



Fall 2015

ACADEMY FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

The Spark

Ideas to Inspire a Community of Learning



For the past few years, the Academy for Teaching and Learning (ATL) has produced an annual publication designed to foster excellence in teaching and learning. Our most recent edition encouraged reflection on the theme of Learning Environments: physical and virtual spaces for cultivating learning. As the number of ATL affiliates grows—faculty and graduate students who generously invest in and advance our work—we embrace new opportunities to share ideas and research more regularly, ideas and research that may spark fresh insights and activities throughout the year. While we are thrilled to continue our yearly publication, I am pleased to reintroduce *The Spark*, a concise newsletter aimed at professional development on a specific topic. This edition of *The Spark* is devoted to article and book publication. In it, Dr. Heidi Bostic and Dr. Carey Newman offer expert advice on producing and publishing scholarly work. I hope their insights inspire you to write and publish your work. Let's continue to share our light—and fire—with the world.

J. Anne Wright

Publish that Article

The process of writing an article and then placing it in a peer-reviewed journal can bewilder graduate students, seasoned academics, and many in between. If you find yourself at loose ends with an article, the following suggestions may help.

Identify topics that you care about. Select one central idea to address in each article—don't try to include every thought you've ever had about the topic. (If your article seems cluttered, it may actually be 2 or 3 articles in disguise.) Strive to achieve an overarching coherence in your work—your various publications should be somehow related.

Craft an argument that includes a statement of the problem, its relevance, and a solution. What is the problem (or gap in the literature) that your article addresses? Why does it matter? (Sometimes this is called the “so-what” question.) What do you propose as a solution?

Manage anxiety. Writing means surmounting psychological obstacles and staying on task. Give yourself permission to write a very rough first draft. Don't say, “I'm going to sit down now and write my article,” but rather, “I'm going to write 5 sentences on topic X.” Set a semester-long writing schedule with specific weekly goals. (For a template, see www.wendybelcher.com.) Protect your time—be a little fanatical about it. Build in accountability, perhaps by participating in a well-organized, reliable writing group whose members are willing and able to give you honest feedback. Have more than one writing project ongoing, at different stages. Consider traveling to fewer conferences if you feel tempted constantly to attend; stay home and write more.

Tips for Publishing:



-Identify topics

-Craft an argument

-Manage anxiety

-Write well

-Select journals with care

-Understand the process

-Keep the big picture in mind

Write well. Writing is a craft that must be practiced regularly. Rewrite, then rewrite again. Ask colleagues to comment on drafts, and do the same for them. Explore the writing advice at www.chronicle.com as well as manuals like Strunk & White (adopt their motto, “Omit needless words”), Claire Kehrwald Cook's *Line By Line: How to Edit Your Own Writing* (my personal favorite), and Helen Sword's *Stylish*

Academic Writing. Try to write in such a way that your reader will want to keep reading. Have something to say, and say it well.

Select journals with care. Aim high. Consult friends and colleagues for suggestions. Decide for whom you are writing: who is your target audience? Don't waste time sending work to a journal that is not a good “fit.” Peruse current issues of journals and engage with what they care about. Follow submissions requirements—yes, formatting matters.

Understand the process of peer review. Read and carefully consider external reviewers' reports. “Revise and resubmit” is usually the best possible news you'll get—it's rare to have an article accepted without revisions. If at first you don't succeed, revise and send it elsewhere. When interacting with journal editors, be polite, prompt, and professional. Resist the urge to argue.

Keep the big picture in mind. Never compare yourself with anyone else (don't give in to “C.V. envy”). Let no institution—including academe—become the measure of your self-worth. Place your center of gravity outside of your job. Let ideas infuse your life, and your writing will blossom.

Dr. Heidi Bostic
Professor of French; Chair, Modern Languages and Cultures; Director of Interdisciplinary Programs, College of Arts and Sciences

Tips for Talking to Publishers

Dr. Carey Newman, Director of the Baylor University Press, recently shared his publishing expertise with the Baylor community in a four-part workshop. In the following section, he explains how to grab an editor's interest.



We spend so much time and energy in and on our writing projects that we don't pause to consider how best to communicate with our publishers. As best you can, you need to understand and, even, think like editors.

“Use all the skills you have developed as a scholar and apply them to putting yourself in a better position to forge a lasting publishing relationship.”

Two truths about nearly all editors—they are looking for you and your project (the good news) but they are busy and sometimes under pressure (the bad news). So, help the editor—help the editor by being as concise as you are accurate. Your first email to the editor should simply be the project's X, Y, Z. That is, my book is about X. In my book about X, I argue Y. And the significance of arguing Y about X is Z. Three simple, concrete sentences. No more, no less.

Putting the editor right inside the project in this way will elicit an immediate response (rather than one in days or weeks), and it will quickly put to the test your project's match. You will likely hear a response, either way, very soon.

If an editor does bite (“Yes, this sounds interesting...”), then be ready. You will need a full description of the project, a Table of Contents, a Road Map (a Table of Contents with chapter descriptions) and a sample chapter or two. Nothing is more frustrating to an editor than to get interested in a project, only to discover that it is underdeveloped.

Do your homework on your potential press and editor. Discover what books they have shepherded. Talk to their previous authors. Use all the skills you have developed as a scholar and apply them to putting yourself in a better position to forge a lasting publishing relationship.



The Academy for Teaching and Learning is pleased to introduce Dr. Tiffani Riggers-Piehl, Assistant Director.

Dr. Riggers-Piehl returns to Baylor from New York University where she was a Postdoctoral Associate studying students' interfaith experiences in college. After completing an MS.Ed. in Higher Education and Student Affairs from Baylor in 2008, she went on to earn her Ph.D. in Education from UCLA in 2013. Tiffani's background in teaching, assessment, and student development will enhance the ATL's work with Baylor's community of scholars.

Tiffani can be reached at tiffani_riggerspiehl@baylor.edu and 254-710-4086.

Professional Development

2016 Faculty Interest Groups (FIG)

The Academy for Teaching and Learning (ATL) is pleased to announce the theme for our Spring 2016 Faculty Interest Groups (FIG): **For the Future**. Why for the future? and Why now? Educators can no longer look solely to the past or the present in order to respond productively to developments in higher education. As we encounter changing student demographics, unsustainable financial models, and shifting paradigms of education, how might we best address these opportunities and challenges? Each Faculty Interest Group will introduce new ways to imagine and undertake our tasks as educators.

Please join your colleagues for one or more of these exciting and important conversations.

For the Future: Grand Challenges for STEM and Humanities

Facilitated by Dr. Heidi Bostic (Director of Interdisciplinary Programs, College of Arts & Sciences and Chair, Modern Languages and Cultures) and Dr. George Cobb (Chair, Environmental Science Department). Participants will explore ways for STEM and Humanities to collaborate in order to address grand challenges of our age (e.g. health care, environmental sustainability).

Discussion will be guided by Bruno Latour's *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*.

For the Future: Emerging Research in Human Learning

Facilitated by Dr. Alexander Beaujean (Associate Professor, Educational Psychology) and Dr. Charles Weaver (Chair, Psychology and Neuroscience). Participants will discuss core findings and practical applications of the science of learning.

Discussion will be guided by Brown, Roediger, and McDaniel's *Making it Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*.

For the Future: Competing Models of Graduate Education

Facilitated by Dr. Laine Scales (Associate Dean for Graduate and Professional Studies) and invited guest presenters. Participants will reimagine graduate education as the careful formation of scholars equipped to address the challenges of their times.

Discussion will be guided by Walker, Golde, Jones, Bueschel, and Hutchings's, *The Formation of Scholars: Rethinking Doctoral Education for the 21st century*.

For more information and to sign up to participate in all ATL events, please go to www.baylor.edu/atl.

Upcoming University Teaching Development Grant Deadlines

The UTDG supports the development of pedagogical or disciplinary expertise in a teaching field.

Grant recipients are eligible for \$1500 biennially.

Application Deadlines

Fall 2015 semester: November 10

Spring 2016 semester: February 9, April 13

Remaining Fall 2015 Seminars for Excellence in Teaching

Teaching with Special Collections from the Armstrong Browning Library

--ABL Teaching Fellow Panelists

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4 | 2:30-3:30 PM | MMSCI 250

Teaching to Promote Gender Equality

--Beth Allison Barr (History)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9 | 3:35-4:35 PM | JONES 200

OUR MISSION

To support and inspire a flourishing community of learning.



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