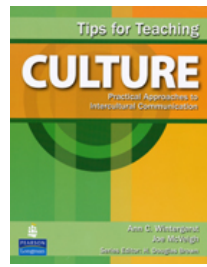


Joe
McVeigh



Getting a Start as a Textbook Writer

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TESOL, Philadelphia

Resources

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- Lewis, L. (2000). *What to charge: Pricing strategies for freelancers and consultants*. Putnam Valley, NY: Alethia Publications.
- Shenson, H.L. (1990). *The contract and fee-setting guide for consultants and professionals*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley.
- Stafford-Yilmaz, L. (Ed.). (2005). *Negotiating ESL/ELT publishing contracts*. Alexandria, VA: TESOL.
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It's a business

Understand that everything is driven by the market—even for academic publishers. Study the market. Study the competition. It's not a bad thing to be like somebody else—you don't need to reinvent the wheel. Be flexible, learn from feedback, and be ready to fit into their plan if your own ideas aren't immediately accepted. Realize that this is a team sport and play well with others.

Network like crazy

Start with your local publisher's reps. Go to conferences and get to know editors. Don't submit anything blind, without an invitation. Go to publishers' booths and ask to talk to editors. Ask people to introduce you. Always have a card handy.

Self-promotion is not a bad thing

You need to be ready to sell yourself and your abilities. Put your doubts behind you – just pretend you're an expert!. Show confidence!

Don't give up easily

Rejection is the name of the game. If you don't get rejected, you aren't trying hard enough. Develop relationships and don't be afraid to put your name forward (gently) from time to time. Don't burn your bridges if things don't work out on a project.

Getting your foot in the door

- Offer to write reviews of books that haven't been published yet.
- Offer to write online materials.
- Offer to write workbooks.
- Offer to write teacher's editions.
- Offer to write test items.
- Offer to do a "cold read"
- Always give them your business card. Write your specialties on the back.

Don't pitch a book — pitch yourself!

***Janet Aitchison
C.U.P.***



MACMILLAN



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS



NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC
LEARNING



CENGAGE
Learning

PEARSON

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS



The
University
of Michigan
Press

M UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

This is a great time to write !

The market

Although there has been increasing consolidation among textbook publishers, the market and the need for materials writers is greater than ever. Publishers today are putting out materials as traditional books and are also exploring lots of new digital formats. Many large series require workbooks or online materials, listening scripts, tests, teachers editions and other sorts of ancillary materials.

Your motivation

There are lots of different motivations for writing: becoming famous, making money, the satisfaction of seeing your name in print, professional advancement, sharing your ideas with a larger audience. Try to think clearly about what motivates you to want to write. It's a lot of work. Way more time than you think. Will that motivation sustain you through the writing process? Do you have time in your professional and family life to devote to a large project? Are you a disciplined writer?

Ways of working

In the professional world there are basically two ways to be paid. Once is with a share of the *royalties* on the book—a percentage of the profits. If the book sells well and the price is fairly high, you could do well. If the book fails to sell well, you will have spent a lot of time for a limited amount of money. Royalties are more common with the student books of a text or series. The other method is called *work for hire*. In this case, the publisher will pay you directly—either an hourly fee or a flat rate—for your work on a project. You get all the money at the time that you do the work. This method is more common for workbooks, online materials, testing materials, and teachers' editions.

Co-authoring

Working with another writer is a great way to break in to textbook writing. It's ideal to choose a writing partner that you know, but sometimes a publisher will arrange a co-author for you. It's hugely helpful to have someone to bounce ideas around with.

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