



2015

Co-authors: Faculty-Student Collaborative Writers

Tara Perry

Western Washington University, tara.perry@wwu.edu

Jackie Heller

Western Washington University, hellerj3@wwu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://cedar.wwu.edu/wis_writingresearchfellows



Part of the [Communication Commons](#), and the [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Perry, Tara and Heller, Jackie, "Co-authors: Faculty-Student Collaborative Writers" (2015). *Writing Research Fellows*. 3.
http://cedar.wwu.edu/wis_writingresearchfellows/3

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Writing Instruction Support at Western CEDAR. It has been accepted for inclusion in Writing Research Fellows by an authorized administrator of Western CEDAR. For more information, please contact westerncedar@wwu.edu.

2014 WRITING INSTRUCTION RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS Closing Report

Tara Perry, Communication Studies Department, professor, taraperry@wwu.edu
Jackie Heller, Communication Studies Department, student, hellerj3@students.wwu.edu

Date study was completed: February 1st, 2015

Title of Study: Co-authors: Faculty-Student Collaborative Writers

Research Question(s):

RQ1: What communication processes are involved in collaborative co-authorship between faculty and students?

RQ2: What happens when faculty and students engage in collaborative writing through co-authorship?

Method(s):

- Collected results through interviews and focus groups. The conversations were transcribed and coded into six different themes in order to analyze the research.

Key Findings from Study:

- The researchers discovered that faculty-student co-authors go through several communication processes when working collaboratively, such as: 1) Getting Started, 2) Breaking it Up, 3) Norm Balance, 4) Connecting, 5) The Outcome/Bringing it All Together, and 6) The Reflective Experience.
- Understanding the communication process is instrumental in the successful completion of the writing project.
- Before the writing projects even began, both student and teacher would analyze what co-authorship or collaborative writing meant.
- Faculty and students shared similar concerns about time management, organization, roles, and power structure.
- Faculty and students shared similar benefits about publishing opportunities, research enhancement, skill development, and building relationships.

Implications for Teaching and Learning:

- This study provides a new “lens” for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) to critically analyze the communication *process* in faculty-student collaboration on writing projects.
- According to Hutchings (2001), SoTL researchers want to find out "what happens" and "what it looks like." Thus, understanding the intricate *step by step process* in faculty-student co-authorship is critical in enhancing SoTL.

- Faculty realize that students' voices do matter, and this is important in the enhancement of their own research and teaching curriculum.

Gains/Challenges in Faculty-Student Collaboration:

- Gains:
 - Both faculty and student have the opportunity to publish their work and be recognized for their achievements.
 - Strong relationships are developed between faculty and student which can enhance teaching and curriculum, and overall student learning inside and outside the classroom.
 - Faculty are able to enhance their own research and gain multiple perspectives.
 - Student voices are heard.
 - Students learn about the research process.
- Challenges:
 - Not all faculty-student co-author groups go through a fluid process in team development.
 - Time management is a major challenge recognized in this study. Both faculty and students expressed difficulties in finding times to meet.
 - Power distribution and unequal roles were a common challenge expressed by both faculty and student.

Implications for Further Study:

- Future research must focus on the *how* versus *what* of co-authorship and collaborative groups between faculty and student.
- Research must focus on the communication process with undergraduate students within collaborative projects, which is limited currently.
- Future researchers must understand that not all co-authorship groups go through a fluid process, and that is okay.