

Title: Collaborating with Students as Co-Authors

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Summary Description:

We will discuss methods of collaborating with students to produce a publishable work. Many professors have used research assistants to the extent that the student's contribution merited a co-author credit. This workshop will expand on this concept, where the students in a seminar class collaborate with the professor to produce a published casebook or other co-authored work. The relationship becomes one of collaborators rather than teacher/student. I have published two casebooks using this method, and my former students have benefitted from the enhancement to their resume as well as the process.

Process:

1. Determine Topic.

First-year courses are probably not appropriate, because first-year students are not capable of producing a quality chapter. I suggest that the ideal topic may be an upper-level elective for which there are currently relatively few casebooks on the market.

2. Draft Table of Contents.

This will determine the number of students who can be involved in this project. If your book has only 10 chapters, then you probably cannot have more than 8 student co-authors, because you will need to write at least 2 chapters.

3. Draft Sample Chapter.

You will need a sample chapter to send to potential publishers. Some prefer that this be something other than the introduction.

4. Find a publisher.

Most publishers will want to see a table of contents and at least one sample chapter, as well as your personal qualifications. It will help if your publishing contract is signed prior to student registration for the course. You may want to negotiate additional complimentary author copies of the book for all your students.

5. Select a few students as early presenters.

Although you will be presenting the chapters you have written during the first few class meetings, most of your class meetings will include student presentations. Because these presentations cannot all occur during the last couple of weeks of classes, you will need to prepare some students to present earlier in the semester. I chose students I knew and asked them during the break, long before the class commenced. Their reward was that they completed most of their work for this course long before the semester end.

6. Allow students to select a topic from your Table of Contents as soon as they register for the course.

This helps them to start the process early, and rewards those who register early. You can now start assisting by providing each student with relevant cases, articles, and materials.

7. Identify and explain the expectations of each student in the course, with appropriate deadlines.

Each student in the course is expected to do the following:

- Write a chapter to be published, including at least 3 featured cases, 4 notes for each case with references to at least 5 other cases, and one essay question.
- Write the accompanying chapter of the Teacher's Manual, with summaries of each featured case, explanations of the notes, and answers to the essay question.
- Present the chapter topic to the class, facilitating a discussion.
- Edit two other chapters, assisting the student-authors with editing, proofreading, and research.

8. Edit.

9. Edit.

10. Edit again.

Unlike law review articles that are proofread and edited repeatedly, you must present your publisher with camera-ready copy. This means if you don't find the typos, they will be printed. Consider hiring a professional editor.

11. Combine all chapters into one document and email to your publisher.

12. Celebrate.