

Chapter 10

From Consumer to Producer of the Literature

Abstract Even if an author prefers not to take on a major project such as a book, it is possible to participate in book projects at different levels. Graduate students/graduate assistants, for example, often develop the instructor's manual or student study guide for a college-level textbook while professors and doctoral students might collaborate to contribute a chapter to an edited book. This chapter guides the reader through a wide range of opportunities to become involved with scholarly book writing. It also teaches scholars how to: conceptualize a book to meet the needs of a clearly identified audience, conduct a market analysis of competing works, and propose their ideas to an editor, both verbally and in the form of a written proposal. The chapter concludes with a candid discussion of scholarly book publishing, from negotiating a contract to realistic expectations for royalties.

Shortly after I was hired as an assistant professor, one of my colleagues placed an unusual hardbound book in my faculty mailbox. It was called *The Nothing Book*. It consisted of rainbow colored, completely blank pages. Inside the front cover, the senior professor had written, "I predict great things from you. Use this little book like a journal to list your goals and accomplishments. Wishing you every success, Emily." At the time, my goals seemed very difficult to attain; I wanted to publish one article in the leading journal in my field, to get tenure and promotion and, even though I dreamed of writing a book someday, that goal was just too lofty to commit to paper. What I failed to realize at the time was that book authorship is an apprenticeship rather than a single event. It relies on involvement at different levels that prepare you to fulfill the book author's role. The more that you seek out opportunities to gain experience and learn about publishing, the more you prepare yourself to become a book author.

Getting Involved in Book Projects

When the conversation turns to writing a book, many students and faculty members assume that it is out of the realm of possibility for them. Widely published author Stephen Brookfield (2015) speaks to these concerns when he writes:

I remember as a graduate student thinking that books were produced by people with intellectual weight who had something to disclose. My own intellect and opinions seemed puny by comparison. I simply did not think I deserved to write a book since I had nothing important to say. To overcome such intimidation it is necessary to demystify the air of portentousness surrounding the idea of book publication...we need to scale back the expectations we place on ourselves to move the tectonic plates of our discipline. (p. 1)

As an antidote to these paralyzing expectations try to identify modest, yet important, goals for book writing. You might organize material in a more accessible way, identify new connections and synthesize, explore a perplexing aspect of a field more deeply or in a new manner, propose a different direction for research, or investigate one small and neglected niche in a field (Brookfield, 2015).

Aspiring book authors also may mistakenly assume that they need dazzling curriculum vitae or have to generate an entire book, all by themselves, in order to be associated with writing and publishing scholarly books. There are, however, many ways to be involved in book projects that do not require you to write an entire book by yourself. For example, you might seek out opportunities to:

- Serve as reviewer for other authors' book manuscripts
- Develop ancillary materials (i.e., the PowerPoint slides, test items, website, instructor's manual) for a college textbook
- Contribute short examples or co-author a chapter for a college-level textbook written by others
- Author or co-author a book chapter in an edited book
- Co-edit or edit a book; usually you would write one or two chapters while other authors contribute the remaining material

The amount of previous experience with publishing required to fulfill these roles can vary as well. For instance, if an established textbook author already has a book contract and invites you to contribute/co-author, you may not need much more than that individual's endorsement and guidance. The nature of the specific task also affects the roles that you can fulfill related to a book project. When college textbook authors need to develop ancillary materials for their textbooks, such as the student study guide, the publisher often will ask for a recommendation from the author of someone who could do that work competently. Many times, a graduate student is identified. Sometimes, practitioners in the field are more knowledgeable about a particular aspect of a book. After reviewers of a 6th edition textbook asked for more applications of technology, the authors created a format for this textbook feature and invited their graduate students to write them. These graduate students were classroom teachers who used technology on a regular basis and could provide (with permission, of course) samples of children's work. The textbook authors then edited

each entry a few times and ten different doctoral candidates now had at least one small publication to add to their CVs. Working on book-related projects such as these not only improves academic authors' writing skills but also introduces them to the publishing world. So, getting involved with book publishing is not as far out of reach as it may first appear.

This chapter is arranged, more or less, in order of difficulty and time commitment. It begins with reviewing others' books, contributing a chapter to a book, editing a book, and, finally, the most formidable task: authoring or co-authoring a book.

Reviewing Book Proposals and Book Manuscripts

One way to prepare yourself for writing books is to review them. It is not necessary to be a widely published scholar in order to serve as a reviewer. Many times, textbook sales representatives will invite you to review a book that you have been using when it is ready to go into a subsequent edition. Or, if it is a new book for a course that you teach, they might seek your input while the manuscript is being developed. You also can volunteer to provide this service to publishers by sending them a letter and your curriculum vita. While each publisher has guidelines for the review, Table 10.1 identifies some of the most frequently asked questions about book proposals, chapters, and entire manuscripts that reviewers use to critique the work. Internalizing these criteria is a good way to prepare yourself for book of your own someday.

Writing a Book Chapter

Another way to venture into book publishing is to generate one chapter. Many authors and editors seek authors or co-authors for chapters in books. For example, if an author is writing a comprehensive textbook for a course and feels that his or her background is inadequate, an author or co-author might be the solution. For an edited book series, editors rely extensively on chapters submitted by various authors. Many times, professors will accept these invitations and use them as an opportunity to mentor one or more colleagues, former students, or current students.

Activity 10.1: Identifying Opportunities to Contribute a Book Chapter

Look on your bookshelf. What edited book series do you see in your field? Who is the editor? Go back through the reference lists for papers you have written and search for (Ed.) or (Eds.) and then go online to view the publishing company's catalog. If it is a series, find out more about it. Usually, the publisher will list all volumes published thus far in the series and forthcoming titles (see, for example, an overview of Springer's book series posted at: <http://link.springer.com/search?query=Book+Series>). Try to locate a series that would be a suitable outlet for your work.

Table 10.2 offers general recommendations on writing chapters for books.

Table 10.1 Questions to guide book reviewers

Do you know the proposer of the book? Do you consider him/her/them to be qualified to undertake the project?
Would the book make a significant contribution to the field? Is it worthy of support?
What is your overall opinion of the material? Does it appear to meet a specific need?
Is the title appropriate? Does it actually describe the book's content?
Who is the primary audience for this type of material? Will the intended audience find the book useful? How do you see the book being used?
How does the philosophy behind the book fit into current thinking in the field?
Is the book well organized? Is its structure helpful?
Are there any topics that have been left out? To your way of thinking, will these be these omissions adversely affect the sale of the book?
What is your opinion of the writing? Is the author writing for the intended audience?
What are the book's greatest strengths? Please be specific
What are the greatest weaknesses, and what would you do to strengthen those areas?
Is the book well organized? Are there any organizational devices that would make the book more useful?
Are there any particular chapters that are exceptionally good or, on the other hand, any that you find lacking in comparison to the others? What ones, and why do they stand out to you?
Are there sections in the proposed contents of the work that would need expansion and/or development? Are there important views that the editor(s) failed to consider in his/her/their proposed content?
Do you notice any redundancy across chapters? Is there material that could be condensed or deleted?
Do you think you would use the book based on the material you have seen? How? Would you recommend the book to your colleagues? Why or why not?
Which books, if any, do you see as this book's primary competitors? Does this project compare favorably? Unfavorably? How?
What is your recommendation: to proceed with the publication of the work, to request revisions, or to decline to pursue the publication?

Adapted from Springer's Guidelines for Book Manuscript Review

The Edited Book

The advantages of edited books are numerous; first, if the contributors are carefully selected for the quality of their writing and adherence to deadlines, a book on a timely topic can be produced more quickly. Second, by involving authors with highly specialized expertise, a chorus of perspectives on an important topic can be achieved, thereby providing a "deeper and wider" analysis than a single author might be able to produce.

Usually, those who edit books need to have some name recognition in the field. Editors of books usually:

- *Make a plan for cohesiveness.* An edited book is not a collection of disparate chapters unified only by the cover page. From the very beginning, the editor needs to communicate the unifying vision for the work, its purpose, and the specifics about format of all chapters.

Table 10.2 General advice on writing a chapter

1. *Talk with published authors.* If they are aware of your areas of interest and expertise, they are more likely to think of you when an opportunity arises

2. *Seek out calls for papers.* These may be advertised in professional journals, distributed electronically, or printed out and disseminated at meetings

3. *Understand your role.* When you are invited, the editor or author should explain what you will contribute and how it will be acknowledged

4. *Read before you sign.* Go through the letter carefully and read all of the attached documents before agreeing to participate. If any of these conditions are not acceptable to you, you should decline the offer

5. *Begin immediately.* The day that you receive the invitation, start collecting resources and making notes. Revisit the file and revise what is there many, many times long before the deadline approaches. Above all, do not wait until the last minute

6. *Revisit the guidelines.* Too often, authors read the letter of invitation when it first arrives and then write the chapter without referring back to the guidelines

7. *Ask for an exemplar.* Book editors should provide you with very specific guidelines and, if possible, a model of the style, length, and tone that is sought. Many times, the book editor writes one or more chapters for the book and would be willing to share his or her work with you

8. *Follow the format requirements.* Prepare the manuscript as required in terms of the referencing style, page limit, spacing, margins, and visual material (i.e., tables, figures, charts, graphs, photographs, captions). Some publishers, such as Springer, use a template that helps to get the chapters assembled in a book-like fashion from the start, so allocate time to learn how to do this

9. *Proofread and double-check references.* Every mistake that you make will come back to you later. You will get list of author queries and need to address each one. Missing references can be particularly troublesome

10. *Understand the review process.* Usually, the author or editor will read it first and provide feedback. Then it will be sent out for anonymous peer review and revised again. After that, it is typical to see a typeset copy and make the final edits

11. *Provide brief biographical information.* Edited books often include brief notes about the authors' achievements. Ask for an example of how the publisher wants this done and follow that format

- *Look beyond local colleagues.* Editors go in search of the necessary expertise and assemble a “wish list” of chapter authors. If the publisher also sponsors a journal, as is the case with many professional associations, they probably will start there. Other ways that they will locate authors is to send out calls for papers and distribute them as flyers at conferences or via technology (e.g., listservs, special interest groups) or by “backwards searching” through the reference lists of recently published articles. Sometimes, peer reviewers of the proposal will recommend a suitable author for a chapter. The goal is to assemble a diverse group of experts.
- *Evaluate chapter authors as writers.* Knowing the person based on informal professional interactions is not sufficient. It is very important to know the person as a writer. Most editors will oversample a bit in the expectation that, due to circumstances beyond their control, at least 10% will neglect to submit a chapter. It can be very difficult to locate a substitute author for that particular topic who can submit a chapter quickly to avoid postponing or derailing the whole project.

- *Assess the skills of collaboration in authors.* An edited book is a team effort so select authors with a reputation for doing high-quality work, turning it in on time, and graciously accepting recommendations for revision. Some authors will become indignant when they are asked to revise; in one memorable instance of this, a chapter author refused to condense a chapter that was twice the length limit and wrote, “it would do violence to the integrity of my work to condense it.” Book editors will want to avoid working with this type of prima donna.
- *Make hard decisions.* Even when chapter authors do submit a chapter, the work sometimes is not acceptable for a variety of reasons. Over the years, there have been book chapter authors who lost the instructions, submitted a manuscript that was written for a different purpose/audience, neglected to make the recommended revisions, or threw together something at the last minute that made a very poor showing in comparison to the other chapters. This leaves the editor with the difficult decision that a chapter needs to be cut.

After you have made the decision to contribute to an edited book, you will need to make a plan for fulfilling expectations for the chapter. Chances are, you are working with someone who is respected and influential in the field so it is important to create a favorable impression. Some ways to achieve this are in Table 10.3.

Editing a book and/or contributing to an edited volume constitutes a responsibility to a group of respected scholars. If a person fails to generate the chapter as promised, this can leave everyone in a holding pattern until the situation is satisfactorily resolved. Over the years, there have been a few times when an admired editor contacted me to say that she or he needed a really big favor. Each time, I could anticipate that the request would be to write a chapter in record time because a replacement was necessary. The book editor’s role is to:

- Conceptualize the unifying theme of the work and communicates this to authors
 - Provide a timeline for the project
 - Supply each contributor with explicit guidelines for the chapter (e.g., length, referencing style, format considerations, permissions, author bio)
 - Provide, if possible, a sample chapter to follow
 - Read chapters as submitted
 - Render decisions about the necessity for and degree of revision prior to external review
 - Decide if a manuscript is unsalvageable and terminate the assignment in consultation with the publisher
 - Return manuscripts to contributors for revision with deadline for resubmission
 - Submit manuscripts to publisher for external review
 - Advise contributors of changes needed and deadline for resubmission
 - Carefully review the proofs and make corrections
 - Treat authors with courtesy and respect.

Table 10.3 Contributing to an edited book

1. *Clarify the project's purpose.* Usually, the letter of invitation will describe the purpose of the project. If you know the editor, you might ask to see a copy of the book proposal if he or she is willing to share it

2. *Understand the contract.* It is rare for the authors of chapters for edited books to get financial compensation in the form of an honorarium or royalties. Much of the time, these books are published more as a service to the profession than as a way to supplement income and even the editor gets little more than a small honorarium. Perhaps the most common form of compensation is one free copy of the book to the first author. Another consideration is copyright. Usually, authors are required to assign copyright to the publisher. If this is unacceptable for some reason, they need to know this in advance. Follow the principles of informed consent where contract is concerned

3. *Read the guidelines.* From the beginning, create a separate folder for this project. You will need to refer to the guidelines multiple times so keep them at hand. Ideally, the evaluation criteria for chapters would have been shared from the outset. If not, request them—and be sure to apply them to your own work upon its completion

4. *Locate an exemplary chapter.* If the editor can supply an example of a chapter that was particularly well written, this can be a great help in fashioning your own chapter. If the edited book is part of a series, go back and look at chapters from previous volumes as well. This gives a sense of the preferred style, particularly if the editor was the same as the one for the current volume

5. *Adhere to the deadlines.* Others' professional careers may be counting on the book to come out on schedule, so it is very inconsiderate to delay the process by being late with revisions and final edits. If you can foresee that you will not be able to fulfill your obligations, let the editor(s) know as soon as possible so that a suitable replacement can be identified

6. *Respond thoughtfully to reviews.* Any reputable publisher of edited books will use an anonymous peer review process. It is important for authors to revise manuscripts in accordance with this feedback and submit the revised manuscript by the specified deadline

7. *Attend to details.* If the editor has not supplied you with a checklist of what needs to be submitted, create your own. It is customary to expect authors to supply such things as a signed contract, a copyright transfer agreement, an abstract of the chapter with keywords for indexing purposes, and a brief biography

8. *Be a writing mentor.* Prolific, well-respected authors often are invited to contribute to edited book projects yet they probably have reached a point where they certainly do not “need” another publication. Edited books can become a tool for mentoring as they coach a less experienced author in producing a book chapter

9. *Try co-editing or editing.* After gaining considerable experience with reviewing proposals for edited books and contributing chapters to them, you may want to propose a volume on a particular topic for the same series or even pursue the establishment of a new series with a publisher. Realize that name recognition in the field often is required, however. If that does not yet exist, collaboration with a well-known scholar is one way to break into book editing

Becoming a Book Author

The successful publication of articles in peer-reviewed outlets is an affirmation of the author's competence while the publication of books establishes a scholar's reputation. When an article earns positive reviews from peers who have no vested interest in seeing a faculty member succeed, it is a vote of confidence. Journal article

acceptance suggests that the author knows how to write in a way that others in the field respect. Yet, when an article is published, it is in a table of contents along with the article titles and names of several others. Unless a reader is citing the work, he or she may not even notice who wrote it. If you doubt that this is true, think about how you read articles before you went to graduate school—chances are, you focused on the topic and did not pay that much attention to the author’s name unless you came across it several times. A monograph—a short book on a specific topic—or a full-length book pulls the author out of the mix and draws more attention to her or his work.

Some reasons for getting involved in writing monographs or books include:

- to make a contribution to the field
- to learn about a topic in considerable depth
- to produce a compilation of what is known about a topic
- to earn tenure, promotion, sabbatical leaves, or grants
- to gain access to other opportunities, such as supported travel
- to learn more and develop specialized expertise
- to establish reputation and enhance visibility
- to make a modest supplement to income

Novelist Annie Dillard (1989) captures the relationship between author and book when she writes: “I do not so much write a book as sit up with it, as with a dying friend. During visiting hours, I enter its room with dread and sympathy for its many disorders. I hold its hand and hope it will get better” (p. 52). Books are such big projects that they easily spin out of control. It takes considerable forethought and planning to successfully launch a project of this magnitude. Use the strategy in Activity 10.2 to get started.

Activity 10.2: Planning the Nonfiction Book

Think about a book you might want to write someday by answering the following questions:

The subject matter of my book is:

The specific audience for my book is:

Other books written on this topic for the audience include:

The focus, thesis, or approach of my book is:

This topic and focus are suited for this audience because:

This book is timely and would sell because:

Three publishers who would produce this type of book are:

Specific features of these competing books are:

The book I am proposing is different from or better than these books because:

The potential contribution of my book is:

The resources that I will need to produce the book include:

The book would probably be about ____ pages with ____ chapters.

Distinguishing features that make my book unique are:

One common question about book writing has to do with your suitability for fulfilling that role.

Fulfilling the Author's Role

Many an author has launched a book project with a period of hopeful dreaming. He or she envisions a wide audience for the work, eager to get their hands on a copy and poring over the pages. An author may imagine hefty royalties akin to those earned by the celebrated authors of bestselling novels and popular nonfiction. As a first step, it is better to set more realistic expectations. Think about your own behavior as you browse through the book displays at a conference or look at a publisher's catalog. Most of the time, only a few books grab your attention and fewer still would cause you to request an examination copy to consider as a textbook for a college course; even fewer would urge you to part with your hard-earned cash and place an order. Furthermore, the potential audience for scholarly works is much, much smaller than a popular press best seller and competition is keen for those small markets. To illustrate, suppose that an author is proposing to write a college-level textbook on adult learning theory. The audience for that book probably consists of graduate students—a very small percentage of the total population—and, to narrow it even further, graduate students enrolled in a program that has an adult learning theory course. The instructor for that course also has to be willing to switch to a different textbook and rewrite the syllabus. Many times, the book currently in use has: been written by an internationally recognized expert in the field, been so successful that it is now in its 10th edition, and garnered considerable support from the publisher's advertising budget. Knowing all of this helps to explain why most college-level textbooks do not survive beyond the first edition. Nevertheless, new books are needed to propel the field forward. Most of the time, this requires authors to invent something with an element of originality and to anticipate future trends in the field (Clark & Phillips, 2014). Use the material in Activity 10.3 as a way to analyze your suitability for book authorship.

Activity 10.3 Initial Questions About Book Authorship

Consider each of the following questions before you commit to working on a book:

- Does the book project mesh well with your expertise, interests, and work life?
- Have you identified a work that is largely original rather than relying heavily on previously published sources?
- Will you rebound from numerous recommendations for revision from the reviewers and revise the work accordingly?
- Are your expectations for direct financial rewards realistic? Can you accept that they could be nonexistent or insignificant?
- What is your employer's perspective on the value of the project? Will the book be recognized as a bona fide scholarly achievement, given the departmental, college, and university-wide policies of the tenure, evaluation, and promotion committee?

Review the points in Table 10.4 to reflect on book authorship as a possibility for you.

Table 10.4 Useful characteristics for authors of scholarly books and monographs

Experience commensurate with the role. Whatever book-related project you undertake, it should be at or slightly above your existing level of competence with the task. If, for example, you have experienced success with teaching undergraduate students, preparing a student study guide or an instructor’s manual for a college-level textbook could be an excellent way to develop as an instructor. Collaborating with a more experienced book author is another way to boost potential for book authorship

Knowledge of competing (and complementary) works. Before you can make a contribution, you first need to thoroughly assess what is already out there. Practically every book publisher will require you to complete a market analysis as part of a book proposal, so do this as a first step. Otherwise, you run the risk of producing a proposal for a book that is very similar to what is already in print

Resilience in the face of disapproval. You can expect that, if a book proposal (also called a prospectus) is subjected to multiple reviews, there will be many recommendations for improvement. As with the dissertation, the author’s responsibility is to formulate a response that would address those concerns, not based on how much work it will be or time it may take, but in the spirit of improving the work. Much of the time, potential book authors give up at the first whiff of criticism

An ability to anticipate future directions in a field. If you merely follow trends and it takes 2 years from proposing the book to publishing it, the material might be dated before it is printed. Successful authors use their knowledge of the discipline to “look down the road” and predict trends, issues, controversies and policies that will produce changes in the field

Commitment to the task and to deadlines. Book authors who have acquired a good reputation with publishers hold themselves to deadlines just as assiduously as they hold college students to deadlines. They get the work done, do it well, and turn it in on time—no excuses

The capacity to generate many good ideas. In the field of creativity, words such as “generativity” or “fluency” are used to describe the individual who is capable of coming up with many different ideas, solving problems, and producing something with a fresh perspective or approach. It is misleading to think that “having an idea” for a book is sufficient; actually, any useful book is replete with good ideas

Realistic expectations for outcomes. If the motivation to write and publish scholarly work is skyrocketing to fame and amassing a fortune, you are almost certain to be disappointed. A more reasonable and modest goal is to make a worthwhile contribution to the field. If, by chance, that work gains recognition and earns some revenue, then it is a pleasant surprise

Interpersonal skills and business sense. Academic authors need to attract the publisher’s attention to their project, persuade the editor that is worthy of the investment, negotiate the contract, respond to peer review, and go through the entire production process. Many book authors are surprised to learn that their job is far from over after the entire manuscript has been submitted. Usually, there is rewriting, responding to the edited copy, making corrections to the proofs, tracking down missing references, and so forth. Authors also are expected to respond to marketing questionnaires, help with writing advertising copy, or promote the book through conference presentations. Authors need to deal with all of this with aplomb and professionalism

Selecting a Publisher

An editor and author were enjoying dinner together to celebrate the successful launch of an edited book series. The author said, “You don’t have to answer this question if it would divulge trade secrets, but I have a question for you. When you receive a proposal for a book, what happens next in your offices?” The editor smiled

and replied, “There is a meeting of all of the editors for the various divisions within the company. We sit around a table in a board room and each editor is given just a few minutes to describe any project for which he or she is seeking support. After the presentation, the group decides if the project merits the investment. Obviously, resources are limited, so we need to make wise business decisions. If I fail to persuade my colleagues, then the contract will not be offered.” The author replies, “That process is very interesting—it is similar in some ways to how we propose new courses or curriculum at the university. May I ask how you prepare for these meetings?” “Ideally, the author’s proposal and the reviews do much of that for me. I go through these documents, highlight the most persuasive information, and write notes in the margins that will help to answer colleagues’ questions. I also use my best judgment about which projects to pursue. If I sign too many contracts for books that do not make a profit, I would be fired from my job.” As this candid conversation reveals, publishing is a business. What this means for authors is that they too need to be professional, practical, and business-like in their dealings with publishers. There is a wide range of possible publishing outlets for books, as summarized in Table 10.5.

Given these different types of publishing houses, how should you go about identifying suitable publishers for a book that you have in mind? Some recommended ways are described in Activity 10.4.

Table 10.5 Categories of book publishers

Professional organizations. Most leading professional associations publish not only journals but also monographs, edited books, and books for their members. These publishing programs frequently have the goal of providing resources for professional development at affordable prices. In the interest of supporting their members, authors rarely receive payment or royalties; however, the authors often are given more editorial support, the works are widely disseminated (thereby establishing the author’s reputation), and a publication for an association often leads to invitations to speak at conferences

Commercial publishers. These publishers are business-driven and will seek to be successful by securing some of the larger markets for books. The most common category here is the college-level textbook. Any book that survives will need to “hit its numbers”; for a college textbook, that may be only about 5,000 copies for the first edition. If the book is successful and more copies are sold, more will be printed and the possibility of a subsequent edition will be explored. Most textbook publishers in the U.S. are dealing with hard decisions about converting the traditional hardbound textbooks into e-books and keeping their market shares. Another category of commercial publisher consists of those who publish books to be marketed directly to professionals for the purpose of professional development. For example, Sage—noted for its books on research—has an affiliate called Corwin that publishes resources for practitioners

Scholarly publishers. These publishers need to make a profit in order to survive; however, they still will publish books that have a comparatively small audience in the interest of advancing the field. University presses are a good example; they are affiliated with a university and, even though they need to sell books, they tend to be less profit-driven than commercial publishers. Usually, university presses are subsidized to some extent by the universities that bear their names. The institution allocates funding for the privilege of having a respected publisher affiliated with them

Activity 10.4: Identifying a Suitable Publisher

There are a number of different strategies to identify suitable outlets for a monograph or book. As a first step, look on your own bookshelf. Who publishes the type of book you have in mind for the audience you've identified? Next, chat with authors and talk with colleagues. What experiences have they had with specific publishing companies, both good and bad? Each publisher has certain areas of focus. Scan through their catalogs in print or online. If you go to all the time and trouble of writing a book, you'll surely want people to know about it and read it. Ask yourself these questions: Is the publisher prominent in my field? Does the publishing house have a good reputation for service, quality, innovation, tradition? Does it market books effectively to the intended audience through effective advertising and a sales force? Are their editors known to be ethical, knowledgeable, helpful, and professional?

After you have identified a potential publisher for the work, make sure that you understand their audience, market, and purposes. Many publishers, for instance, have series of books that focus on an area of interest. Here is Olivia Saracho's statement of purpose for an edited book series:

The purpose of the series is to present current knowledge related to various aspects of the field. Each volume is devoted to a single broad topic. Individual chapters in each volume are designed to present **reviews and analysis of the literature** in relation to recent **theory, research, and analysis** of practice concerning some facet of that topic. Each contribution should present a clear and significant presentation that should have implications for researchers, scholars, policy makers, and practitioners.

Each edited book provides a forum for ideas. Scholars from diverse areas are invited to contribute their unique perspective to the field that should be enriched by discourse relating to a variety of viewpoints. To this end, we encourage scholars to address questions concerning the field in a scholarly manner within the series and to submit work that integrates, analyzes, and critiques elements of the literature such as research and theories. This should be done in a way that is accessible to a broad range of readers in the field. Each chapter included in a volume must be written in a style and format that will be accessible to researchers, theoreticians, administrators, practitioners, and policy makers.

Before you approach a publisher with a book prospectus, be certain to read the purpose for their publishing program.

Proposing a Book

Two faculty members who had co-presented at several conferences were discussing the difficulty in locating a suitable textbook for a course that each of them taught at their respective universities. In analyzing what was available amongst the published books, they fell along a bimodal distribution—either books that were written for fellow researchers that might be suitable for a doctoral seminar or books that lacked a theoretical/research base and consisted mainly of “helpful hints” offered to other professionals. This led to an idea for a book that would bridge the gap between

research and practice, so they went in search of a publisher for it. The exhibits hall would close shortly and they arrived at the booth of the leading college-level textbook publisher to find the editor there by himself. After they pitched their idea for the book in just a minute or two, the editor said “As you can see, we are the premier publisher of textbooks in this field. Most of our texts have sustained their market share for many years and some are in their 10th editions. So, we are not really interested in pursuing the publication of any entirely new textbooks at this time—except for the one that you just described.” Those last eight words launched a textbook that is now in its 7th edition (Isenberg & Jalongo, in press).

As this example illustrates, authors need to quickly describe their project in a persuasive way to the editors responsible for signing new authors. Usually, they are called “acquisitions editors” because their job is to acquire new books for their list. Table 10.6 guides you in developing a succinct statement about your proposed book project.

Think of your idea for a book project as a 2-min commercial. Activity 10.5 offers suggestions on how to make that initial contact with an editor more successful.

Activity 10.5: The Concept for Your Book

Using the advice in Table 10.6, make a plan to *briefly* explain your idea for a book.

Rehearse and time your presentation and keep it to fewer than 2 min because that is about all you can expect at a conference booth before you get interrupted. Ask others to listen and respond with suggestions and questions. If you are in a writing group, give everyone a chance to practice and get feedback. Were they “sold” on the marketability of the idea?

Scholars frequently overestimate how much publishing they need to have done previously before pursuing a book contract. In fact, it may be easier to secure a book contract than to publish in the top-tier research journal in your field, purely because the competition is not as fierce. The simple explanation for this is that far fewer people are willing to commit to a huge, long-term project. But, before you rule out book writing as a possibility, realize also that book projects often are supported by sabbatical leaves. Sabbaticals are not awarded with the faint hope of a scholarly product; rather, you need to build a case that the institution’s investment will pay off. So, wait until after you have secured a contract, completed a few chapters, and dealt with peer review successfully. If you already show every indication of completing the project, your application for a sabbatical leave is more likely to rise to the top. Better yet, after you have produced the book as promised, you build a case for a subsequent sabbatical leave. During 37 years at the university, I was awarded five one-semester sabbatical leaves to write books: that’s equivalent to two and a half years at full salary to write. Few could argue that this is anything less than a remarkable level of support, yet some faculty never even apply. What other occupation gives you paid leave to pursue your interests? Stated plainly, you *can* get time to write—but only if you have published and continue to do so.

Contrary to many an author’s expectations, you do not write the entire book first and then go in search of a publisher. Although this is the way that novelists are portrayed in the media, the development of a scholarly book follows a very different path.

Table 10.6 Planning to present your concept for a book

Be mindful of these points:

Do talk with experienced and successful book authors about their experiences and seek their advice on proposing a book to a publisher. Find out which editors and companies have a good reputation, treat authors respectfully, and follow through with their commitments

Take the time to study the publisher's catalog and become familiar with the other books they may have published on the topic. Determine, in advance, if what you are proposing is filling a gap

Recognize that the publishers need to make responsible decisions about which projects to support. It is estimated that the cost of producing an ordinary book is \$25,000.00. The cost includes salaries of all the staff members involved (editors, production team, sales representatives, office personnel), direct mail advertising, publishers' catalogs, travel to major conferences, and production costs (e.g., paper, printing, binding, converting the book to an e-book, etc.). In some ways, you are more like an artist seeking patronage to complete a work than an employee of the publisher

Remember that an acquisitions editor's continued employment depends on signing books that make money. Do not "oversell" the idea that there is no other book on earth like this; that suggests that there may not be a market for it. Instead, persuasively answer this question: *Why this book at this time for this audience and publisher?*

Remember that editors may not be experts in your field. Chances are that editors for commercial publishers, such as textbooks, are experts in identifying successful authors and producing books that generate income for the company. Therefore, do not speak with them as you would disciplinary colleagues. In many cases, editors will rely on peer reviewers for the disciplinary expertise; they bring the business acumen to the mix rather than the subject matter expertise

Speak clearly about the project. Avoid excessive jargon or name dropping; strive to communicate the marketability of your idea. Do not spend those precious moments with an acquisitions editor attempting to dazzle them with what you know, as if you were a doctoral student during a comprehensive exam. Editors assume that professors know something; what they don't yet know is if you have a book that is timely and will sell, so focus your energies there

Do emphasize how this book represents a stride forward. That will require such things as: insider information about emerging trends and issues in the field, recent facts and figures that predict new directions, and a thoughtful study of other published books—particularly those represented by this publisher

Do be reader/publisher centered. Remember that, whatever you publish, it needs to make a contribution and advance the field. Preoccupation with your own need to publish is not the correct focus

The initial step in getting a book contact is to write what is called a book proposal or book prospectus. Over the years, various faculty members have asked me to look at their ideas for a book. In almost every case, these documents are nowhere near what they need to be in order to garner a contract from a publisher. They frequently sound like a lengthy answer to "Here's what I want to write about..." rather than "Based on these trends in the discipline, here is an important, timely, and marketable book that meshes with your publishing program". When I share examples of book proposals that were awarded contracts, the most common and candid response is something along the lines of "Wow, I didn't know you had to do all that."

Activity 10.6: Drafting a Proposal for a Book

Think of this task as a trial balloon for your book. A publisher will require more, but this will get you prepared to write a more formal proposal (also referred to as a book prospectus).

- Identify a possible book topic, title, and specific audience. Go to Amazon and Barnes and Noble on the Internet and conduct a search of other books on the subject. Read the descriptions and look inside the tables of contents of several that seem similar to what you have in mind. Print out the information on six books that are similar to (or will compete with) the one you are proposing.
- Don't be discouraged if there are many more books on your topic than you imagined. Some of the books may be dated. Others may not take the approach you are proposing. Textbook publishers, for example, often want more than one book for the same course so that they can offer alternatives and maintain their market share for that audience. Based on this admittedly cursory look at what has been published, compare/contrast major features of the book you have in mind and competing works (for example, how the book is organized).
- Now you'll need to explain how your approach is unique, needed, better, etc. Remember that this information will be used by the editor to gain financial support for your project from the company.
- Gather evidence to support the marketability of the project:
 - The statements of leading professional organizations
 - Changes in accreditation standards for the profession
 - Surprising statistics that suggest emergent issues
 - Research findings that are leading to a paradigm shift
 - Pervasive problems or persistent controversies that merit attention
 - Other information to demonstrate that the project is timely and appropriate
- Write a statement of purpose for your book (no more than one paragraph). Remember that it should answer the question, *Why this book at this time for this audience and publisher?*
- Generate a list of four to six unique features that will distinguish this work from others on the market.
- Write a list of some of the topics that will be included. Usually, it does not have to be a detailed outline; possible chapter titles with a paragraph may be sufficient and even preferred.

When you propose a book, keep in mind a board room table surrounded by editors. Each person has to convince her or his colleagues that the project presented merits support. Do the editor's "homework" for him or her; provide persuasive evidence that the project will fill a niche and make a contribution. Table 10.7 is a "before/after" of the introduction to a book proposal. The first is a draft is in the first column; the revised version is in the second column.

Table 10.7 Book prospectus before and after

Before	After
<p>Over the past 30 years, technology has changed the way individuals work, play, and communicate. Le Masurier and Corbin (2006) reported that physical activity has been replaced by modern day conveniences and “engineered out of most aspects of daily life” (p. 44). Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure (Meeks, Heit, & Page). Despite well-documented research that defines the importance of daily physical activity, children today are less physically active than their predecessors. Just four decades ago, children were likely to walk to school or use bicycles as a primary means of transportation. Today, children spend more time using technology and engaging in sedentary behaviors than playing outdoors or participating in physical activity (Page & Page, 2015)</p>	<p>Introduction</p>
<p>Decreasing physical activity levels among children has led to an epidemic of childhood obesity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] (2015) warns of the short-term and long-term health effects associated with childhood obesity, and suggests that increases in chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes, asthma, and cardiovascular disease mirror childhood obesity trends. Although high blood pressure, dyslipidemia, and elevated blood sugar are among the many health complications that sedentary children may experience, the CDC posits that improving physical activity habits and reducing childhood obesity is a “winnable battle” (Blanc & Collins, 2013)</p>	<p>An appreciation for the interdependence of a healthy mind and body has existed for centuries throughout the world. In ancient Rome, the phrase was “<i>Mens sana in corpore sano</i>”—“a sound mind in a sound body”. Connections between the health of the mind and the body are an integral part of Eastern philosophy as well, such as the yoga-based Chakra system. The most recent iteration of a holistic approach to physical and mental health is supported by empirical research that documents the positive effects of physical activity on the cognitive performance of adults and children (McKenzie, Sallis & Rosengard, 2009; Ratey, 2008)</p>

<p>Early childhood educators are in a unique position to promote physical, cognitive, and emotional health among children. Over 60% of children ages 3-to-5 who are not attending kindergarten attend center-based preschools outside of the home (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2008). These centers are a viable location for physical activity and health promotion programs because they serve over half of all children, ages 5 or younger</p>	<p>However, as is the case with many other initiatives, the youngest children are frequently overlooked. Where physical activity is concerned, there is a persistent misconception that the very young are “naturally” active and require no systematic opportunities, encouragement, or instruction in order to acquire the “minimum daily requirement” of exercise. The Institute of Medicine (2011), for example, recommends 15 min of moderate-to-vigorous exercise for every hour a child spends in child care yet that criterion is seldom met. Another damaging attitude toward children’s physical activity is a talent scout mentality in which only those children who appear to be gifted and talented athletically are given extensive support in developing physical skills. Meanwhile, those children whose bodily-kinesesthetic skills are regarded by adults as ordinary or deficient in some way are excluded from opportunities to participate in physical activity. This type of bias should be no more tolerated in the realm of physical skill development than it is in opportunities for intellectual skill development</p>
<p>Brown et al. (2009) conducted a review of 24 preschool facilities in South Carolina and examined how often children were sedentary, engaged in light activity, and engaged in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA). During one typical school day, 89% of the activities were sedentary, 8% included light activity, and only 3% incorporated MVPA. In order for children to maintain adequate levels of daily physical activity and counteract the trend toward more sedentary habits in contemporary children, intentional programming designed to increase MVPA among preschoolers is essential</p>	<p>Rationale for the book</p>

(continued)

Table 10.7 (continued)

Before	After
	<p>Over the past 30 years, technology has changed the way individuals work, play, and communicate. Le Masurier and Corbin (2006) reported that physical activity has been replaced by modern day conveniences and “engineered out of most aspects of daily life” (p. 44). Physical activity occurs when the skeletal muscles—those that initiate movement of the skeleton—are set in motion and expend energy (Meeks, Heit, & Page, 2013). Despite extensive research supporting the importance of daily physical activity, contemporary children are less physically active than their predecessors. Just four decades ago, children were likely to walk to school or use bicycles as a primary means of transportation. Today’s young children are more sedentary than ever before. There are at least five variables that exacerbate this phenomenon. First, the American Pediatrics Association (2015) reports that children devote, on average, seven hours a day on entertainment media, such as televisions, computers, phones and other electronic devices. Secondly, whereas young children once were outdoors and playing with neighborhood children, concerns about safety have brought them indoors to keep them safe (Clements, 2004). Third, the pressure to attain higher academic standards has reduced or eliminated both structured physical activities, such as physical education classes and supervised, less structured physical activities, such as recess (Ramsetter, Murray & Garner, 2010). Fourth, parents/guardians frequently do not provide models of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (Moore, Lombardi, White, Campbell, Oliveria & Ellison, 1991). Fifth, many young children are in child care or preschool settings where their teachers lack the preparation, skills, confidence, materials, and environments to lead children in physical activity (Lounsbury, McKenzie, Trost & Smith, 2011)</p>

Yet regular physical activity during the early years not only serves to maintain a healthy body mass but also has several other physiological and psychosocial benefits related to bone and skeletal health, motor skill development, psychosocial health, cognitive development, and cardiovascular and metabolic health (Carson, Clark, Ogden, Harber & Kuzik, 2015; Timmons et al., 2012). Experts are advocating a new perspective on physical education that regards it as form of literacy; the goal is to promote healthy bodies (i.e., physical literacy) just as assiduously as literacy with print or computer literacy (McNulty & Prosser, 2011)

Lower physical activity levels among contemporary children have led to an epidemic of childhood obesity. The World Health Organization (2012) estimates that 42 million children worldwide under the age of 5 are not developing optimally due to overweight and obesity. In Canada, for example, national data estimate that 35 % of children between the ages of 2 and 5 years are overweight or obese (Shields, 2006). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] (2015) warns of the short-term and long-term health effects associated with childhood obesity; it is linked to increases in chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes, asthma, and cardiovascular disease. Although high blood pressure, dyslipidemia, and elevated blood sugar are among the many health complications that sedentary children may experience, the CDC posits that improving physical activity habits and reducing childhood obesity is a “winnable battle” (Blanck & Collins, 2013). Promoting wellness during the early years is crucial for enhancing the health of society because early childhood is a formative time period during which lifelong attitudes, values, and habits associated with physical activity are set in motion (Eliassen, 2011)

Activity 10.6: Improving the Persuasiveness in Book Proposals

Compare/contrast the Before and After columns in Table 10.7. As you read, answer the following questions. How does the revised version: (1) speak to a wider audience of readers? (2) supply the editor with additional evidence to persuade colleagues to support the project? (3) answer the question, “Why this book at this time for this audience?”

Remember that, when proposing a book, you are trying to convince business-minded people to support your project.

Now that you have drafted a preliminary idea for a book using the material in Activity 10.6, ask a peer to critique it using the scoring rubric in Table 10.8.

Table 10.8 Scoring rubric for a draft book proposal

Author’s Name: _____			
Proposed Book Title: _____			
Audience for the Book: _____			
Possible Publishers for the Book: _____			
Criteria	2 target	1 acceptable	0 unsatisfactory
Rationale/purpose	Thoroughly addresses the question “why this book at this time for this audience?”	Addresses the question “why this book at this time for this audience?”	Does not address the question “why this book at this time for this audience?”
Market analysis of competing works	Identifies 4–6 other books as well as their strengths/weaknesses; persuasively argues that the proposed book is a stride forward	Identifies fewer than four published works, their strengths and their weaknesses, in comparison to the proposed project; argues that it is a stride forward	Identifies fewer than four published competing or similar works and does not clarify how the book advances thinking
Current facts and figures	Uses authoritative sources, the statements of leading professional associations, and current trends to build a compelling argument for awarding a book contract	Uses authoritative sources, the statements of leading professional associations, and current trends to build an argument for awarding a book contract	Supplies facts and figures but they are not authoritative or organized into a logical argument that supports awarding a contract
Appropriateness for audience	A specific audience is identified and the reasons for putting this topic and audience together are convincing	A more general audience is identified and weaker reasons to bring the audience together with the content are supplied	The audience is too general and the reasons for bringing the audience together with the content are not clear

When you formally submit a book proposal, the components that typically are required consist of:

- curriculum vitae
- overview of the book, highlighting its unique features
- evidence that this is the right book at the right time
- clearly defined audience
- analysis of trends and market
- detailed comparison with competing works
- annotated table of contents
- sample chapters in the proposed format of the book
- timeline for completion of the project
- evidence of previous work done on this project

Each publisher has a format for proposing books, so be certain to follow their guidelines

Securing a Book Contract

One vastly experienced editor for a commercial textbook publisher explained the situation of signing authors this way: “Of the professors I talk to about a book project, about one-third will follow through and write and submit a book proposal. Of that one-third, about a third of the projects are worth pursuing in our estimation and the estimation of the reviewers; these authors will be offered a contract. However, nearly half of them will bail out when they see all of the recommendations for revision. Only about half of those still standing will finish the book and produce a first edition. Out of those produced, about 20% will go to a subsequent edition and out of that 20%, about 2–5% will make a significant profit. We actually use a letter grading system that is based on the amount invested in advertising, ranging from an AAAA down to C.”

It is very difficult to know what to expect financially from writing a book; our best advice is to set your expectations very low. As one college textbook author put it, “I treat any royalty checks I happen to get as ‘mad money’ to use on whatever makes me happy. If I’m lucky, I have enough to take the kids to Disneyworld.” Some basic facts help authors to formulate ideas about what would be fair. Table 10.9 contains information relevant to book contracts.

As this information reveals, academic writing is very different from popular press ventures. Whereas novelists’ livelihood is entirely dependent on books, professors already have full-time jobs, health care, and so forth. To put it bluntly, publishers are working on small profit margins themselves and they expect universities to support scholars. We read of popular press books selling millions of copies while selling fewer than 5,000 copies would be more typical for scholarly books or even college-level textbooks. Many times, students think about how expensive textbooks are and assume that authors surely are the beneficiaries of those high prices. Yet, as

Table 10.9 Background on book contracts

Net versus gross. To understand the difference between the net and gross, just think of your paycheck—the gross is quite a bit larger. Suppose that a publisher charges \$80.00 for a book—that is the gross income. But from that amount, the publisher has to pay for personnel, office space, design, paper, printing, production, and technology; they also have to produce advertising, marketing, mailing, and send out free copies. The bookseller needs to make a profit as well. As a result, the net is about 30% of the gross for books

Basic royalty rates. These are payments made to the author, based on sales. A typical royalty rate is about 7–10% of the *net* income generated by the book—not the cover price at the bookstore (that is the gross). This means that if the net price of the book is \$40.00, you would earn about \$2.00 per book and, if you have a co-author, your share is \$1.00 per book. Knowing this helps to answer a common question: “Should I hire an agent or a lawyer?” With compensation this low, it probably is not worth it to pay a percentage to someone to advise you

More on royalties. Be sure to read the contract carefully—royalty rates are often lower on international sales, direct sales, or electronic versions. Some publishers—such as professional associations that are nonprofit—may not pay any royalties at all since their book publishing programs often are designed to get high-quality, inexpensive resources into professionals’ hands. Where college-level textbooks are concerned, it might be advisable to include an escalation clause (for example, an increase from 8% to 10% after the first 7,000 copies are sold) or to renegotiate when a subsequent edition is planned. Realize too that there are no royalties on used books, only on new ones

Hidden costs. Be sure to read your contract! Too often, professors are so thrilled to have a book contract that they promptly sign it and return it without reading the document. Some publishing companies will charge you for indexing the book; this is deducted from your royalties. Given that this is something that most authors are not keen to do, you may want to insist that the publisher absorb this cost as part of your contract negotiations. Commercial textbook publishers may charge you for photographs; this too is deducted from royalties. If you decide to use any copyrighted materials, you will have to pay permission fees and these can be quite expensive so find out what the fees will be before you include any of this material in a manuscript. Given all these charges against royalties, your first statement well may be a negative number, with you “owing” the publisher money—at least until you sell more copies of the book

Breaking the contract. Sometimes, a commercial publisher (e.g., college-level textbook publishers) will give a small advance—for example, \$1,000—to an author when the project is launched. Realize that these are advances against royalties, so if the book is never produced, there will be no royalties and you will have to pay it back. Scholarly publishers typically do not do this. Your contract will specify the deadline for receipt of the entire manuscript, the approximate number of words, and so forth. If you fail to comply with those terms, the publisher has the option of abandoning the project and there is nothing you can do about it

Special clauses. Some publishers include a “noncompeting works” clause. This means that you are prohibited from writing another book on the same topic for a specified period of time (e.g., 1–2 years). What if you are terribly dissatisfied with a publisher and want to take your work elsewhere? Again, it is essential to read your contract. You will need to be released from your contract, assuming that it is still in force

Harsh realities. Only about 2–3% of the books that are proposed ultimately become published books (Moxley & Taylor, 1997)

this chapter has explained, the money flow gets diverted to covering other expenses, leaving a tiny trickle for the author. As one professor explained. “I have six books in print right now and, collectively, they keep my ordinary family car up to date. Most of my tangible rewards for writing have come from my employer, such as moving through the promotional sequence (and up the salary schedule) quickly or earning sabbatical leaves.”

Conclusion

A faculty member who was writing a college-level textbook for the first time called her widely-published dissertation advisor for insight about the process. He had written a highly successful textbook on research and recommended that she think of each chapter as an individual work, much like a journal article. After months of struggling with this approach, she came to the conclusion that, while that approach evidently worked well for a graduate-level statistics book, it was less effective for an undergraduate textbook on early literacy. In fact, the major breakthrough for the new textbook author was to discover a structure that could be applied across all of the chapters. Upon greater reflection, her advisor was a heavy planner. He would write an outline and generate text to match it with minimal deviation from the original plan. She, on the other hand, was a discovery drafter. Although she had been required to develop an outline for the book proposal, she was constantly moving material around, trying to determine the best way of organizing her ideas. The experienced author's primary goal was to explain advanced statistical methods in a clear, systematic, and linear way to graduate students. The new textbook author's goals were quite different. She needed to "translate" theory and research in a palatable way to relative novices in the field so that undergraduates studying to become teachers would actually read the book and learn from it. A second, yet equally important, goal was to convey the most successful and creative teaching she had done to fellow instructors seeking to deliver a high-quality undergraduate course.

The point here is that, while some general advice about writing books can be helpful, each author and each project that an author undertakes has different hurdles. Writing this book, for instance, creates a dual expectation that, not only for providing competent guidance but also for delivering that advice in beautifully crafted prose. It sets the daunting expectation that each of us be a "writer's writer". Each time we sit down at the computer to compose, the nature of the task and the characteristics of the readership should shape us as authors. Even though there are common traits of effective writing, every scholarly writing task demands something at least slightly different. Big projects, such as books, intensify everything—worries about disappointing editors and reviewers, extensive preparation for writing, demands for revision along the way, and a maddening attention to detail that is required. Surely, one of the greatest impulses with a scholarly book is to send it hurtling to the editor's digital inbox, if only to be shed of it. Despite a large measure of aggravation, publishing a book chapter, editing, or writing a book ultimately can become a satisfying experience. When scholars succeed in publishing with a reputable company, it demonstrates that they have something to say to disciplinary colleagues, signals that peers have responded favorably, and fills a niche in the literature of their chosen disciplines.