



THE QUARTERLY REPORT FOR TSTC PUBLISHING

November 2004

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Discover Yourself.



Writing a Textbook Proposal Class

Faculty and staff at all TSTC campuses have the chance to initiate and participate in textbook development projects. But, having this opportunity vs. taking advantage of it can be two different things given that even the idea of writing a textbook can seem overwhelming.

It is possible, however, to break down the process of writing a textbook into basic, sequential steps that make such a project manageable. The most important first step is completing a book proposal

because once you've assembled all the necessary elements for that proposal, the groundwork has been laid to successfully complete the rest of the book. Beginning in February the publishing office will offer a continuing education class to teach faculty and staff how to write a complete book proposal.

Several important areas will be covered so that anyone can produce a persuasive book proposal: completing a survey of instructional materials already on the market, using

a current course syllabus to produce a provisional table of contents, putting together a basic chapter template and outline, writing an expanded table of contents, providing enrollment information for the classes in which the book will be adopted, assembling an editorial team, and, most importantly, writing a sample chapter.

In addition, other topics to be covered include document layout and design, basic copyright guidelines, book contract information, graphics and illustrations formatting, marketing, and more.

By the end of this class, faculty and staff will know what information they need to provide as well as how to put it all together.

The class will meet Tuesday nights from 6 pm to 9 pm for six weeks, February 1 through March 8. Tuition is \$18. Scholarships may be available for TSTC employees. Check with your department chair/supervisor on availability. For more information contact Mark Long at mark.long@tstc.edu or (254) 867-3095

Upcoming Schedule

- Inaugural online issue of *Best Practices*
- Fall interns reception in the Culinary Arts Ballroom from 12-1, Dec 7
- "Writing a Textbook Proposal" continuing education class, Tuesday nights, 6-9 pm, Feb 1 through March 8
- Deadline for submissions for Spring issue of *Best Practices*, March 25



Fall Semester Interns & Reception

At the beginning of the fall semester students nearing graduation in the Advertising Design & Print Technology program began internships at the TSTC publishing office.

Internships allow students to gain valuable real-world production experience before entering the job market. Also, studies show that students who go through internships increase their odds of finding that first job as well as making an on-average higher initial salary.

According to Tony Taylor, ADP chair, Chad Keeton, Angela Clark, Joe Brooks, Cody Seigmund, André Rayford, Jackie Mester, Domeanica Carter, Jessica Rogers, Greg Timmons, and Robert Beasley represent the best of the best from their program.

Projects being completed include exterior and interior layouts and designs for the co-op, English composition, and biomedical textbooks in development. In addition, work has been done on promotional materials for those books

as well as for *Best Practices*, TSTC Waco's new e-journal. Even the new look for *The Quarterly Report for TSTC Publishing* contains design elements from an intern, André Rayford.

Work completed by these interns will be on display at a reception for them from 12-1 on December 7 in the Culinary Arts Ballroom. Please come out to show your support for these students who have been an integral part in the development of publishing at TSTC.

Meet the Author: Nick Cram



Tell us a little bit about yourself. How did you end up in the biomedical field? How did you find yourself at TSTC?

My family was in the drugstore business. It was a family tradition since 1887. I was tapped as the next druggist in the family when I was in junior high. After I finished my Pharmacy degree and did a one-year residency at the University of Michigan, I started the daily drugstore

grind. I liked the money but not much else. I was always curious about how things worked and was always taking stuff apart.

I decided to make a major change in occupation and scenery. I left the drugstore business, moved to Waco, and enrolled at TSTI in the biomed program. After graduating from here, I enrolled at Texas A&M University in Biomedical Engineering. I worked as a biomed tech

Meet the Author: Nick Cram (cont.)

full-time at a local hospital and finished my BS and MS in Biomedical Engineering at TAMU.

I was teaching at TAMU and made a random call one day to Fred Khozein, the Program Chair of the biomed program at TSTC. Twenty-some years later, ironically, I was back at TSTC in the biomed program. On this stop I came as an instructor, with the goal of establishing a biotechnology program. Thirty years ago, if someone reading tea leaves had told me this bizarre tale of my life, I would have said, laughing, "It would make good fiction. Here's your tip."

What made you decide to write a basic electronic troubleshooting book for biomedical technicians?

I have been the editor of *The Journal of Clinical Engineering* for the past eight years. This gave me an opportunity to express my opinion about health care and clinical engineering related topics. I started writing two or three major articles a year after my first year as editor. The journal is an international publication and I started receiving e-mails about my articles from every

corner of the globe. Most of them were positive.

During this same time, I was the Director of Clinical Engineering at a local hospital in Bryan and teaching two classes a semester at TAMU. I wrote four chapters for *The Clinical Engineering Handbook* edited by another co-editor of the journal, Dr. Joe Dyro. Writing was becoming a natural means of communicating for me. I learned the value of the carefully considered written word versus the blurted spoken word.

After coming on board at TSTC, the opportunity to become published through TSTC was announced. The timing just seemed right. I was frustrated with the available technical textbooks. Most of what I considered good technical texts were out of print. After talking to some of the other faculty in the biomed department,

I convinced Selby Holder and Glen Ridings to help me with a new text for electronic troubleshooting. I put together two manuals at TAMU that I had reprinted by Copy Corner for my students each semester. I'm using some of that material for the new

text. Glen and Selby have contributed their expertise to the book and I know we have a winner!

How has it been working with Selby Holder and Glen Ridings? How did that come about and how is the work divided among the three of you?

Since I had a template for the book in my TAMU manuals, I took on the task of writing the didactic/theoretical portions. Both Glen and Selby have great lab skills and hands-on expertise. They are writing new lab exercises to compliment the formal text. We've never had a strict formal division of tasks. I took the lead in meeting deadlines and content but much of it has just seemed to fall into place. We meet at the copier once in a while and share ideas. I send out e-mails to Glen and Selby when I've finished a chapter on theory and they just jump in and send me back the corresponding labs.

What's been the biggest surprise so far in working on this book project?

Technical textbooks are in dire straits. Most of the established authors in the field have stopped writing

Meet the Author: Nick Cram (cont.)

or are post mortem. Realizing that we could actually be “the guys” that are recognized for technical writing in the biomed and electronics field has had a Jekyll and Hyde effect. It would be great to be the lead horse but we know we have a responsibility to get it right.

What advice would you have for someone wanting to write a textbook?

Always write about an area that you have both experience and expertise.

Don't wear out the thesaurus. Accept and expect critical reviews. Make realistic deadlines for completing each portion of the book. Always keep your eyes on the finish line.

What writing plans do you have once this book has been finished?

I always have one project on the bench and six more on the drawing board. I'd like to write a generic “what goes on in a hospital” book. Most students in a health care related

field don't really understand the complexity of the processes that occur in hospitals. A book that introduces a “visitor” (that is, the reader) to each area of the hospital would provide for an excellent introduction to health care text. Our target market would include nursing, pharmacy, lab techs, biomed techs, and even a curious general public. I think it would also be useful in health-care MBA programs. After working with several health-care MBAs, I know they really need it.

Best Practices

The TSTC Waco publishing office is pleased to announce that the inaugural issue of *Best Practices* will be online in late November. Helmed by Managing Editor Dr. Lynn Parks, TSTC Waco Academic Cluster Director, *Best Practices* will be a twice-yearly e-journal devoted to different, specific topics related to two-year colleges.

In particular, it is envisioned as means of communication for faculty and staff throughout the TSTC System to share what they're doing well with the rest of the TSTC community as well as with schools around the rest of the country.

This first issue is focused on the idea of student preparedness for college. What different skill sets do they need to master for success in college? What are the best ways and means to teach them these skills? What problems do we and our students encounter during this learning process? What are the rewards that may be earned for our students and ourselves by engaging in the means to achieve these ends?

Answers to these questions can be found in articles from April's issue Grulick, TSTC Waco Supplemental Education Services, a book

review from Louis Mazé, TSTC System, as well as in an in-depth conversation with Rich Kirk, Director of Student Success at TSTC Harlingen.

For those interested in writing for the Spring issue of *Best Practices*, the subject will be the flip side of this Fall's topic; the next issue will be concerned with how we prepare our students for work and life after graduation. The deadline for submissions is March 25th. Additional guidelines and information can be obtained by contacting Dr. Lynn Parks at lynn.parks@tstc.edu.