
FROM DISSERTATION TO BOOK

ASA Professional Workshop

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4:30 – 6:10 pm

Presenters



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Overview

- Differences between dissertation & book
- Stages in the transformation
- Common barriers
- Tips & resources
- Q&A / Hands-on work

Goals: At the end of the workshop you will know:

- How a book manuscript differs from a dissertation;
- The stages of developing a dissertation-based manuscript;
- How to identify common stumbling blocks;
- Where to look for help.

Should You Write A Book?

- Does your dissertation research **demand** book form?
- Will writing a book support your career goals or help your job search?
- Are you in a 'book department' or an 'article department'?
- Do you have the resources you need?

TIP: This might seem like a question you've already answered. But books don't fit every scholar's career. And, that's okay. – Tristan Bridges

Dissertation Vs. Book

	Dissertation	Book
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scholarly, research-focused• Reach narrow audience• Earn PhD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wider audience (laypeople, students)• Inform, teach, inspire
Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pre-determined chapters, content• Methods/others' research: strong emphasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Story-like;" one theme connects parts• Creative structure• Methods/others' research: less emphasis
Writing Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Field specific• Jargon/terminology• Objective/clinical voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More accessible• Less jargon – define terminology• Clear authorial voice

Assessing Goals/Resources

Assess Goals

- What are your professional obligations (e.g., teaching, research, service, collaborations, career track)?

Identify Challenges

- Time, money, skills, abilities, logistical resources
- Personal demands (children, aging parents, partner)
- Personal challenges (work style, health concerns/needs, energy/motivation)

List Resources / Needs

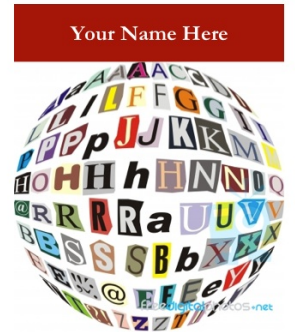
- Release time, internal/external funds
- Technical assistance (e.g., copyediting, indexing)
- Personal assistance (e.g., child care, housecleaning)
- Self care (e.g., yoga)

Assessing Goals/Resources

TIP: This is a CONTINUOUS PROCESS! To stay motivated, I taught about my research. Students' excitement helped me stay excited!
– Dawn Norris

Stages of the Transformation

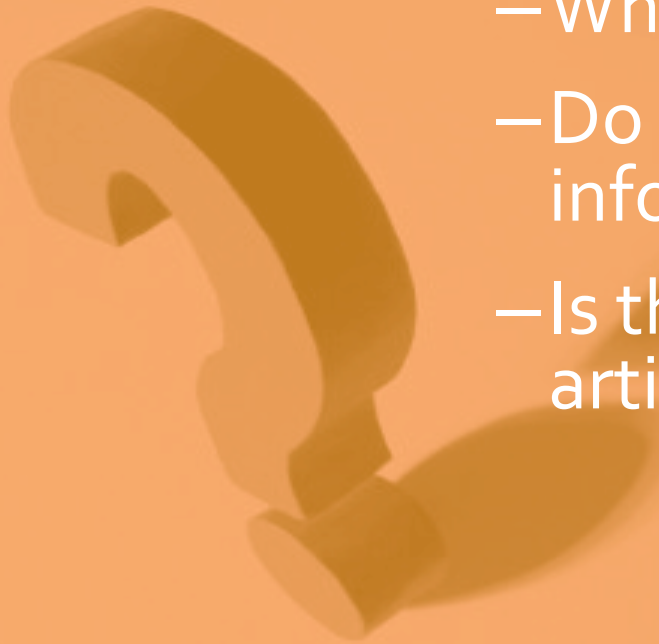
Assessment Prospectus Work Plan Writing Platform Contract



Assessment

What will I need to do?

- How much overhaul does my dissertation need?
- What's new about my topic?
- Do I need more data or information?
- Is there enough content for 1 or 2 articles in advance of the book?



Assessment

TIP: A first stab at revising scholarly writing may be to **search** for concepts like “social constructionism” and **replace** them with simpler language. – Wendy Cadge, “Heartwood”

Craft A Prospectus

In about 5-8 pages:

1. What is your manuscript is about? Why is it important?
2. What is the proposed table of contents?
3. Who is the likely audience?
4. What are the competing/similar books?
5. What is the status of the work? (length, % complete, proposed revisions, sample chapters, permissions?)
6. What are your marketing plans (e.g., website, blog, twitter, Facebook, connections w/ journalists, etc.)
7. Who might review your book (3-4 suggestions)? Get permission!

Craft A Prospectus

TIP: Some presses ask for specific information to be included in a prospectus. *ALWAYS CHECK* their websites first to find out. – Chris Bobel, “New Blood”

Create A Reasonable Work Plan



1. List goals
2. Identify projects involved
3. List steps needed for each project
4. Map each step onto your weekly calendar

TIP: It's your book. Your process. In the end, you need to develop it, guide it, and love it for yourself.
– Adina Nack, “Damaged Goods”

Write

- Read good writing in your field
- Read nonacademic books
- Develop a daily writing practice
- Write first
- Time yourself
- Join a writing group (or several)
- Find your “writing groove”

Write



TIP: What do you need to support writing time? Make your wish-list. Then spend some time looking for resources. – Astrid Eich-Krohm, “German Professionals in the United States”

Create & Use Your Platform

Traditional

- Find acquisition editors at professional conferences
 - Contact editors to set up a meeting
 - Visit book exhibit for a conversation
- Email publishers with cover letter & prospectus
- Only send to 2-3 publishers at once. Tell them you're shopping the book.

Non-Traditional

- Diverse outlets (blogs, op-eds, newsletters)
- Collaborations with stakeholders (webinars, conferences, workshops, meetings with members)

Create & Use Your Platform

TIP: I never set out to be a public scholar. But I couldn't put out a call to action and then not be part of the action! My blog took on a life of its own. So did the book.

– Gayle Sulik, “Pink Ribbon Blues”

Secure The Contract

- Legal contract, without much variation
 - Standard terms and conditions
 - Manuscript/delivery specs
 - Payments/royalties
- Negotiating room for contract details
- Marketing plans = separate documents (non-contractual)
- Release from contract, if necessary

Secure The Contract

TIP: Talk to senior mentors with significant book publishing experience to better understand contract terms and possible negotiations.
– Meika Loe, “Aging our Way”

Some Lessons We Learned

- Stick to a timeline; adjust as needed.
- Translate for your audience; control the message.
- Consider publicity coach or developmental editor.
- Find your support system – writing partners, accountability groups, mentors.
- Outsource what you can – copyeditor, indexer, layouts for image plates or other materials, etc.
- Contract timing and negotiations vary.
- “Kill your darlings.”

Some Lessons We Learned

TIP: Life is not orderly. No matter how we try to make life so, right in the middle of it we die, lose a leg, fall in love, drop a jar of applesauce. - Natalie Goldberg, “Wild Mind”

Q & A

Do you have any clarifying questions we should answer before moving on to brainstorming and hands-on work?

-- 5 minutes --

Why should I (or, shouldn't I)
write a book?

-- 5 minutes --

Handouts

-- 5 minutes --

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- What is my book about?
- What is the purpose of my book?
- Who is my audience?
- What are my professional obligations?
- What resources do I have/need?
- Is my dissertation finished? How much of an overhaul will it need? Have I read it?
- Am I ready to start working on a prospectus? Shopping one around?
- Do I have a platform? Who am I as an author, scholar, writer?

THANK YOU!

Slides and handouts available for
download at www.gaylesulik.com