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Commons](#)

[Tell us](#) how this article helped you.

---

### Recommended Citation

Lunenburg, Fred C. and Irby, Beverly J. (2013) "Mentoring New Faculty on the Road to Tenure," *School Leadership Review*. Vol. 8 : Iss. 2 , Article 9.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/slr/vol8/iss2/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in School Leadership Review by an authorized editor of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu](mailto:cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu).

## ***Mentoring New Faculty on the Road to Tenure***

*Fred C. Lunenburg<sup>i</sup>*  
*Sam Houston State University*

*Beverly J. Irby*  
*Texas A&M University*

---

One of the first mentoring steps is to help new faculty members determine how many articles can be published from their dissertations. We contend that any dissertation of seminal importance can produce multiple journal articles. For example, the literature review may be suitable for publication if it is a critique of the literature with major issues raised on the specific topic of interest. If the new faculty member did not conduct a critique of the literature, then that may be a suggestion; and as that is done, references can be updated as well. The dissertation may have resulted in a specific intervention that is worthy of a manuscript. In that manuscript, recommend to the mentee that the researched intervention should be described in detail and could be submitted to a journal related to the intervention. For example, it could have been a mathematics intervention that worked well in a secondary school program. Such a description may be helpful to secondary school administrators and could be shared via a journal supported by the Texas Association of Secondary School Principals. Such suggestions from the mentor constitute the beginning of a publication plan for tenure for the new faculty member.

Mentors must also support the new faculty member in appropriate publishing behavior. According to Lunenburg and Irby (2008), multiple papers may be derived from the dissertation that describe independent parts of the total document. They did not recommend creating several publications based on the results from a single database. This practice constitutes duplicate publication (Cone & Foster, 2007). We recommend that the mentor and mentee review the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, Sixth Edition (2010) for further discussion of this matter. The mentor should also discuss the conventions of publishing in terms of authorship that grows out of the dissertation. Suggest to the mentee that he/she contact the dissertation chair to discuss who would be appropriate to include on the articles that emerge from dissertation research.

### **Mentors Can Help Early-Career Faculty Members Select a Suitable Journal**

Helping early-career faculty members determine where to send their manuscripts involves three important factors: (a) selecting a journal that matches the topic, (b) selecting a journal that matches career goals, and (c) selecting a journal that is appropriate for the study (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). First, mentors should help the new faculty members find journals that publish the types of articles that match their dissertation or research topic. Journal requirements should be reviewed with the mentee as specific journals will focus on a particular type of article it publishes, such as empirical articles, theoretical articles, or practitioner articles. For example, within educational administration, *Educational Administration Quarterly* publishes primarily empirical research. *The Journal of Educational Administration* publishes primarily conceptual and empirical studies. *Educational Leadership* publishes primarily applied articles on

---

<sup>i</sup> **Dr. Fred C. Lunenburg** may be reached at [edu\\_fcl@shsu.edu](mailto:edu_fcl@shsu.edu).

educational leadership and education, as well as some empirical articles with definitive implications for practice. Read the journal’s mission statement with the new faculty member and review its guidelines for manuscript submission. In addition, peruse the contents of the primary journals in Educational Leadership (of course, as we often state—educational leadership/administration deals with everything from finance to curriculum development) to get a feel for the type of articles published in them.

Second, the new faculty member’s career goals will determine the most suitable journal for manuscripts. For example, if there is an interest in working as an administrator in higher education, then publishing in a journal that focuses on practitioner articles might be helpful to that career goal. However, if there is an intention to build a career in a research university, the new faculty member should conduct research and submit manuscripts to prestigious empirical journals. Those prestigious journals will be noted by specific university department guidelines in most cases; it is important for the mentor to share that information. Academic departments in research universities will consider, in most cases, journal articles published in top-tier journals. As a mentor, it is critical to make certain that the mentee knows the rules—written and unwritten—on what the tenured faculty and university policy require.

Following are several Tier 1 journals in educational administration for mentors to share with new faculty. This is not an exhaustive list. (See Table 1.)

Table 1  
*Sample Tier 1 Journals in Educational Administration*

---

<i>Educational Administration Quarterly</i>	<i>Review of Research in Education</i>
<i>Journal of Educational Administration</i>	<i>Educational Evaluation &amp; Policy Analysis</i>
<i>Journal of School Leadership</i>	<i>Harvard Educational Review</i>
<i>Educational Researcher</i>	<i>Teachers College Record</i>
<i>American Educational Research Journal</i>	<i>Educational Management &amp; Administration</i>
<i>Review of Educational Research</i>	<i>Journal of Educational Research</i>
<i>Education Leadership Review</i>	<i>Journal of Experimental Education</i>

---

Third, help the mentee determine the most prestigious journal that is suitable for the manuscript. Many journals are available in any given discipline, but not all journals are of the same quality or scientific rigor. Academics classify journals into a rough hierarchy as to quality as follows: excellent (Tier 1), above average to average (Tier 2), and below average to marginal (Tier 3). This rough classification system is based primarily on three factors: refereeing systems, acceptance rates, and citation scores. For example, some journals may not be juried; i.e., they do not (a) require peer reviews of manuscripts, (b) conceal the identity of the author(s), and (c) provide a rating scale to guide reviewers. Additionally the journal may have very high acceptance rates. Other journals have a peer-review system, and they may have a very low acceptance rate. Some journals have high citation scores, while other journals are cited less often. All of those considerations should be reviewed between the mentor and the mentee.

Generally, the higher the rejection rate, the higher the quality of the journal. However, there are exceptions to this general pattern. In many behavioral and social science disciplines, some of the best and most prestigious journals are not refereed. (Examples include *Educational Leadership*, *Harvard Educational Review*, and *Phi Delta Kappan*). In addition, some universities place importance on *citation scores*. This is a calculation of how often other researchers cite an article from a specific journal. The more often a specific journal is cited, the higher the quality the journal is judged to be. Although the aforementioned three journals are not refereed, each has high citation scores and high rejection rates. Citation scores for most journals can be found in the *Social Science Citation Index* and the *Humanities Citation Index*. Nevertheless, again, it is critical that the mentor know and share what the specific university and departmental policy is in terms of emphasis in publishing in refereed journals.

Lunenburg and Irby (2008) recommended *Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Educational Psychology and Administration* (2010) as a good source of information on journal listings and specific information about the journal. It lists more than 5,000 specialized and professional journals by discipline. For each journal it supplies (a) submission addresses; (b) publication guidelines, including manuscript length, copies required, computer submission requirements, format, and manuscript style; (c) review information, including number of external reviewers, acceptance rate, time required to review, reviewer's comments, and invited articles; (d) circulation data, including primary audience, frequency of issue, copies per issue, publisher; (e) manuscript topics; and (f) manuscript guidelines.

In helping the new faculty members to select a journal, it is important as well to help them to evaluate the level of scientific rigor of their manuscript. If the research is a two-variable study using correlation, it is not likely to be published in a Tier 1, empirical journal, unless it is some seminal piece of work—something very unique. Mentors should also guide mentees toward quality Tier 1 journals when their research is qualitative with solid and trustworthy results. In some cases, the mentor may need to recommend a journal more suitable for the publication at a Tier 2 or Tier 3 level.

### **Mentors Can Assist in Preparing the Manuscript**

Mentors can help with the next step – preparing the manuscript for publication. Most APA-style journal articles include the following sections: abstract, introduction, method, results, and discussion. Mentors will want to suggest that mentees cut down their dissertation so that the sections of the manuscript are shorter and more focused, or they could suggest to enhance conference proposals submitted to the American Educational Research Association (AERA) or the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), or other national or international annual meetings.

Observe the following maxim when preparing the manuscript: Write, print, edit, revise, polish, get feedback, and revise again. Repeat such a cycle as many times as it takes to get a publication-ready manuscript (Vasquez-Armijo et al., 2011). Write a first draft. Do not worry about how the ideas are organized at first. Print and edit the paper on the hard copy. Avoid on-screen editing, which is usually confined to simple corrections. At the revision stage, focus on organizing ideas into a clear argument sequence and linking closely related points. Then polish the text using topic sentences, transitions, and closure sentences (consult Chapters 3 and 4 of the Sixth Edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for further discussion of

these matters). Mentors should provide feedback on an almost polished manuscript so that revisions can be made once more, repeated until the mentor and mentee are completely satisfied with the manuscript.

### **Mentors Can Assist with Submitting the Manuscript**

Mentors can insure that new faculty members have submitted according to the journal guidelines by reviewing the submission just prior to it being sent. Check the required number of copies to the address provided in the most recent issue of the journal selected or on the online posting. Most journals now require electronic submissions. If the journal requires a hard copy, send the manuscript *Return Receipt Requested*. This postal method requires a signature from a receiver where the journal is housed. This practice ensures that the manuscript arrived safely. Most editors will acknowledge receipt of the manuscript by e-mail or letter. They will usually indicate who is handling the manuscript which is typically an associate editor. If there is not such an acknowledgement e-mail or letter within a few weeks of submission, contact the editor (by e-mail, telephone, or letter) to inquire about the status of the manuscript. The turnaround time for electronic submissions is usually a few days.

Mentors can encourage new faculty members to have patience on the decision on their manuscripts. The average turnaround time required for a publishing decision is approximately two months (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008). Journal editors typically use four categories of response: (a) acceptance with no changes; (b) conditional acceptance pending changes; (c) rejection, accompanied by two or more anonymous reviews; and (d) revise and resubmit. In the latter case, the editor encourages the author to revise the manuscript and resubmit it for additional consideration. The *conditional acceptance pending changes* and the *revise-resubmit* decisions are very common practices in publishing. In the former case, there is an acceptance. It does not get much better than that, because an *acceptance with no changes* is very rare. Thus, mentors should encourage mentees to revise the manuscript as soon as possible, following the suggestions provided by the reviewers. Mentors will want to share with mentees that they do not have to make all suggestions recommended if they do not agree with them, but they must respond to each suggestion in a respectful letter. The *revise-resubmit* decision is, in essence, no decision. It is basically considered a reject, until accepted. Mentors can help new faculty in making a decision to revise and resubmit, or to submit the manuscript to another journal, using the suggestions from reviewers to improve the manuscript.

When a manuscript has been accepted for publication, the turnaround time these journals require to publish it varies from 1 month to 2 years. Therefore, examining a journal's turnaround time for publication is important when selecting a target journal. Thus, turnaround time is as important as acceptance rate. Prolific scholars do not get to be prolific by waiting extended periods for each manuscript to be accepted and published. Instead, they submit their manuscripts and begin immediately writing other manuscripts.

### **Mentors Should Assist New Faculty in Planning the Writing Process**

One of the major problems beginning assistant professors face in getting ready for tenure is the shortage of time. Amassing a suitable number of important articles in top-tier, refereed journals is difficult for some, especially with the competing demands of teaching, service, and family. Once teaching is begun, it will seem as though it is very difficult to find the time to write. The

keys to writing success and publishing success are planning and discipline. Following are some tips that mentors could share with new faculty members for organizing their writing process (Day, 2011; Henson, 2005; Jalongo, 2002; Osborn, 2002).

### *Establish Regular, Predetermined Writing Times*

Some authors find it helpful to set aside 2 or 3 half-days or 1 full day (8 or 9 hours) each week for writing. Others write for 2 hours every day. Still others may prefer to reserve writing blocks of 6 to 8 hours one or two times a week. Mentors can suggest that new faculty members establish regular, predetermined writing times, and make them inviolable. Writing regularly greatly increases the level of writing productivity, as well as the quality of the writing.

If the new faculty members find it difficult to write during the regular, predetermined writing times, mentors should encourage them not to stop writing – encourage them to just write a first draft and do not worry about how the first draft is organized; rather, concentrate instead on expressing the ideas. Then, later they can rearrange the ideas into a single, clear sequence of arguments.

### *The Order of the Writing Task Need Not Be Linear*

We have suggested that an APA-style journal article contains the following sections: abstract, introduction, method, results, and discussion. However, mentors must relay to mentees that manuscripts do not have to be written from beginning to end, (i.e., write the abstract page and continue linearly through the manuscript). Start with the easiest task and progress to the more difficult tasks. Perhaps the method section is the easiest to write. Begin there. When this task is accomplished, it will feel like progress is being made and movement toward the next step can take place.

Mentors should also share writing conventions with mentees. They should explain that some sections may take longer to write than others. For example, introductions usually take the longest to write, so they may recommend that a large block of time be reserved to write that section.

### *The Best Writing Does Not Happen Under Pressure*

Successful professional writing takes time: time to reflect, time to read, time to write, time to get feedback, time to evaluate the writing, and time to repeatedly revise the manuscript. That is a central theme that mentors should share with new faculty members. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) stated “A manuscript should be written and revised at least five times, and more for inexperienced writers” (p. 271). Usually the first, second, and third draft of the manuscript is not ready to submit.

The lead author of this article had a conversation a few years ago with a new faculty member. She told him that she was going to submit her manuscript the following day to me to get my reaction. I said to the student: “Are you completely satisfied that your manuscript is the very best work you can do. If not, consider revising it until you are absolutely certain your paper cannot be improved any further by yourself; then, I, as your mentor, will go through the paper.” This is

sound advice to any writer, experienced or inexperienced, whether writing a dissertation, journal article, book chapter, or book. We find, as mentors and as editors of journals, that many new faculty members submit their first draft to get the mentor's or the editor's reaction. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred, it is sent back for further revision. Certainly, the revision should be with the mentor, as that is part of the job of mentoring—providing feedback—but not of an editor. Encourage new faculty members to get everything in top shape prior to sending it to the editor, and never send anything for the editor to *just* review. In addition, as book and journal editors, we find that many authors submit rough drafts to us for publication. If the content is worthy, some are returned to the author for revision; however, some may end up in the *circular file*. Mentors want to caution new faculty members about sending out rough drafts.

## Conclusion

University presidents often proclaim that their organizations are *teaching institutions*. However, faculty members in 4-year colleges and universities on tenure tracks know that the gatekeepers of the tenure review process—however broadly their institutions may define scholarship—want to see a long list of quality publications at the time of the tenure decision. Thus, most faculty members in higher education institutions are required to write for publication and often times, the new faculty members get little support with jump-starting their writing/research careers. Through mentoring new faculty in such a process, those faculty members can have the opportunity to better succeed in their scholarship. Marcellino (2011) found that mentees were able to refine their research agendas with their mentors' assistance. We hope that as early-career faculty members move ahead on their roads to tenure, mentors can use this article in promoting and demystifying the publication process for their mentees.

## References

- American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Cabell, D. W. E. (Ed.) (2010). *Cabell's directory of publishing opportunities in educational psychology and administration*. Beaumont, TX: Cabell Publishing Company. Retrieved from <http://www.cabells.com>
- Cone, J. D., & Foster, S. L. (2007). *Dissertations and theses from start to finish*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Day, R. A. (2011). *How to write and publish a scientific paper* (22<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Erickson, C., Hensley, P., & Kinsey, G. (2010). Lessons learned: Transitioning from K-12 to the professoriate. *Education Leadership Review, 11*, 1–9.
- Henson, K. T. (2005). *Writing for publication: Road to academic advancement*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Jalongo, M. R. (2002). *Writing for publication: A practical guide for educators*. Norwood, MA: Christopher-Gordon Publishers.
- Lunenburg, F. C., & Irby, B. J. (2008). *Writing a successful thesis or dissertation: Tips and strategies for students in the behavioral and social sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

- Marcellino, P. A. (2011). Fostering sustainability: A case study of a pilot mentoring program at a private university. *Mentoring and Tutoring: Partnership in Learning Journal*, 19(4), 441-446.
- Osborn, S. T. (2002). *Complete guide to writing for publication*. Ozark, AL: ACW Press.
- Vazquez-Armijo, J. F., Abdel-Fattah, Z. M. S., Cardoso-Jimenez, Cipriano-Salazar, M., Tinoco-Jaramillo, J. L., & Camacho-Diaz, L. M. (2011). *Guidelines for writing and preparing a manuscript for international publication*. Hauppauge, NY: Nova Science Publishers.



*Texas Council of Professors of Educational  
Administration*

*406 East 11th Street  
Austin, TX 78701-2617*

# School Leadership Review

*The international, peer-reviewed journal of the Texas  
Council of Professors of Educational Administration*

ISSN: 1559-4998

<http://www.tcpea.org/slr.html>