

Writing Your Book or Textbook and Workbook

Most professors who start down the pathway of writing underestimate what it takes to do so. Some start writing a book or textbook, find that they do not enjoy it, and abandon the project. Others write enough to send publishers a partial manuscript out for pre-publication review, receive bad news that reviewers don't like it, and then abandon the project. A few complete their book but experience disappointing sales and abandon the book after one or two editions. About one fifth probably make it past those four hurdles and end up with a successful book. Such a book can continue for many editions.

You can fall into any of the first four groups without careful planning. Which group do you think you might fall into if you're not careful? To help you answer this question, there are a few predictable pitfalls to look out for:

1. The author is too busy to prioritize the project and give it the time it deserves.
2. The author is not particularly careful and willing to work hard enough.
3. The author has a writing style that is too dense, abstract, or analytical to read.
4. The author views are too unusual or nonconventional to appeal to the vast majority of instructors who teach the course.

It takes a tremendous amount of self-awareness and self-evaluation to recognize your shortcomings in these areas. Professors are very reluctant to view themselves as careless, eccentric or odd. Few will admit their writing is hard to follow. Such lack of self-awareness is one reason so many unsuccessful books and textbooks are written.

To seriously consider writing a book or textbook and workbook, like classroom teaching or instruction, is a good use of time, effort, and money. Few people in the world earn a living imparting knowledge; establishing a written, documented point of view; and, supporting scholarship, practice, as well as leadership. And, most professors spend their time imparting knowledge, but not writing. Giving lectures is one way of imparting knowledge; writing books or textbooks and workbooks, another. What are the benefits of writing books?

Of course, the most immediate benefit of classroom teaching and writing is influence on the minds of students. You have wide latitude in choosing what material to include and how to present it. Led of The Holy Spirit in making these choices, you give your own "spin" to the subject and help determine the views of your students. Although classroom professors and writers share this responsibility, writers reach a larger audience. Books are the most efficient medium. Indeed, because they are so important in shaping the field, many of the most prolific writers in academic journals are also authors of books, textbook, and workbooks.

A less obvious benefit of classroom teaching and textbook writing is that they stimulate ideas for research. Whenever you have to explain something to someone, either in person or on a printed page, you have to think it through more thoroughly than you otherwise would. Preparing lectures or drafting textbook chapters will reveal holes in your understanding. And as you try to fill these holes, you get inspired ideas for research. Putting it simply, imparting knowledge and creating knowledge are complimentary activities. That is why these two forms of production take place on university campuses all over the world.

Writing Instructional Curriculum for Your Book or Textbook & Workbook

Let's look at preparing for your master's thesis or doctoral dissertation. As a master's or doctoral learner and candidate, you will partially fulfill the requirements of your degree through writing instructional curriculum for your book, textbook, and workbook. Working on your dissertation or thesis textbook, you will teach three trimester course terms of five classes each on Saturdays for a complete year. Otherwise if you have post-graduate students with no core curriculum requirements, you must teach four course terms or quarters of ten classes, ending with an eleventh week of final exams each quarter. Each course will divide your textbook and workbook into four parts, units or sections or three parts if you teach three hour Saturday classes. They will either have ten classes or chapters, making up the first 10 weeks of your course; or, two chapters per weekend, the first 5 weeks of your course on 1st and 3rd or 2nd and 4th Saturdays.

It's important that you prepare for your classes at least two to four weeks in advance. In the first quarter or trimester, your first class/chapter or two chapters each Saturday should be an introduction and general overview of what you will cover for the entire year. The second to ninth classes should be substantiated facts for why you believe your courses are needed, determined by a brief research study or case analysis of literature, using peer reviewed articles to formulate the core values for writing your thesis and dissertation. The last class should reflect on drawing a conclusion on these facts or points and introducing the next course.

The second course, quarter or trimester, should cover the documented principles or structure of what you believe will help your learners understand your concept for instruction. Each week you should delineate a "how to," step by step process for learning a constructive ministerial approach for your thesis or a "what and why" argument and solution in authenticating your beliefs or ministry for your dissertation. The first class should review the reasons for discourse. Classes two through nine should touch on each validated point for learning or understanding the core values per chapter written for each class. The tenth class or chapter should summarize the procedures or solutions and introduce the next course.

The third quarter should offer practical applications towards demonstrating the realization of each principle learned. There should be strategies or projects designed for their realistic implementation. The first class establishes the approach, while classes or chapters two through nine break down the details necessary for functional realization of each practical application. The tenth class should summarize the approaches with projected outcomes and introduce the next course.

The last course, quarter or trimester, should discuss the results, considerations, and/or outcomes. Your findings must be documented in a statistical, clinical, and/or practical presentation that should reflect the facts for validating the reasons for your instructional curriculum, supporting the core values of your thesis or dissertation. These findings, resolutions, and/or expectations should be summarized in the first class. Classes two through nine should corroborate or prove these findings through illustration, demonstration, and discussion of the core values that will bear out the support for confirming your reasons for writing your thesis or dissertation. In conclusion, the tenth class or chapter should sum up the accomplishments and expectations of your courses.

Great care should be given not to plagiarize the work of others. You should use APA format for your thesis or dissertation, providing information that will motivate, enrich, empower and impact upon those who have an ear to hear, your student learners. The benefit of successfully doing so is duplicating and replicating the work of ministry for the edification of The Body of Christ!