

The Academic Author

NEWSLETTER

Relaxed Productivity: A Kinder Way to Work Well

BY ALISON MILLER, PHD, THE ACADEMIC WRITERS' SPACE

Many academic writers experience writing as pressured and effortful. It can feel like a constant push to stay focused, stay on top of deadlines, and demonstrate that you are moving forward. Over time, this pressure can become a default setting, making it harder to feel connected to the work itself.

Relaxed productivity offers a different experience. It is a way of working that supports focus, consistency, and well-being by creating the internal and external conditions that help you stay present with your work. In this approach, you are not working from reactivity or urgency. **You are working with clarity, rhythm, and intentional effort.**

Clarity means knowing what matters right now. Rhythm comes from creating a steady way to begin and return to your work. Intentional effort means choosing tasks that match your real capacity and focusing on one step at a time. These elements create the conditions for focus, steadiness, and connection.

A key element of this approach is the **practice of immersive contact**. This means staying with your work long enough to feel connected to it. Immersive contact invites you into a state where you are engaged, attuned, and available to the thinking and writing you want to do. This kind of connection supports momentum that feels grounded and real.

To support immersive contact, begin by noticing how you are when you arrive at your desk. Ask yourself: What is the version of me that is here today? What do I need to work well right now? When you make plans that match your actual capacity, you begin to build trust in yourself. That trust helps you engage more fully and return more easily over time.

Creating structure is one way to care for your attention. When you define where to begin and how you want to move through your time, you create the conditions for steadiness and focus.

Writing in a shared space of focus, whether virtual or in person, can also support relaxed productivity. When the conditions are aligned, progress and presence can exist together. And you can work in a way that honors both your well-being and your goals. ●

Alison Miller, PhD, is the founder of The Academic Writers' Space (TAWS) (theacademicwritersspace.com), an online coworking community she designed for graduate students and academic writers to get real work done in a supportive and nurturing environment. She is also the author of *Finish Your Dissertation Once and for All! How to Overcome Psychological Barriers, Get Results, and Move on With Your Life*.



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2025 TAA Virtual Conference: A Resounding Success

We're thrilled to share that the 2025 TAA Conference on Textbook & Academic Authoring was a tremendous success – and it's all thanks to our incredible attendees, speakers, sponsors, and staff who made this event truly special.

Held virtually June 9-10, this year's conference brought together textbook and academic authors from across the country for two days of learning, connection, and inspiration. With 147 participants and a line-up of close to two dozen expert-led sessions, the event offered something valuable for every stage of the author journey – from first-time writers to seasoned scholars.

Highlights included:

- An engaging keynote from Dr. Gerald Friedland, Principal Scientist at Amazon AWS, and coauthor of *Multimedia Computing*, on the future of textbook publishing and its opportunities and challenges, especially around AI.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Passing the Gavel

The momentum continues as TAA experiences a transition in Board leadership. I would like to thank Paul Krieger for his leadership as president as well as his 22 years of TAA membership. It has been a pleasure working closely with Paul the past couple of years. I am grateful for his generous and abundant guidance and friendship.

As I move into the role of president, I welcome this opportunity with enthusiasm and purpose. I wish to extend the collegial spirit shared with me upon my introduction to TAA at a Tara Gray workshop. Her enthusiasm for writing and the processes leading to publication led me to attend the TAA conference in San Antonio. It was more than I hoped or imagined! I maintain friendships from that initial experience that continue today.

The website offers a myriad of resources from Textbook Publishers Author's Guidelines, *The Academic Author* newsletter, Diversity Equity and Inclusion resources, Webinars on Demand, Virtual Workshops, Conversation Circles, and much more for our

talented members to explore. Additionally, it's with enthusiasm that I announce an increase in the number of institutional memberships TAA has recruited. The number is 11 percent higher than the number TAA enjoyed in June of 2024. Faculty will enjoy the benefits of membership that will inspire and motivate them over the coming year. Congratulations to Executive Director, Kim Pawlak, and staff members Sierra Pawlak and Trisha Rulewicz for their efforts over the past year to produce this wonderful outcome.

I look forward to working with the board members, Kim, and the staff to support TAA's goals and objectives and I also look forward to meeting many members in the webinars and at our future conferences.

Sincerely yours,

Dione Taylor



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. ●



Connecting with Your Readers

BY JOHN BOND

Connecting with your readers and audience. Who would debate that this is not essential? And yet some authors resist it, and others are unsure how to go about doing it. Let's talk about finding out who your readers and audience are and then how to go about establishing and ensuring a long term connection.

When you start to focus on who your readers and audience are, specificity is the key. Don't be too broad in defining them but start to drill down into the profile of your ideal reader, and therefore your ideal audience.

Think about what their professions or job titles are. You could say scientist, or you might say biologist more specifically, or you might say molecular biologist. All might be true, but the last one provides the greatest benefits to you when thinking about your readers and audience.

It's difficult to say you're going to connect with "all scientists." Connecting with molecular biologists seems a much more

up with a single sentence definition of who your target market is. Specificity matters. Remember the old adage, that if you try to write for everybody, you'll be writing for no one.

Now, let's discuss how to connect with your audience. You probably are already immersed in where they are since this is your chosen field of interest. Conferences are important places to meet them and engage with what is on their minds. Social media (the professional type, including internet forums, think old message board or chat



Defining your readers and customers is a way for you to focus your writing, ideas, and eventually your marketing and promotional efforts.

achievable goal. Now think about what level they are. Yes, it's okay to say all molecular biologists (in this example). But maybe you'd want to add "mid-career" to your target. Or you may want to say molecular biologists focused on genetics or biochemistry. Undoubtedly the molecular biologists at the pinnacle of their professions are potential readers but your work may not be the first thing they pick as a thought leader. Are retired molecular biologists your target market? Also, consider thinking about where your readers are geographically. You may wish to say all molecular biologists across the world. Or depending on who your publisher and the publication you're working with is, you may wish to narrow it down to, let's say, North America. Or you may be thinking regionally.

It is important to note that drilling down to your target readers and customers *does not mean* you are excluding anybody *outside* your definition. There will certainly be people outside your target audience who find your work through search, databases, or by a book retailer search at a place like Amazon. Interdisciplinary readership is a wonderful and essential way to spread your work in scholarly publishing.

Defining your readers and customers is a way for you to focus your writing, ideas, and eventually your marketing and promotional efforts.

Take a minute for either your current or next writing project (or for your career and research interests in general) and come

rooms that may be run by your society or association) are key places to connect with an audience. Speaking of which, writing and participating in professional organizations is a great way to connect and stay in touch with your readers. There are many other venues, and you are probably better suited to know them in your exact field than I am to list them.

When you are in the midst of these groups, wear three hats. First, of course you are there for your own professional development and knowledge. Second, be a fly on the wall. Observe your audience's interests, their educational preferences, and what catches their attention. Finally, connect. Don't be afraid to swap business cards or contact information. Put yourself out there and talk about your writing, your project, and/or your research interests.

Make that connection. You will benefit but mostly it will help expand your future. You won't regret it. ●

John Bond is a publishing consultant at Riverwinds Consulting. His new book is: *The Little Guide to Getting Your Book Published: Simple Steps to Success*. He is also the host of the YouTube channel "Publishing Defined." Contact him at jbond@riverwindsconsulting.com.



Conference a Resounding Success *continued from page 1*

- Three interactive pre-conference workshops on academic writing, book proposals, and demystifying the publishing process.
- Three on-demand workshops on writing and a guided meditation before writing.
- Networking sessions that sparked new collaborations and shared experiences.
- The ever-popular mentoring sessions with seasoned professionals and industry experts held pre-meeting.

We've received overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees, with many noting how much they appreciated the quality of the sessions, the professionalism of the event, and the opportunity to connect with fellow authors and industry professionals

Top comments from attendees:

"I loved the one-on-one mentoring, the opportunities to network and the very useful information from the conference. I am grateful to TAA for making this possible. In such a warm and supportive atmosphere, it is a pleasure to present and network with fellow writers."

"As a first-time attendee and someone who has only worked in Publishing and never as an author, I wanted to be a fly on the wall and learn what I could. The camaraderie and openness to discourse that I experienced through these sessions and conversations was inspiring and sobering."

"I was extremely happy with this experience. I was worried that it was completely virtual, but the conference was surprisingly good, well-organized, easy to navigate, very-well paced, with a variety of topics and excellent presenters. I look forward to attending next year."



Winners of the closing session raffle included:

- **\$100 American Express Gift Card** - Cassandra Baker
- **\$50 Best Buy Gift Card** - Rebecca Campbell & Yun Shi
- **\$25 Starbucks Gift Card** - Jessica Burchett, Lisa Compton, Karen Turner, and Peggie Williamson
- **TAA Conference T-shirt** - Renee Saris-Baglana
- **Guide to Making Time to Write print book** - Heather Jenkins & Jessica Sarra

To everyone who contributed – whether by presenting, participating, or supporting behind the scenes – thank you. Your involvement helped make this one of our most successful conferences to date. Special thanks goes to Bronze Level sponsors Archstone Law, Top Hat and BMG, and Attendee Gift Box sponsor Chemeketa Press for donating pens.

We're already looking ahead to the 2026 TAA Conference and can't wait to build on this momentum. Stay tuned for more updates – and until then, keep writing, keep connecting, and thank you for being part of the TAA community. ●

A Big Thank You to Our TAA Conference Sponsors



Sign Up for Daily Writing Accountability Sessions

Reserve your spot for TAA's daily writing accountability sessions, open to all members! These 30-minute sessions, available Monday through Friday, provide focused time to write, research, work on projects, connect with other writers, and build a supportive community. Sessions are held Monday and Thursday from 3:30-4 p.m. ET and Tuesday, Wednesday and

Friday from 11-11:30 a.m. ET. You can sign up for one or all, one month or multiple months. Enrollment is limited to 20 people per month. Sign up to reserve your spot!

TAAonline.net/writing-accountability-sessions



2025 TAA Conference Scholarship Recipients Share Recollections

Five TAA members were awarded 2025 TAA Virtual Conference Scholarships: Akua Oppong-Anane, West Virginia University; Nathan Camp, New Mexico State University; Elizabeth Frasco, New York University; Gabriela Peterson, New Mexico State University; and Renee Blanchard Hawkins, Texas Woman's University.

The scholarship is designed to support emerging scholars and textbook writers as they grow in their academic journeys. It offers a valuable opportunity to engage with a vibrant community of peers and professionals, gain insights into the world of academic publishing, and take meaningful steps toward a successful writing career.

Congratulations again to our scholarship recipients – we can't wait to see the impact you'll make in the field!

Here are some highlights from recipients:

"Every session of the conference offered practical takeaways, which are too numerous to recount. The conference was an invaluable learning experience, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to attend." - Akua Oppong-Anane



"Thank you again for the chance to attend the 2025 TAA Conference as a scholarship recipient—it was such a meaningful experience for me. The session that had the biggest impact was the pre-conference workshop, Book Proposals: Five Myths and Five Action Steps. I've been carrying around ideas for a book and several articles, but I've always hesitated to take that first step. This workshop helped shift my mindset." - Gabriela Peterson



"Attending the 2025 TAA Virtual Conference was an invaluable experience that taught me several key lessons that I will carry with me for the rest of my academic career. I am grateful to have been able to attend and look forward to applying the lessons I learned from this conference in my academic writing." - Nathan Camp



2025 - 2026 WEBINAR SERIES

Revise and Resubmit: Strategies for Organizing and Executing Feedback Efficiently



Join Christine Tulley, Professor of English, Founder and Director of the Master of Arts in Rhetoric and Writing, The University of Findlay, to learn four key strategies for effectively managing and implementing the "revise and resubmit" feedback in academic writing.

Thursday, September 10, 2-3 p.m. ET

From Pressure to Presence: A New Approach to Work in Grad School and Beyond



Allison Miller, PhD, founder of the online coworking community, The Academic Writers' Space (TAWS), will share practical strategies and ready-to-use exercises to help you work with more clarity, focus, and self-trust.

Thursday, October 16, 2-3 p.m. ET

The Writing Teacher Is In. And She Has Tech Tools!



Maria Zafonte, Professor of English, Department Chair, Grand Canyon University will provide an overview of technology tools that can help you to meet your academic writing goals.

Wednesday, November 5, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. ET

TAAonline.net/webinars



WATCH ON DEMAND

Beyond the Book: How to Market Your Work



Dr. Erica Machulak, author of *Hustles for Humanists: Build a Business with Purpose*, shared how to align your book marketing strategy with your professional goals so that you can sidestep some of the challenges that many academic authors face come publication day.



Watch 250+ On Demand Presentations:

TAAonline.net/presentations-on-demand



Writing Academically as a Non-Native English Speaker

BY SIERRA PAWLAK

Yun Shi, PhD, an assistant professor of Counselor Education at Portland State University, and a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT), shares her insight into what it's like to write in academia when English is your second language.

Q: Can you share a bit about your journey in learning to write academically as a non-native English speaker?

Yun Shi: My journey started when I came to the United States as an international student. I first came here for a master's program in Asian studies, and that's when I started to write academically. A few years later, I went back to school to study counseling, and 15 years later, to get my doctoral degree in counseling Education. Now I'm working in academia. So academic writing has become part of my daily life.

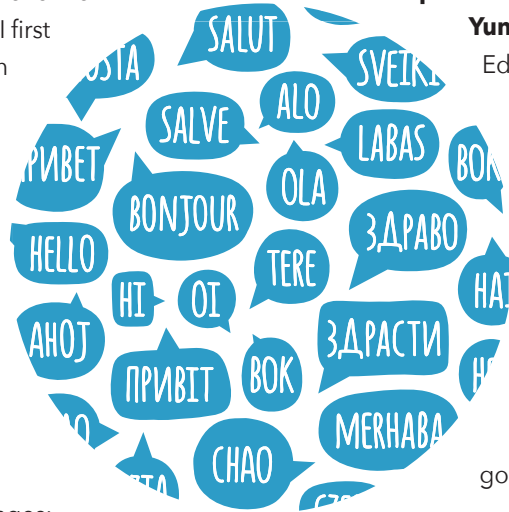
Q: What are some of the biggest challenges that you faced when starting to write in English?

Yun Shi: There are two layers of challenges: writing in English and writing in Academic English. I think the biggest challenge that I faced as a non-native English speaker was to learn how to write in English. Every language has its unique rules, vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, and Chinese is very different from English. So, for me, learning to write in English literally was writing in a brand-new language. It's challenging

because you have to develop everything from scratch, but is also tremendously beneficial, because you are exposed to a brand-new way of thinking. Writing in academia has its own layer of challenge because it's a unique set of language, with its own unique set of rules that one has to learn.

Q: Do you feel that academic structure and conventions help level the playing field for non-native speakers?

Yun Shi: Yes, for example, in the Counselor Education Field we use the APA writing style. If you master the APA manual, everybody follows the same rules. You know exactly how other people will be writing, and that reduces some of the challenges non-native English speakers face when they try to struggle with the vocabulary, and the different cultural backgrounds and rules. When you see academic journals written well by non-native speakers, and they are often as clear as native speakers, I think that's a good example of leveling the playing field. ●



The full interview is available as part of the 2025 TAA Virtual Conference On Demand sessions, available free to conference registrants (TAAonline.net/2025-taa-conference-sessions-on-demand) and at a fee for non-registrants (TAAonline.net/2025-taa-conference-sessions).

New Industry Professional Added to TAA Professional Directory

As a developmental editor, Karen C. Turner of TurnKey Content has worked on content development and creation in academic textbooks for more than 20 years. As a freelancer she has expanded from textbook editing and project management into editing digital question banks and ghostwriting.

"My degree in biology gives me an edge in my areas of content expertise, including anatomy/physiology, pathophysiology, nursing informatics, and USMLE-style questions," she said. "I have a proven track record of managing large, complex products while

maintaining a high level of quality. I have particular skill with high-level art programs, helping unite art with narrative in a cohesive and consistent way."

TAA members receive 10% off of services, plus a free trial period to be sure you work well together. Learn more or connect with Karen: TAAonline.net/professional-directory-editors ●



TAA Board Welcomes New Executive Committee Members

The TAA Board welcomed new President Dione Taylor, new Vice President/President-Elect Christine Tulley, and new Secretary Jamie Pope on July 1. Former Board Secretary, Brenda Ulrich, an intellectual property attorney at Archstone Law, was appointed a three-year term as Board member.

Dione Taylor is ascending to President after serving two years as Vice President/President-Elect. She is Director of the Pupil Personnel Services, School Counseling program in the School of Education at Point Loma Nazarene University. She conducted research with graduate students around the topic of cultural competence and published the results in an article entitled *Developing graduate and undergraduate student cultural sensitivity and emerging competence using the Intercultural Development Inventory®*.



Christine Tulley is Professor of English and Founder and Director of the Master of Arts in Rhetoric and Writing at The University of Findlay. As the campus Academic Development Coordinator, she runs faculty writing groups and offers tenure and promotion application support including effective practices for writing teaching philosophies and persuasive reflective statements. She is the author of *How Writing Faculty Write* (2018) and contributes regularly to Inside Higher Education on faculty productivity issues. She also serves as a research adviser to Prolifiko, a UK-based writing productivity think tank, and as a dissertation writing coach with Defend and Publish.



Jamie Pope served one year as a Board member before being elected Secretary by the Board. She currently serves as Adjunct Assistant Professor in Nutritional Sciences in the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing. Previously, she served as Assistant Professor of Practice in Medicine, Health and Society in the College of Arts and Sciences at Vanderbilt University. She is the co-author of *Nutrition for a Changing World*, the recipient of a 2020 TAA Textbook Excellence Award. In 2020, she developed and produced an audio course for Learn25.com (Nutrition 101: Understanding the Science and Practice of Eating Well) designed for the NPR type lifelong learner. She has also authored or contributed to numerous scientific and popular press publications.



Brenda Ulrich is a partner at Archstone and is an intellectual property attorney who focuses on publishing, higher education, copyright and trademark law. She represents authors negotiating and interpreting publishing agreements, agency agreements, and joint author agreements. She also advises colleges and universities on the development and implementation of intellectual property policies, navigating copyright questions related to teaching and scholarship, as well as managing and defending college and university trademark portfolios.



TAA Board

Executive Members

Dione Taylor, *President*
Christine Tulley, *Vice President*
Michael Sullivan, *Treasurer*
Jamie Pope, *Secretary*
Paul Krieger, *Past-President*
Kim Pawlak, *Executive Director*



Board Members

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Nicole Dillard
Tasha Égalité
Rick Mullins



Authors Coalition Rep

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Virtual Events & Education Manager
Trisha Rulewicz,
Membership Manager



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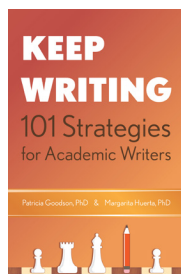
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NEWSLETTER EDITOR: KIM PAWLAK

BUSY TAA PEOPLE

Patricia Goodson, Margarita Huerta Author New Book for Academic Writers

TAA members Dr. Patricia Goodson, Presidential Professor for Teaching Excellence - Emerita at Texas A&M University, and Dr. Margarita Huerta, the Founder of Real Academics, published a new book, *Keep Writing: 101 Strategies for Academic Writers*, which contains 101 user-friendly, bite-sized suggestions for nurturing the motivation to sustain a healthy, productive, and joyful writing career, day after day after day. Congratulations, Patricia and Margarita!



Felicia Moore Mensah Selected 2024 NARST Fellow

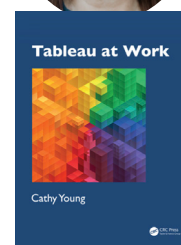
Dr. Felicia Moore Mensah, PhD, a Professor of Science Education at Teachers College, Columbia University and Chair of the Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology, was selected as a 2025 NARST Fellow. The NARST Fellows Program honors and recognizes members for their exceptional contribution to and excellence in research and service to the NARST community. Congratulations, Felicia!



Cathy Young Publishes New Book

TAA Member Cathy Young's new book, *Tableau at Work*, will soon be released by Taylor & Francis. With data and AI increasingly at the forefront of business today, you have a significant advantage when you can manage data and uncover and communicate data insights effectively.

"It's been quite a journey, taking nearly a year to bring this project to publication, and I'm so excited to finally share it," she said. "I'm grateful for the resources provided by TAA that helped make it possible." Congratulations, Cathy!



Andrea Honigsfeld Selected for Maroon Monocle Award

Dr. Andrea Honigsfeld, a Professor of TESOL Teacher Education at Molloy University, has been selected for Molloy University's Maroon Monocle Award, presented in recognition of an individual's ability to align their philosophy of teaching with research practices in a creative, yet meaningful manner. Congratulations, Andrea!

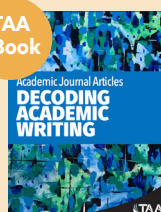


Christina Inge Earns Doctor of Education

TAA member Christina J. Inge, EdD, Digital Marketing and Automation, Founder, Thoughtlight Digital Agency, and Expert on Data Analysis & Performance Optimization completed her EdD - Doctor of Education at Northeastern University! Congratulations, Christina!



TAA
eBook



Learn how to find the right home
for your journal article, what
to do after your article is
published, and more!

TAAonline.net/ebook-downloads

