

The Academic Author NEWSLETTER

Momentum Leads to Motivation: Start Small

BY BEC EVANS AND CHRIS SMITH

Stop delaying on your goals. If you're feeling stuck, the best way to get started is to go small. This approach works at every stage of your writing life. You might be at the beginning of a project, dancing round your dream trying to find out where to start, or you can apply this as a daily practice of prioritization, warming up the writing muscles with a quick win to build confidence.



Take a moment to consider what you want to do.

It might be an outcome goal like a completed article or chapter, or a practice goal like writing regularly.

Do you have a specific goal or project in mind? Is there a behavior you want to work on, such as writing for a certain amount of time or a number of words or pages?

Name your goal and write it down, before figuring out the best way to approach it.

Approaches to Identifying a First Step

Take the behavior or goal you're working on and either scale it back or find a starter step.

Scaling back is great for outcome goals, such as working on a specific project like an article, novel or thesis. Rather than consider the whole thing, scale it back to something small and easily achievable. Don't write 500 pages, write one page, half a page, perhaps even a paragraph.

Starter steps move you towards the behavior you want to build. They are something very small that gets you familiar with writing – for example, opening your notebook or naming a document. At the very beginning, it's not even about doing any writing: by keeping the bar low you'll start a routine and be able to keep it alive.

At this stage the step should be small. The point is to get you off the starting blocks; once you're feeling comfortable you can increase. But for now, think super small to bypass the fear centres of your brain. If you start to feel worried or panicky, that's a sign you need to go smaller.

Brainstorm

You are more likely to have a successful idea if you've got a choice of ideas.

Grab a piece of paper and write your goal in the centre of the page. Then go wild and free-form as you note down all the things that could help you achieve it – these could be steps to take immediately, they could be things you need to stop doing to make time for writing. Have fun with this exercise and get out of your comfort zone.

Finally, select one that is easy, quick or fun to do. Download our writing goals planner, which helps you name your dream, make it SMART, and identify a first step (<https://prolifiko.com/writtenresources/>).

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Embracing Creative Nonfiction in Academic Writing

BY DR. JESSICA SMARTT GULLION

A common complaint among faculty members is that many students don't read the assigned readings. As authors, it's our job to make our writing accessible and interesting so that students will want to read it. To do this, I encourage authors to use literary techniques to tell stories about the material instead of relying on stilted "academic" prose.

We convey information to other humans daily through storytelling. When your friend asks how your day went and you describe a colleague who went ballistic and yelled at the department chair in a faculty meeting, you are telling a story. When you explain the definition of a key term to your students using an example from your own life, you are telling a story.

A good story evokes images, sounds, sensations, feelings, emotions, and/or memories in the reader's mind. But this is not as daunting as it sounds.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Embracing Change

Greetings to all TAA members! As the new President of TAA, I am delighted to lead such a wonderful organization that has given me so much over the years. For those of you who don't know me, I am a long-time TAA member and an author and illustrator in the field of anatomy & physiology. As we all navigate the ever-changing landscape of higher education publishing, I would like to share with you my goals for TAA.



First and foremost, we must remain true to our mission of advocating for the rights of textbook and academic authors and standing for excellence in scholarly writing. Everything we do should always align with this mission and we should not stray from it.

While we have made some good progress in the area of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), I would like to see us at the forefront on this matter, advocating for these issues on behalf of our members. In short, we need to integrate DEI into our DNA at TAA.

Change is difficult for all of us, yet the only constant in life is change. The future of textbooks is digital and interactive and textbook authors all need to embrace this change. This will be an important factor in attracting new, younger members to our organization and flourishing in the future.

Like all non-profit organizations, we obviously need to continue to be actively involved in fund raising, growing our membership, and finding new leaders. Please consider getting more actively involved with TAA by serving on a committee or running for a leadership position. You will be working with some terrific people.

I look forward to serving all of you!

Sincerely,
Paul Krieger

Make a Big Impact With a Future Gift

When you include the Textbook & Academic Authors Association in your estate plan, your generosity ensures that textbook and academic authors will receive support well into the future.

For those who have greatly benefitted from the resources that TAA provides, planned giving represents a way to leave a lasting legacy to the association. Charitable bequests also reduce the size of your estate and reduce estate taxation.

Include a Gift to TAA in Your Will or Trust. Gift TAA a specific amount or percentage of your estate in your will. View bequest language and other information about making a bequest to TAA.

Name TAA a Beneficiary of Your Life Insurance Policy. Designate TAA as the primary beneficiary for a percentage or specific amount of your life insurance policy. You can also make us the contingent beneficiary so that we will receive the balance of your policy only if your primary beneficiary doesn't survive you. You qualify for a federal income tax charitable deduction when you itemize on your taxes. If you continue to pay premiums on the policy, each payment is tax deductible as a charitable gift when you itemize.

There are numerous ways to creatively structure a planned gift. Consult your attorney and/or financial adviser to assure that the optimum benefits are realized for both you and TAA.

Already included us in your estate plans? Let us know so we can thank you (TAAonline.net/legacygift)

If you have any questions, or to discuss making a gift, contact Kim Pawlak, TAA Executive Director, Kim.Pawlak@TAAonline.net or (507) 459-1363. ●

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Embracing Creative Nonfiction in Academic Writing

Readers come to your work with their own reference points, their own imaginations and prior experiences. A few words can evoke a character, place, or feeling in their minds.

My friend Lori was in a car wreck when she was a teenager. The driver, her best friend, drunk, crashed the car into a tree. Lori was not wearing a seatbelt. She was ejected through the windshield, narrowly missing the tree. After dozens of surgeries, Lori still has subtle scars on the left-hand side of her face, and she complains that she can't do anything with her hair because of the roadmap of scars on her scalp.

is happening in the story on a visceral level. Writers have the power to evoke all sorts of emotions in our readers. A story about a natural disaster might bring up feelings of loss, frustration, and distress. Writing about an animal laboratory might bring up feelings of compassion, tedium, and the excitement of a new discovery. Writing vulnerably is another way to connect our writing to our reader's reference points.

Finally, good stories follow some sort of logical narrative arc, a storyline or plot line. The events in a good story are ordered and parceled out in a way that keeps the reader wanting to know more.

When we connect to the reference points that people already hold, we make the story come alive for them.

Could you picture Lori and the wreck in your mind? There are lots of details I didn't give you. I didn't tell you what kind of car the friend drove, or what color it was. I didn't tell you how big the tree was, or how fast the car was going. I didn't say much about what Lori looks like. Nonetheless, as you were reading, you probably formed a pretty good picture of the scene in your head. The scene evoked images, feelings, sensations (did you imagine how that ejection through the windshield felt?), perhaps even sounds in your mind. When we connect to the reference points that people already hold, we make the story come alive for them.

Good stories also draw on our emotions. When there is emotional vulnerability within our stories, readers can connect to what

You want your book to be a page-turner. To transform those students into readers who don't want to put your book down because they need to know what happens next. ●

Portions of the article are reprinted from Writing Ethnography, 2nd edition.

Jessica Smartt Gullion, PhD, is Professor of Sociology and Associate Dean of Research at Texas Woman's University. She has published ten books, including the bestselling *Writing Ethnography*, and the award-winning *Diffractive Ethnography*.



Meet the Newest Member of Our Team

We are pleased to welcome Kiley Thornton, the new Director of Membership and Programs. She joined TAA on May 15. Kiley comes to us with almost 20 years of association and membership management experience. Most recently she led the professional membership program for the National Kidney Foundation, working primarily with medical professionals.

In addition to developing and implementing meaningful member benefits, as well as recruiting and retaining members, Kiley will be managing the annual Conference, TAA's Textbook Awards program, overseeing the Grants program, and helping with the blog. She is excited to be part of TAA

and support the needs of academic and textbook authors.

In her free time, Kiley enjoys singing, traveling, and wearing Korean face masks while watching TV. She is fascinated by history, is an animal lover, likes a good ghost story, enjoys all baked goods, and believes a summer day is best spent in a hammock. ●



Michael Sullivan Donates \$100,000 to Fund Lecture Series, Matching Gift Challenge

Make a Donation Before Dec. 31 and Double Your Gift!

A \$100,000 gift from mathematics textbook author and long-time member Michael Sullivan will fund an annual lecture at the TAA annual conference and a 1:1 matching gift challenge to encourage additional gifts to support the association.

One half of the gift will fund the “Michael Sullivan Lecture on Textbook & Academic Authoring,” which will provide a forum for textbook and academic authors to learn from veteran textbook and academic authors and other academic and textbook authoring and publishing experts. The first lecture will take place at the 2025 TAA Conference.

The other half of the gift will be used as a matching gift challenge to encourage additional gifts to support the association. Support TAA by making a donation to one of the following areas before December 31, and it will be matched 1:1 up to \$50,000, doubling your gift:

- **TAA Conference Travel Grant.** Contributions to this fund enable members who cannot afford to attend to gain valuable education and make meaningful connections.
- **TAA Webinar Program.** Contributions to this fund allow us to bring in paid presenters on topics of value to TAA members, including industry topics like AI, piracy, DEI, and more.
- **Unrestricted Gift.** Give TAA’s leadership discretion in how your donation will be spent, maximizing our ability to respond to the ever-changing needs of the association.

“I have been involved with TAA for about 35 years and have watched the organization evolve from a membership of

30 to over 2,500,” said Sullivan. “The importance of

TAA to the textbook and academic publishing community is notable. But as a nonprofit, TAA must rely on its membership for support beyond dues if it is to continue its role as the only organization dedicated to textbook and academic authors. I hope my gift to TAA will inspire others to help TAA continue its work on behalf of authors.”

All charitable contributions are 100% tax deductible. Donate at TAAonline.net/donate ●



Michael Sullivan on Textbook Writing: ‘You can’t write a good textbook without being a good teacher’

TAA recently caught up with mathematics textbook author and long-time member Michael Sullivan, whose generous gift of \$100,000 is the largest our association has ever received. He answers several questions from how he got started writing textbooks to the advice he would give to other textbook authors.



How did you start writing textbooks?

Most textbook authors get started because they’re not satisfied with the text they’re using, and that was my case as well. That said, the first textbook I contributed to—a mathematics book for elementary school teachers—was a disappointment. It was adopted in only three schools: my own school, my coauthor’s school, and the major reviewer’s school.

But before news got out that it hadn’t done well, we were approached by an editor at Wiley. Many business schools were opening around that time, and their curricula included math applications in the social sciences. We were asked to write a textbook that covered math-major material in a way that other students could access.

That book just took off! It did exactly what everyone wanted. It even became a selection in the Book of the Month Club, which wasn’t known for highlighting math books.

How did you get involved with TAA?

When TAA started in 1988, mostly math authors were involved in it, and I was one of them. I saw TAA as an organization that was long overdue. At the time, textbook publishers always had the edge over authors, because obviously publishers knew the business. The idea of TAA was to reduce that edge by educating textbook authors about what to expect from publishers. Later, the scope broadened to include all textbook authoring professions and other academic authors as well.

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Build it Up

You might be rather skeptical about the small-steps approach, and of course it will take forever to write a 70,000-word book if you are only writing ten words a day. ¹

However, if you consistently show up to do your small step, you'll become familiar with it, less scared, and also better at it. That's when you increase the step into something larger.

Turn up each session, repeat, and the behavior will build without freaking out your amygdala.

Find a Prompt to Embed the Behavior

Prompts will anchor your step into your day. Identifying an existing routine (like brushing your teeth or eating your breakfast) or an event (like a phone notification) that can act as a cue to remind you to do the new behaviour. Experiment with which prompt works best for you.

Feel Good About Your Progress

While motivation is a fickle and unreliable friend for writers: that doesn't mean writing should be miserable. In fact, feeling good about your writing will help you keep going, especially when you hit hard times.

Notice each time you take a step or reach a milestone. Embed that positive feeling by tapping into your brain's reward circuitry with a celebration, reward or treat - these will help you recognize progress and lead to feelings of success as your project moves forward, step by step. ●

1 Forever in this case is 7,000 days or 19.18 years.

Bec Evans and Chris Smith are the founders of Prolifiko, a coaching business that helps people build productive writing habits, and the authors of *Written: How to Keep Writing and Build a Habit that Lasts*, a research-backed self-coaching guide giving people the strategies and tools to beat their writing blocks and become more productive.



Connecting with an Acquisition's Editor? Be Considerate of Their List

A keyway to connect with an acquisitions editor is to be considerate of their list, said Gregory J. Privitera, PhD, Professor of Psychology at St. Bonaventure University, and author of *Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (3e)*, *Essential Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (2e)*, and *Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences (3e)*: "Publishers do not want to 'cannibalize' their lists. In other words, they want to build more sales; they generally don't want a book that would directly compete with a book they already have on their list. So, being considerate of how your book proposal 'fits' within the full list of an acquisition editor can help align your work with their interests for signing a new author." ●



2023 WEBINAR SERIES

So, You Talk to Cows? A Faculty Author's Publishing Story



Join Erica Irlbeck, author of *The Crisis Communications Guide for Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources*, who will share her textbook authoring journey with XanEdu Publishing.

Thursday, October 19, 2-3 p.m. EST

Passion for Learning and Research: Is Earning a Doctorate the Right Path For You?



Join Tasha Egalite, Ph.D., New Mexico State University, and Kristin Kew, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Department of Educational Leadership and Administration, New Mexico State University, to learn how to determine whether to apply for a doctoral program and how to navigate some of the pitfalls and rabbit holes of the academic arena.

Thursday, December 7, 2023,
11 a.m. to 12 p.m. EST



TAAonline.net/webinars



WATCH ON DEMAND

How to Leverage a Textbook or Academic Book to Launch a Consulting Career



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Michael Sullivan on Textbook Writing: ‘You can’t write a good textbook without being a good teacher’

How do you prepare for new editions?

I’m currently working on the fourth edition of AP Calculus for MacMillan and the 12th edition of a 4-book Precalculus series for Pearson. One thing I always insist on is that publishers retain teachers who use the textbook to conduct what I call “diary reviews.” As instructors come across material that could be improved or updated,

How have textbooks evolved to become digital?

That’s a tough one, because it’s a work in progress. Publishers began by just using PDFs of the book, and that’s not always the best reading experience. That said, the process has been improved and adoptions are now running more than 50 percent on the digital side over print. That was unheard of 10 or 15 years ago.

Be patient. This is a learning process that takes a lot of time and effort.

they make a note on the page. That feedback becomes my main resource for revision.

It’s important to have a thick skin through this process. Think hard about what’s being recommended. Sometimes you’ll be asked to do things you don’t like but that educators in the community want. Listen to them before making a decision.

What advice would you give other textbook authors?

Ask yourself: What would I say if I were in a classroom? You can’t write a good textbook without being a good teacher. Try to put that teaching process into words.

Also, be patient. This is a learning process that takes a lot of time and effort. I recommend setting aside a block of hours to work without interruption. When my kids were young, they’d see me writing at our dining room table when they left for school at 8:30. When they returned home at 3, I’d still be there with a bag of crumpled paper next to me. Those were all my bad starts.

What do you enjoy doing when you’re not writing?

I like playing tennis and traveling. In October I’ll represent the Authors’ Coalition of America at the IFFRO (The International Federation of Reproduction Rights Organizations) World Congress in Reykjavik, Iceland.

Also, my grandson is getting married! It’s an exciting time for him. He’s an Olympic swimmer—Ryan Murphy. He has four Olympic gold medals, and he just finished the world championships in Japan with four medals (two golds, a silver and a bronze).

Sullivan was a Professor of Mathematics at Chicago State University from 1965 to 1997. His love of teaching spurred him to write textbooks, with his first textbook *Finite Mathematics*, published in 1972. He has since authored more than 120 textbooks. Several of his texts won TAA McGuffey Longevity Awards, and he was honored with TAA’s Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007. He has served as TAA Council President and Treasurer and is currently TAA’s representative to the Authors Coalition. ●

How to Use a Double Entry System in Your Professional Journal

Dannelle D. Stevens, Professor Emerita at Portland State University and the co-author of five books, including *Write more, publish more, stress less!*, describes the double entry system she uses in her professional journal:

“I have two columns in my professional journal. A good metaphor is the larger column is like the river and the side column (1-1.5 inches) is the observation. I write the date, people who are at the meeting, to do lists from the meeting,

special thoughts, and reflections. The larger column is my notes, meeting minutes, drawings, post-its from brainstorming. I also create the table of contents after I finish a journal and it is a great source for next steps in my life and for bringing balance.” ●



Join us in Nashville to Learn, Network, Connect

TAA's Annual Textbook & Academic Authoring Conference is back in person!

Join us June 21-22, 2024, at the vibrant and funky Virgin Hotels Nashville in the heart of Music City to learn, network, and connect.

Learn how to turn up the volume on your textbook or academic writing at this annual conference that features General, Textbook and Academic Tracks, mentoring by veteran authors and industry professionals, and lots of networking opportunities. Here are five more reasons to join us in Nashville:

- 1) You'll enjoy engaging presenters and interactive sessions, with timely and relevant topics.
- 2) You'll be able to connect one-on-one with other textbook and academic authors and industry professionals who can help further your writing career.
- 3) You'll no longer feel alone in your writing pursuits.
- 4) We haven't seen each other in almost five years!

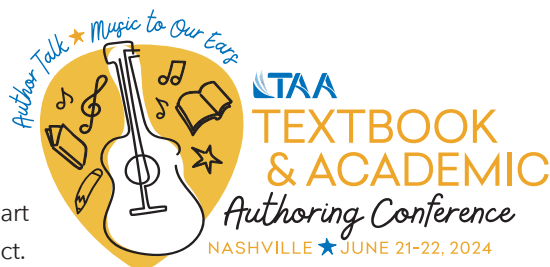
Don't forget! Members receive \$50 off by using coupon code **MEMBER50**. Register at 2024taaconference.org.

If funding is an issue, for the first time, we're offering a limited number of travel grants. Don't let cost get in the way of attending this premier event. Learn more or apply at TAAonline.net/taa-conference-travel-grant-program.

Share Your Knowledge and Experience with Other Authors: Submit a Session Proposal

Have an original idea, or something you've been wanting to share with your colleagues? Submit a session proposal!

Preference will be given to sessions that incorporate innovative and interactive elements and align with our goals to explore and exchange ideas on the future of the textbook and academic authoring and publishing industry, especially emerging trends like AI; share successful writing tips and strategies and inspire you to complete your writing projects; and promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in academic and educational materials. For more information or to submit a proposal, click the "Call for Proposals" link at the top of the conference website: 2024taaconference.org.



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NEWSLETTER EDITOR: KIM PAWLAK

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BUSY TAA PEOPLE

TAA Member Margarita Huerta's Work Reaches the 1,000 Mark for Citations



TAA member Margarita Huerta, PhD, writer and Founder of Real Academics, reached the 1,000 mark for citations on her Google Scholar profile [<https://tinyurl.com/5n8ujhm>] on August 25, 2023.

"It's nice to see my work keeps generating some thinking," said Huerta. "May this encourage you all to do meaningful work. Be inspired! The publication I was MOST passionate about (regarding helping academics with their writing anxiety) is the most cited. Lesson here: Write about what you are passionate about and write it WELL."

"Being cited means that others are finding your work useful and referring to it when they write up their own research," she says. "In short, it's good to 'be cited', and in my field (educational research) 1,000 is a great number." Congratulations Margarita!

Jean Murphy Under Contract For First Book



TAA member Jean Derricotte-Murphy, D.Min., Ph.D, is under contract with Cascade Books to publish her first book, *A View From the Balcony: Opera Through Womanist Eyes*, in early 2024. Excerpted from the book's abstract: "...this work offers the reader a historical glance at the philosophical and religious underpinnings of systemic racism by presenting a new healing hermeneutic, a Balcony Hermeneutic, from which to view, critique, assess, correct, and reverse the devastating effects Anthropological Poverty has inflicted upon the world." She will also be presenting the paper "Beloved, Margaret Garner, and the Desperate Flight to Freedom" at the November 2023 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Religion in San Antonio Texas. Congratulations Jean!

Karen and Bill Timberlake Receive 2023 Alumni Legacy Award From UCLA



TAA members Karen Timberlake (M.S. '65) and William Timberlake (M.S. '66) received UCLA's 2023 Alumni Legacy Award.

The award honors distinguished UCLA Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry alumni who have received a graduate-level degree from the department, in recognition of their achievements in life, and generous support and service to UCLA. Congratulations Karen and Bill!

Juli Saitz Recommended by Who's Who in Legal



TAA member Juli Saitz, a Certified Public Accountant at HKA, has received a Recommended ranking by Who's Who in Legal, which identifies the foremost legal practitioners in multiple areas of business law. WWL says: "Juli Saitz is held in high regard for her profound skill when it comes to providing expert testimony in IP-related litigation involving damages and valuation issues." Congratulations Juli!

Paul Krieger's Textbook Goes Completely Digital



The 5th edition of TAA Council President Paul Krieger's book, *A Visual Analogy Guide to Human Anatomy & Physiology*, published by Top Hat, is being transformed into a completely digital and interactive book. The new book cover was completed in March 2023. The new edition was released in September 2023. Congratulations Paul!

