
(LAVAl continued from page2)

Classes at the Benito Juárez University start the next day. Students will study Spanish four hours a day in classes with only three to six students. At one o'clock they will go home to have lunch with their families. The afternoons are free and students are encouraged to visit Oaxaca which has magnificent sixteenth century architecture, 27 churches, two outstanding museums, an exciting zócalo and a large outdoor Indian market. There is always something to see even if it is only from an outside café. Students often gather at the zócalo and sometimes we even hold our seminar at one of the cafés there. Site directors have even been known to keep office hours at

the zócalo in the late afternoon.

In addition to lectures at the Benito Juárez University, the 490 seminar will be taught at Monte Albán, once a Zapotec holy city covering 25 square miles, at the Mitla ruins, another complex of ceremonial structures, in the Rufino Tamayo museum, in the church of Santo Domingo and at other important historical sites in the city.

After the four-week program, some students elect to stay on to travel in Mexico or remain with

their families. Last summer, student evaluations of the program were very positive and we are looking forward to exciting new learning experiences this summer. While there are real classrooms in Oaxaca, much of the learning takes place without using pencils, paper, or the classroom at all. The lives of the students will be changed forever after their experience in Mexico. This is one promise we make to our students.

I teach basic concepts in mathematics and build student self-confidence because I truly enjoy starting the freshmen out on their voyage through their college careers.

— Harriet Gustafson

Publish Without Perishing: **A Practical Handbook for Academic Authors**

By Jan Reading, Graduate Student, Master's of Professional Writing under the direction of Dr. Dawn Rodrigues, Professor of English

Getting Published has become more difficult for academic writers. Peter Benjaminson's book, *Publish Without Perishing: A Practical Guide for Academic Authors*, attempts to provide some tips to negotiate the "publishing mine field."

Working on the Contract

It is essential that an academic author understand how to negotiate a publishing contract before he or she signs it. Authors should remember that most contracts are written to favor the publisher. Although a publisher cannot be forced to offer a pro-author contract, an author should be prepared to counter with concessions he or she wants from the publisher. Asking a publisher to consider certain concessions will show that the author is "not undervaluing" (18) his

or her work. Even if all of the concessions are not met, some might be just because the author asked.

Finding an Agent and Collaborators

Most authors do not have agents, because journal "articles are what academic writers write most often" (21), and an agent may not be necessary. However, an agent can benefit an author simply because "getting an agent usually means a more lucrative contract" (22). An author can also save time if he or she is able to hire an agent who will do most of the grunt work.

Writers can also save time by collaborating with others. One collaborator's expertise in a given area may compliment that of his or her colleagues, and that knowledge can be used to create a stronger manuscript.

There are, however, some problems with collaboration. Obviously, royalties would be split, and deciding how may cause conflict. In addition, there may be arguments regarding "whose name comes first as an author" (31), "or co-authors may feel they did more than their partners" (32).

Writing a Proposal

Once an author has settled the basics, he or she can concentrate on the book proposal. Some editors may insist on an outline or proposal letter, while some may ask for the complete manuscript. Most editors however, will prefer a proposal and sample chapters, even if a complete manuscript exists. The standard proposal would include a description of the book (including its contents); biographical information about the author(s), highlighting the author(s)'

qualifications to write the book; a list of competing texts, and a brief description of each. The proposal should also illustrate why the manuscript differs from the competition and include a description of the targeted audience.

Most publishers send proposals to “readers”—experts in the field. One pitfall of this practice is factionalization; “a manuscript can be killed by a reader who’s a member of an opposing faction” (53). The author should warn the editor about possible factions. The manuscript will have a much better chance of being judged more fairly if factions are avoided.

Advances and Royalties

Advances are important because they can protect the author(s) financially if something does go wrong. Also, the larger the advance the more the publisher shows his or her interest in an author or authors. The author must keep in mind that an advance is taken directly from his or her royalty.

If the book is published, the author should understand that “the

I teach for a variety of reasons—mostly because I can’t shoot subpar golf, carry a tune or write any better than Robert James Waller. Other than that, I simply love it.

—Randy Goodwin

more copies of [the] book that the publisher sells, the higher a percentage price of each book returns to the author as royalties” (65).

Copyrights

Authors must keep in mind that “what academic authors write is the authors’ property, unless the academic author sells it or gives it away” (75). A copyright gives the author the right to “sell it, print it, novelize it and pocket the money from doing so” (75). The most recent version of the United States copyright law holds that “authors hold the copyright to their work as soon as they finish writing it” (75). Even if an author does not register the copyright as soon as the publication is written, the author is still protected. However, it is wise to register the copyright as soon as possible.

Publishers may try to get the manuscript under a work-for-hire agreement. Work for hire gives the publisher all rights to the work, including re-publication, and the publisher is under no obligation to put the author’s name on the manuscript.

All of the above guidelines are important to take into consideration before creating a manuscript, and should be taken into consideration before academic authors approach a publisher, so the authors will be able to publish without perishing.

Work Cited

Benjaminson, Peter. *Publish Without Perishing: A Practical Guide for Academic Writers*. Washington D.C.: National Education Association, 1992.

What Students can do on Computers

William A. Rooks, Jr., Assistant Professor of Marketing & Professional Sales

(adapted from a recent article. Full text available from the author)

Over the past three years, I have observed that some students do better than others in my course, Marketing Data Analysis. The course requires students to retrieve data from CD-ROM sources in the library and process it, which consists of developing an expert system on a PC and then use the data as input.

The student who did better in the course seemed to have a better understanding of the operations of personal computers. Based on these observations, several questions came to mind. Is there some way to effectively and practically measure a student’s knowledge of

computer operations? What knowledge is required for effective operation of a personal computer? Are certain computer use factors associated with levels of computer operations knowledge?

From a review of literature, it was clear that some knowledge of a PC’s operating system was needed for effective operation. DOS (Disc Operating System) is an industry standard for IBM and compatible PCs. Researchers have suggested that there are certain DOS commands that are a “must know” for those seeking PC proficiency. These commands were listed in a survey instrument and adminis-

tered to 403 students in a number of classes who were asked to define these commands.

Over the years I have been guided by the principle that the good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge. Foremost in my mind are love for my students and my profession and knowledge of my academic field and my strengths and weaknesses.

—Vassilis Economopoulos