

Share Your VOICE: Using the VOICE Framework to Support Faculty Scholarship at Teaching-Focused Universities

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Journal of Special
Education Preparation
5(3), 68-77

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33043/682cabda>

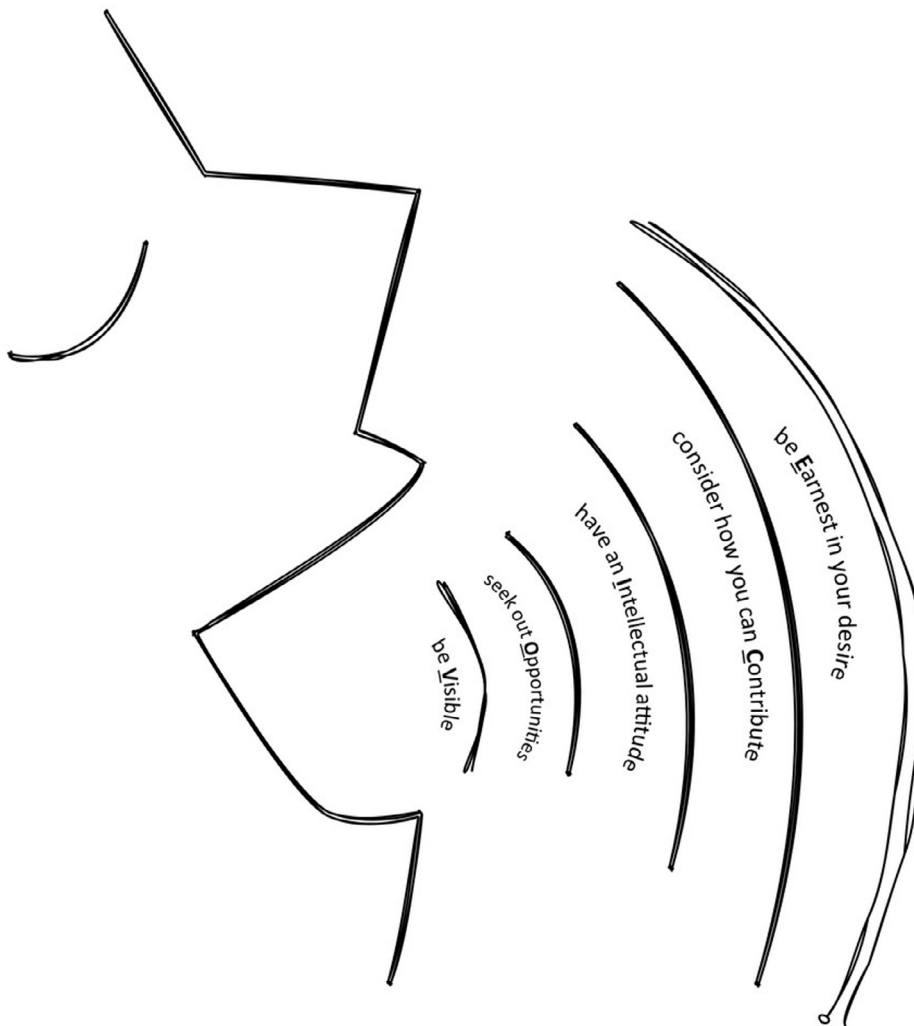
ABSTRACT

University faculty are expected to engage in a variety of tasks, with a specific focus on teaching, scholarship, and service (Mamiseishvili et al., 2016). The importance placed on each of these three pillars of academia differs based on the type of institute of higher education (IHE) in which one works. However, all three pillars are vital for success, including the goal of achieving promotion and tenure. More recently, an increased emphasis has been placed on scholarship at both research and teaching-focused universities (Schimanski & Alperin, 2018). Although academic faculty know they must engage in scholarship, including conducting, publishing, and presenting research, some early career faculty might be unprepared to do so. In this article, we offer recommendations to support faculty at more traditional teaching universities in achieving their goals for scholarly work. We propose the acronym VOICE: (a) be Visible, (b) seek out Opportunities, (c) have an Intellectual attitude toward growing your skills, (d) consider how you can Contribute to the field, and (e) be Earnest in your desire to create high quality academic scholarship. .

KEYWORDS

Faculty, scholarship, teaching university

The responsibilities of university faculty, which generally revolve around the three primary obligations of teaching, scholarship, and service (Mamiseishvili et al., 2016), come with varying degrees of emphasis depending on the type of university. According to the Carnegie Classification system rankings, Research 1 (R1) universities are those in which there is “very high research spending and doctorate production” and Research 2 (R2) universities are those with “high research spending and doctorate production” (American Council on Education, 2025). Faculty at R1 and R2 universities are typically expected to allocate a higher percentage of their workload to research and related mentorship of graduate students as compared to faculty working at master’s colleges and universities. Such institutions can be classified as large (M1), medium (M2), or small (M1). These are often referred to as ‘teaching institutions’ and their faculty are expected to distribute a higher percentage of their workload to teaching. As a result, faculty at teaching institutions usually are not expected to publish as many papers per academic year, or in journals as highly ranked, as faculty at R1 or R2 institutions (Scutelnicu Todoran, 2024). With that said, faculty in every institution must navigate each of the three primary expectations with variance in the percentage of time spent on each priority. It can be challenging for faculty at teaching institutions to balance heavy teaching loads with an expectation for scholarship. In fact, Griffith and Altinay (2020) note that many faculty, regardless of institutional ranking, frequently feel the tension of meeting all expectations, especially when those expectations are not clearly articulated. It is vital that faculty fulfill responsibilities for all three pillars for success, particularly to meet the goal of achieving promotion and tenure. Despite traditional expectations, an increased emphasis has recently been placed on scholarship at both research- and

FIGURE 1: Use Your VOICE Framework

teaching-focused universities (Schimanski & Alperin, 2018).

Historically, scholarship was viewed as a form of engagement that included discovery, integration, application, and teaching and learning (Boyer, 1990). As the landscape of IHE has shifted, faculty have experienced an increase in technology, collaboration, and transparency (Beach et al., 2016). Consequently, the definition of scholarship has also evolved. According to Brown (2012), scholarship is not only about content, but also about the context of scholarly work. In other words, the definition of scholarship looks different depending on the IHE context. Glassick (2000) sug-

gested that scholarship could be defined and assessed by clear goals, preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, clear presentation, and reflective critique. Although the definitions of scholarship differ across IHEs, faculty are expected to excel in whatever form it takes.

Even when early career faculty know they must engage in scholarship (e.g., research, publications, presentations), some are unprepared for all that it entails. In order to support the scholarly goals of faculty at teaching universities, we propose the acronym VOICE: (a) be **V**isible, (b) seek out **O**pportunities, (c) have an **I**ntellectual attitude toward

growing your skills, (d) consider how you can **C**ontribute to the field, and (e) be **E**arnest in your desire to create high quality academic scholarship (see Figure 1). This framework was developed by the authors based on our professional experiences and is grounded in the literature around higher education scholarship. Collectively, we have over three decades of experience as special education faculty in teaching-focused universities. We each received our doctorates at R1 universities, where we were taught the importance of scholarship in academic careers. We developed the VOICE framework through frequent conversations and personal reflections about our experiences as we navigated our roles as early career, and now mid-career, special education teacher educators. Throughout this article, we use a series of vignettes to demonstrate how a special education faculty member might use the framework to support their own scholarship.

V: BE VISIBLE

Amid the many responsibilities related to teaching, it can be challenging to find time to engage in scholarship. However, neglecting this component of the faculty role can have negative consequences. We recommend that faculty be diligent about making time for scholarship. Collaborative research is one way to become more visible and help establish a community that promotes accountability for scholarly engagement (Li et al., 2020). Teaching faculty who work at small universities or in small departments may feel like a “party of one” as the only special education faculty member. This can be isolating and make collaboration on scholarship challenging. To combat this, special education faculty should be visible in physical and online spaces that can foster networking with potential collaborators. Thankfully, the use of virtual spaces has increased

IHE faculty's ability to create and sustain professional networks regardless of geographical distance (Trust et al., 2017). Such online professional networks can lead to impactful scholarly collaborations (Schieffer, 2016).

To create more opportunities for visibility, and in turn, collaboration, faculty can also attend annual in-person conferences specific to either teacher education or an area of research interest. We realize that many university faculty have limited funds for professional development or face other travel-related restrictions. In those cases, we suggest creative funding solutions, such as writing conference funds into grant proposal budgets, serving on the conference board, or exploring online conferences that offer meaningful networking sessions. Conference attendance is a well-utilized networking opportunity for IHE faculty in a variety of fields (McClements et al., 2024), including the field of education. To boost networking opportunities, consistent conference attendance, ideally every year, helps to establish a visible presence in that professional space. Although the specific choice of conference will vary, it is important for early career faculty to find a professional "home" at a conference they can attend regularly in order to build a strong network in special education.

In addition to attending sessions to broaden knowledge, conference attendees should make a diligent effort to connect with others in the field, including both familiar and unfamiliar colleagues. Networking at conferences can take many forms, but attending or presenting poster sessions and roundtables can allow faculty to naturally engage in conversation with others. These presentation formats lend themselves well to one-on-one or small group discussions around the topic of the presentation. Conversations about shared research and scholarship interests can spark exciting opportunities to collaborate.

During poster sessions and roundtables, it is helpful to ask questions about the presenter's work and, when appropriate, share relevant personal information and research efforts related to the topic. If the opportunity arises, either a presenter or an attendee might express interest in future collaboration.

Another great way to network at conferences is by finding a subgroup, such as a caucus or special interest group, to foster more personalized connections. Attending the conference organization's business meetings and any highlighted sessions for a subgroup will provide additional information about its goals and objectives. Although individuals might have different comfort levels with joining and engaging in a smaller group, networking opportunities exist for both introverts and extroverts. First, an introduction goes a long way, even if only to one or two new colleagues. Low-risk, low-involvement options include signing up for a subgroup's newsletter or social media page, which can provide valuable information about opportunities and collaborations. For those looking to jump in more deeply, volunteers are almost always needed and welcomed. Initially, this might include assisting the group with one-time tasks, but eventually, volunteerism could grow into a leadership position within the subgroup. Volunteering for such a role can help faculty connect with others with shared interests and further facilitate potential collaborative scholarship.

Dr. Baker is a second-year assistant professor of special education at a small teaching college in a rural community. She teaches 12 credit hours per semester and has a total of eight distinct course preparations each academic year. During her first year in her position, she focused on teaching. She advocated for teaching the same courses during her second year to reduce the time required for preparation and allow more time for scholarship. Dr. Baker's university will

provide funding for her to attend one conference, so she selects one focused on special education teacher preparation. While at the conference, she attends all scheduled events for early career faculty, as well as sessions related to her areas of research interest. At each event, she talks to other attendees and shares her desire to find collaborators for research. By the time the conference ends, she has connected with a group of early career faculty. They have already scheduled a Zoom meeting for the following week to outline plans for a collaborative research project regarding Universal Design for Learning in inclusive classrooms. As her second year as a faculty member progresses, Dr. Baker and her new network conduct this research study and are able to present their research findings at the same conference the following year.

In addition to conference attendance, or when travel funding is unavailable, it is vital that teaching faculty find other networking opportunities. Many professional organizations host virtual events throughout the academic year. These might include webinars, policy information meetings, book clubs, Sip and Chats, writing retreats, professional learning communities, or other virtual meetings. Whenever possible, attend these events. Participation in these virtual communities assists faculty in identifying avenues for collaboration and continuing their own professional development within the field (Trust et al., 2017). In our experience, there are often only a few dozen people in attendance, which allows ample opportunity for conversation and networking. Seasoned and tenured faculty could share many stories about the scholarly projects that have arisen from such networking events. Most recently, two of the authors participated in a book club; in one of the final meetings, the attendees discussed a specific aspect of the book and designed two research projects and a practitioner

manuscript based on that topic. While scholarship was not the intent of the book club, being visible in that space led to an opportunity for scholarship.

O: SEEK OUT OPPORTUNITIES

The second strategy to increase scholarly success is to intentionally seek out opportunities for collaborative work and mentorship. Mentorship is a relationship between two parties in which both individuals benefit. Typically, one individual is considered an expert on a topic and is willing to share their knowledge, while the second individual learns from the expert (Booker, 2023). However, this relationship can also flow in reverse. Newer faculty often have a level of excitement and drive that can reenergize a long-standing faculty member with decades of experience in the field. Those new to scholarship should keep an eye and ear out for potential mentors who share their research interests and could offer support with learning the academic research and subsequent publishing process. This mentor might be a colleague from their own institution or someone they connected with at a conference or other professional event. Some professional organizations also offer official mentoring processes to match early career faculty with more established researchers in the field. Within any mentorship relationship, early career faculty should request opportunities to publish with their mentor in some capacity as they learn the scholarship process. In an ideal world, one faculty member would have multiple mentors who can each support unique aspects of their scholarly journey. Whether independently or through an organization, having a mentor will serve a new faculty member well as they develop their own research agenda and scholarly work.

Collaborative opportunities can also include writing chapters for edited books or articles for special journal issues.

Information about these publishing avenues is often shared through professional organizations and at conferences, which is another great reason to get involved. Often, calls for book chapters or special issue articles are accompanied by a writing template to guide the manuscript. Occasionally, editors might pair up authors interested in writing on the same topic, thus providing an opportunity for a new collaboration. Additionally, submitting work for special issues or edited books can reduce the time authors need to spend looking for a suitable journal in which to publish.

For academic publishing in general, faculty should take time to learn and understand the expectations for a specific journal or publisher. Most journals include specific information for authors along with their submission guidelines on the journal website. Furthermore, numerous manuscripts, both from the field of education and the broader academy, are available to support faculty in the writing process itself (e.g. Markelz & Riden, 2022; Phillips & Barker, 2021; Quinn & Rush, 2009; Saracho, 2013).

Finally, it is critical for early career faculty to protect their time and avoid allowing their research agenda to drift into unrelated topics. Once a faculty member makes it known that they desire to write and collaborate with others, they may receive ample invitations for scholarly partnerships. In some cases, they will find themselves with more opportunities than they have time in the day. Do not say ‘yes’ to every writing opportunity that comes your way. Instead, be choosy and select the projects that most align with your career goals, research interests, and time constraints.

As Dr. Baker and her colleagues prepare to present their research at the conference, they begin looking for avenues in which to publish that work. Dr. Baker sees an advertisement for a special journal issue that is directly related to Universal Design for Learning

in the K-12 classroom. She presents the opportunity to her colleagues, and they work together to develop and submit an article that shares their research and meets the guidelines for the issue.

I: INTELLECTUAL ATTITUDE TOWARD GROWING YOUR SKILLS

Often, IHE faculty are inquisitive people who enjoy engagement in lifelong learning. Scholarship must be approached the same way, with intellectual attitudes and a desire to grow in one’s knowledge. Researching, writing, and publishing are skills that must be learned and refined over the course of a career. There are several ways that faculty can achieve this. First, ask for help from other, more established researchers in the field of education. Earlier, the importance of mentorship was discussed. While advice and feedback from a mentor will be invaluable, this should not be the only person from whom a faculty member seeks advice about scholarship. Meetings, social events, and conversations with other researchers are all opportunities to develop understanding, even if it is asking a single question about scholarly activity. In addition, some professional organizations host social media groups or other virtual ways to connect. Even if an individual does not feel comfortable asking a question, reading and listening to others can still be a powerful way to take in advice from experts in the field. Common questions asked in these types of online groups might include “*Does anyone have a recommendation for a peer-reviewed article on using assistive technology to teach spelling to children with disabilities?*” or “*Can anyone recommend a good journal for publishing a research study that falls into the category of scholarship of teaching and learning?*” Whatever the platform or interaction, the ultimate goal should be an exchange of knowledge and information.

TABLE 1: Resources to Grow Your Scholarship

REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION
American Psychological Association. (2020). <i>Publication manual of the American Psychological Association 2020: The official guide to APA style</i> (7th ed.). Author.	This comprehensive guide for writing, formatting, and citing scholarly work is used across academic disciplines, including general and special education. It provides guidelines for structuring papers, including the use of headings, tables, figures, and reference lists, to ensure consistency and professionalism. The manual emphasizes ethical writing practices, such as avoiding bias in language and properly crediting sources to maintain academic integrity.
Belcher, W. L. (2009). <i>Writing your journal article in 12 weeks: A guide to academic publishing success</i> . Sage Publications.	This book is a practical, step-by-step guide designed to help scholars transform their research into publishable journal articles. It addresses critical aspects of academic writing, including selecting a journal, organizing content, revising drafts, and responding to feedback. The book provides a clear framework and structured weekly tasks, empowering writers to navigate the academic publishing process with confidence and efficiency.
Lynn, T. G., Farnan, S. M., Moore, A. M., & Rueter, J. A. (2024). Flourishing in academia: A collaborative writing team approach for higher education faculty. <i>The Journal of Advancing Education Practice</i> , 5(2).	This article articulates the benefits of collaborative writing for academic success. The authors detail how structured teamwork enhances productivity, promotes accountability, and reduces the isolation often experienced in academic writing. Collaborative writing is introduced as a method for skill development and goal achievement within a supportive professional community. Practical strategies and examples can easily be replicated in the reader's own collaborative work.
Silva, P. J. (2019). <i>How to write a lot: A practical guide to productive academic writing</i> . APA LifeTools.	This book offers advice for academics looking to improve their writing productivity. It emphasizes the importance of setting writing schedules, creating realistic goals, and overcoming common barriers such as procrastination and perfectionism. Silva debunks myths about writing habits and provides practical strategies for maintaining consistency, tracking progress, and balancing writing with other responsibilities. With its humorous tone and actionable tips, the book serves as a motivational and practical resource for anyone aiming to enhance their academic writing output.

Advice may come from mentorship relationships, individual conversations, or social media. In addition, a major source of feedback results from submitting a manuscript to a journal. Authors should expect to receive feedback in the form of peer reviews and editor comments. All such feedback supports growth in research and writing skills. While some of this feedback may feel harsh at times, authors should approach it with humility and an understanding that reviewers desire to offer support and advice.

Early career IHE faculty should also be diligent about engaging with current literature on scholarship itself. This includes reading articles, books, and other materials about research and scholarship as well as attending webinars, conference sessions, and other in-person and virtual presentations. See

Table 1 for a summary of resources to enhance scholarship. These resources can often be accessed through university libraries. Faculty may also consult with department chairs about available funds to purchase resources or attend conferences.

A final word related to an intellectual attitude is that of experiencing rejection and discouragement. The reality is that scholarship is hard and can be disheartening. Like anyone learning a new skill, no one starts as an expert. Be willing to fail. You will have manuscripts rejected and you will receive harsh feedback from peer reviewers. This is part of the process and is experienced by even the most established and well-respected researchers. Do not take it personally and learn to focus rejections as opportunities to improve your scholarship for another outlet.

A few months after submitting their manuscript, Dr. Baker and her colleagues receive an email from the journal with an article rejection, but the opportunity to revise and resubmit. The comments from the reviewers request significant changes to the manuscript. Dr. Baker begins to feel dismayed about the quality of her work. While having lunch with a tenured faculty member at her university, Dr. Baker mentions the rejection letter and states that she is not sure she can even address all the requested changes, so she wonders if it is worth her time to resubmit. Her colleague shares stories of her own manuscript rejections, followed by the eventual success stories of each of those articles. She encourages Dr. Baker to put the reviewer comments aside for a few days and then return to tackle the work before submitting a revised manu-

FIGURE 2: Example of Group Meeting Norms and Sample Agenda for Collaborative Scholarship

Meeting Norms

1. Be fully present.
2. Be prepared.
3. Be mindful of others.
4. Be mindful of self.
5. Be mindful of your workspace.

Collaborative Writing: Meeting Agenda

Date:

Present:

Absent:

Time/Activity:

5-10 minutes	Catch-up: Personal + Professional News
5-10 minutes	Announcements related to project
5-10 minutes	Share goals for work time
60-90 minutes	Work time
10-15 minutes	Share accomplishments
	Confirm/set next meeting time
	Assign To Do items and person responsible, as necessary

To Do Items:

- Draft cover letter for submission (Author 1)
- Check references (Author 2)
- Proofread the final draft (Author 3)
- Verify submission guidelines (Author 4)

script. The manuscript is later accepted and published, becoming Dr. Baker's first scholarly work as a university faculty member.

C: CONSIDER HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE FIELD

A primary goal of special education faculty is to prepare future teachers and make contributions to the field outside of our own IHE and community. Scholarship is the means by which we can make this impact by establishing a research agenda that connects all aspects of scholarly work. First, to launch a research agenda successfully, the faculty

member should articulate both short-term and long-term goals and writing plans in a focused area of scholarship. This does not mean that projects unrelated to the research agenda cannot be completed, but the research agenda items must be the top priority.

When considering scholarly contributions, faculty can use several questions to guide their work. First, ask yourself, "What do I know, and what is my expertise?" For many early career faculty, their dissertation topic is a strong indicator of an area of expertise. Consider ways this research can be shared with both the special education academic community and classroom teachers.

This may include plans for one or more research articles, as well as practitioner pieces on the topic of a dissertation. Finally, think about how the work can be expanded through additional research projects, as appropriate and relevant to your current faculty role.

Secondly, ask yourself, "Where do my passions lie in the field of special education, and who shares those same passions?" Passions and expertise are likely to be aligned, though this might not be the case for everyone. As one's role in their IHE, professional organizations, and as a faculty member expand, their interests might change or develop tangentially. A good way to zero in on areas of pursuit is to make a list of broad areas of scholarly interest along with specific educational questions to answer. Then, begin thinking about others in the field who publish scholarship in those areas. This path will likely include reading and studying recent special education journal articles and looking at presenter lists from recent conferences. While it may feel daunting, reaching out to others who share your passions can open the door for discussions about the potential for collaboration. Some IHE faculty who work in teaching institutions find it most fruitful to seek out other teaching faculty members who share their scholarly passions. However, colleagues in research-focused institutions or positions should not be excluded or ruled out as collaborators.

When launching these collaborations, always begin by discussing professional expectations and the role of scholarship in your career. The group should identify a team leader to take on the primary responsibility for identifying the primary objective of the project, recruiting other team members, leading key aspects of the project, setting the timeline for completion, and clarifying roles during collaboration. Expectations and roles should be clearly defined for each person

TABLE 2: Journals on Action Research and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Title	Description	URL
<i>Active Learning in Higher Education</i>	Research related to active learning strategies for teaching and learning in higher education	https://journals.sagepub.com/home/alh
<i>American Journal of Education</i>	Research that encourages dialogue between researchers and policy makers and addresses key issues to the field of education broadly	https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/toc/aje/current
<i>Applied Measurement in Education</i>	Research that connects theory and practice and addresses contemporary measurement needs and challenges	https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/hame20
<i>Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education</i>	Research related to the practice of assessment and evaluation in higher education	https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/caeh20/current
<i>College Teaching</i>	Interdisciplinary articles related to instructional practices	https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/vcol20
<i>International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching & Learning</i>	Research about the scholarship of teaching and learning as it applies to higher education	https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/ij-sotl/
<i>Journal of Scholarship and Practice</i>	Research for school and district administrators	https://www.aasa.org/publications/journal-of-scholarship-and-practice
<i>Journal of Special Education Apprenticeship</i>	Research focused on children and youth with disabilities authored by graduate students and early career faculty	https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/josea/
<i>Networks: An Online Journal for Teacher Research</i>	PK-12 and teacher preparation-focused action research	https://newprairiepress.org/networks/

before getting started, especially when a new faculty member does not yet have expertise with scholarly processes and activities. It is important to remain realistic. As a contributor, an early career faculty member should consider their other commitments and honestly convey the amount of time they anticipate contributing to the project. With these time commitments in mind, the team leader can more effectively determine roles and responsibilities among collaborators.

Once a shared understanding of expectations and the role of scholarship has been established, the scholarly team should set regular times to discuss the project and/or write together in person or via videoconferencing. Such a schedule

aids in productivity and accountability. During the first meeting, establish meeting norms to lay a solid foundation for the project. For example, the following norms, used in the third author's co-taught class, were created and agreed upon by both instructors in order to establish a classroom environment conducive to productivity.

Be fully present: Limit distractions and focus on identified goals.

Be prepared: Have what is needed to complete required tasks during the work session (e.g. refill water bottle or coffee mug prior to the meeting, have a snack available).

Be mindful of others: Use reflective listening skills; be willing to compro-

mise; be punctual; and alert the team if missing a meeting, leaving early, or arriving late.

Be mindful of self: Be aware of mood/emotional state and how ideas may come across to team members.

Be mindful of your workspace: Organize your space and create the ambience you need to be productive.

These same norms can also apply to a collaborative scholarly relationship.

In addition to establishing group meeting norms, create a template to keep documentation from meetings (see Figure 2 for an example). An agenda with detailed notes maintains a record of discussions and serves as a reminder of what the group accomplished during the

previous meeting.

Lastly, ask yourself, “*How can my scholarly work align with my teaching?*” For teaching faculty, much of the workload is dedicated to preparing courses, instructing students, and assessing learning. It can be easy to see this work as separate from scholarship. However, this should be a bidirectional process where scholarship informs teaching and vice versa. One avenue through which teaching can be aligned with scholarship is by conducting research on effective or innovative teacher preparation. A teacher educator might ask themselves what they want or need to know in order to be more effective in the classroom and to better support students. This may include scholarly projects focusing on instructional practices or assessment methods. Much of this research will likely fall under the categories of either action research or the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). There are several peer-reviewed journals that specifically publish these types of studies. Table 2 provides a list of journals that might be appropriate outlets for publishing scholarly work on teaching.

After the publication of their manuscript in the special issue, Dr. Baker’s writing colleagues suggest several other potential research projects on a variety of special education topics. Dr. Baker knows that she does not have the time to participate in multiple projects at once and must decide which research is most appropriate for her to pursue at this time. One of her colleagues suggests investigating the impact of using the Universal Design for Learning framework to develop teacher preparation coursework. Because she recognizes that this research can be conducted within her own courses and that it aligns with her desired research agenda around UDL, Dr. Baker chooses to partner with the colleague developing this research study.

A second strategy for integrating scholarship into a heavier teaching load is to write practitioner articles, especially if those articles can later be used in a faculty member’s own courses. A practitioner article is simply a manuscript that aims to bridge the research-to-practice gap. These articles offer a brief overview of research on a specific topic, followed by guidance for teachers on using one or more research-based strategies in their own classroom. Practitioner articles often include vignettes or case studies that demonstrate practical application of the teaching practice. Popular practitioner journals in special education include *Teaching Exceptional Children*, *Beyond Behavior*, and *Young Exceptional Children*. Other journals, such as *Journal of Special Education Technology* and *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, publish practitioner articles in addition to research articles. When looking for a journal, early career faculty should consider the aims and purposes of a journal to ensure a good fit between the outlet and the manuscript.

Finally, two cautions are worth noting. First, many faculty members experience the common challenge of imposter syndrome (IS) from time to time (Rickett & Thompson, 2024). Feelings of IS have been linked to a decrease in well-being, job satisfaction, and self-assessed job performance (Swaidan & Jabbour Al Maalouf, 2025). As a teaching faculty member, you cannot expect to publish at the same rate as colleagues working in research universities, nor as frequently as colleagues with more experience and larger academic networks. We highly recommend avoiding comparing your scholarship to that of others. Second, for some faculty members, research and writing are a desirable component of the job, perhaps preferred over teaching and other responsibilities. For teaching-focused faculty, we caution against neglecting other job components to

focus on scholarship, as this may carry negative consequences.

E: BE EARNEST IN YOUR DESIRE TO CREATE HIGH QUALITY ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP

The final part of the VOICE acronym is to be earnest about your work. An earnest attitude might be demonstrated through a variety of actions. First, make writing a priority. Silva (2018) encourages scheduling writing time on a calendar and treating that calendar item like any other appointment, class, or meeting. When you intentionally plan time to write, you are likely to make a greater commitment, follow through, and meet your scholarly goals. We have seen academics do this in a variety of ways:

One author starts every workday with 15 minutes of writing and completes one small writing task each day (e.g. write one paragraph, find one reference). She blocks off one longer stretch on her calendar each week for more intensive writing and completing larger tasks. She finds that daily writing helps keep the project fresh in her mind so that she does not waste time during writing sessions trying to remember what she is working on.

Another author maintains a spreadsheet with tabs to keep track of current projects, ideas for the future, and implements several tips from Silva (2018). For example, one tab is a log of the date, time, project, and task for each writing session. When possible, she schedules Zoom calls with collaborators to have dedicated time with nothing else interfering. Otherwise, she marks off times for scholarship on three to four days per week as an appointment on her work calendar. This shows as an unavailable time when colleagues search her calendar for meeting times, keeping that time sacred for accomplishing scholarly

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tasks. Additionally, she maps out a tentative timeline for each project on a file folder to increase the opportunity for projects to make steady progress toward completion. She places relevant print materials in the folder for easy access during writing sessions.

A third author started out by writing whenever she could, usually on a Friday after she was caught up with most of her other job duties. Recently, she found this system was not working well and was limiting her productivity, so she set up a weekly time to meet virtually with her co-author(s) to write. She found this to be helpful, especially because the co-author's presence allowed them to talk through challenges together instead of waiting to respond to comments in a shared document. She also has a whiteboard in her office that lists her teaching responsibilities and scholarly projects (e.g., works in progress, manuscripts under review, grants, book or chapter proposals, articles in press). These lists help her see at a quick glance what needs to be worked on.

Another way that scholars can demonstrate earnestness is through collaborative work. As noted earlier, educational research is generally a collaborative effort. Faculty members need to work with others to be strong scholars in the field. During those collaborations, it is important to demonstrate reliability as a co-author, completing agreed-upon tasks within agreed-upon timeframes. When you are known to be a reliable co-author, more opportunities for collaborative scholarship will inevitably follow in the future. Keep in mind when demonstrating earnestness that it might be necessary to pass on opportunities when they do not align with personal interests or research agendas. You can be truthful, sincere, and earnest by saying "thank you for the opportunity" without making a

commitment.

As she moves forward in her career as a faculty member, Dr. Baker takes on increased responsibilities at her university and begins preparing to apply for promotion and tenure. Because she wants to be more efficient in her scholarly work, she begins hosting monthly writing retreats for other faculty at her university. These sessions provide dedicated time for research and writing, offering accountability and a disruption-free environment. Before each retreat, Dr. Baker creates a schedule for herself with specific tasks to complete and a timeline for completing each one. She finds that this system helps her use her time well. By the end of her fourth year as a special education faculty member, she has published several articles and has more under review and in progress. After meeting with her dean, Dr. Baker feels confident that her level of scholarship, paired with her teaching and service tasks, has set her up for success as she applies for promotion and tenure. Based on her dean's statements that she is "more than qualified" for promotion to tenured associate professor, Dr. Baker feels that her use of the VOICE framework over the past few years was essential to her success as a faculty member and a scholar at a teaching university.

CONCLUSION

Sharing your VOICE is an important part of being a professor. However, we also know that it can be the most daunting task you take on. While many of us are eager to share our knowledge of special education, we do not always know where or how to start. By adhering to the VOICE framework, early career faculty can begin the scholarly process with people who are there to support your endeavors. As mentioned earlier, we encourage finding people

who share common interests as well as establishing a solid network or writing group that you can rely on. For us, what began as informal, conversational meetings during the pandemic evolved into a productive writing group, resulting in the publication of several articles and book chapters, as well as multiple joint presentations. While we also collaborate with others, we are able to use this group as a place of encouragement and as a network of potential partners for projects. Don't forget: Your VOICE is essential to furthering your career and the field of special education!

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