

# Preface. The Other Half of Writing for Publication

I started writing a book that was about the nuts and bolts of how to write for publication. This book would be my take on how to craft a text to shepherd into publication, envisioning something like Wendy Belcher's *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks* or Paul Silvia's *How to Write a Lot*, backed with a lot of data from expert writers and my own longitudinal datasets. However, there are already good books in this genre (Belcher, 2019; Boice, 1990; Jalongo and Saracho, 2016, 2023; Silvia, 2014, 2018).

One of the challenges of most books on writing for publication, however, was articulated by Kristine Johnson (2017)—she notes that most writing for publication books are written by experts who are drawing primarily from their own expertise. Since I am a dyslexic, first-generation college student writer, I wasn't sure how my expertise would translate to others' processes, and I decided to take a different path. In my years of teaching of writing for publication and supporting graduate writers through the Jones White Writing Center and later the Center for Scholarly Communication at IUP as well as supporting writing for publication internationally, I was primarily drawing from the above books, my own experiences in publication, and the interview-based studies of expert scholars (Gallagher & Devoss, 2019; Söderland & Wells, 2019; Tulley, 2018; Wells & Söderland 2017).

But something still seemed to be missing, particularly surrounding the identity and personal aspects of the writing for publication process. I spent a good deal of time in my own career exploring these personal aspects as they relate to writing development and writing transfer and wanted to see how they applied to writing for publication. Thus, I endeavored to collect a rich dataset that would explore how successful expert writing processes worked and develop more effective pedagogy. With the help of Google Docs and Google Draftback (as described in Appendix A), I was able to collect extensive data on the composing processes of six expert writers on article-length projects (book chapters, articles, edited collection chapters) from idea conception to the submission of their initial draft towards publication. After submitting the first two chapters and my book proposal to the WAC Clearinghouse, the editors of the series had great suggestions—suggestions which led to me collecting two other datasets. Thus, I also interviewed 11 emerging scholars who had successfully completed one or several publications, and I conducted a survey of professionals within the field of composition and rhetoric on their writing processes for publication. This data ended up being much richer and more interesting than I could have imagined.

The best thing about collecting data is that we often get lead in a different direction than we originally intended. To me, that's the point of research—a

process of discovery. For me, it turned out that the most compelling data I collected didn't speak to how to write for publication. By that, I mean that the data didn't speak to the technical process and rhetorical moves of producing academic publications, which is what I had originally intended to write about (and what books like Belcher and Jalongo already do so well).

The story in the data was how to become an expert writer and the threshold concepts that transition one from a novice to an expert. This involved what writing expertise looks like in an academic publication setting, what people's processes realistically look like, how issues of identity deeply and meaningfully impact what it means to write professionally, and why people keep on publishing long after they no longer need to do so for tenure or promotion. In other words, it was covering everything that wasn't the technical aspects of writing or content knowledge of a specific field. These other parts—writing processes, time management, motivations, mentoring, flow states, to name a few—are an incredibly important part of the publication equation. Thus, the story of this book became the ways in which people crafted meaningful, relevant and impactful scholarly agendas and words that sought to change their fields and the world.

Additionally, in my teaching and research, I also found that the advice given in typical writing for publication books on time management, goal setting, and related areas simply do not work for those who are neurodiverse or differently abled. Books like *How to Write a Lot* and *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks* advocate for scheduling writing time or suggesting that writing for 15 minutes a day would work. When I talked to these neurodiverse writers—and sought them out to interview for this book—they had different advice. As a neurodiverse person myself, being diagnosed with dyslexia since I was in grade school, I have long struggled with some of this advice and have had to develop my own unique approach to writing productivity. I've seen my likewise neurodiverse or differently abled students also struggle with this advice and grow frustrated that there weren't books speaking to them. We've discussed it in my writing for publication classes, with some strongly opposed to conventional wisdom. Thus, I was grateful to bring our voices into the conversation.

What I discovered in these rich datasets is that writing for publication processes are as extraordinarily complex as are the writers themselves. Literacy sponsorship, collaboration, and mentoring are critically important for emerging scholars, much more than previous self-help books or publications have indicated. In other words, writing for publication is so much more than figuring out what to write and how to write, but rather, how writing intersects with our identities, motivations, dreams, goals, flow states, and dispositions. And if we don't have that clear connection between our identities and motivations and the writing for publication we are seeking, we are never going to successfully make it through the onerous process of publication.

Thus, the book I ended up writing is focused on how to be an expert writer: the mindsets, dispositions, creative practices, writing processes, identities,

motivations, mentoring, social apprenticeship, flow states, and joy that it all offers. I'm offering a richness of content through research that is typically reduced to a paragraph, given an appendix, or skimmed over entirely in a typical book about how to write for publication. In other words, this book is the other half of writing for publication. This book shares how to become a joyful, focused writer who uses words to change the world. Thank you for joining me on this journey.