**Annotated Bibliography**

**Topic of Interest: Textbook writing**

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EDCI 52002: Seminar II

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Giraud, Y. (2014). Negotiating the “middle-of-the-road” position: Paul Samuelson, MIT, and the politics of textbook writing, 1945-55. *History of Political Economy*, *46*(suppl\_1), 134–152. https://doi.org/10.1215/00182702-2716145

This article describes the political game that Samuelson had to overcome when writing an economic textbook for MIT. Giraud states that the goal of his article is to examine “the making of the text itself and in the way it was revised and defended in its early years”, and Samuelson had to take a “‘middle-of-the-road’ position” to reach a “political negotiation” due to the differing opinions of his peers (Giraud, 2014, p. 135). In 1945, Samuelson wrote an article series for two well-known newspapers and was later called upon to write an introduction due to his reputation as a technical writer. The first draft of his textbook angered local businessmen due to Samuelson’s views of the free-enterprise system. His text was peer reviewed throughout several drafts which caused more opposition to his text. The book was used at Yale, Harvard, Duke, Purdue, and many more educational institutions. Not only did he have good content, but he also “had a ‘snappy style’ and ‘drop[ped] to wisecracks at times,’ making ‘the inferior student (and teacher) feel good’” (Giraud, 2014, p. 144). Although Samuelson’s textbook was widely accepted, there was still major opposition that continued his need to defend his textbook. Giraud concludes his article by looking at Samuelson’s whole writing process. Samuelson had a lot of opposition that could have caused the project to fail, but instead, the opposition caused Samuelson to make edits and revisions that softened some of his viewpoints. “The ‘middle-of-the-road’ position emerged as a way to respond to these critics, by stepping *aside* rather than *against* them” (Giraud, 2014, p. 151).

The goal of the Giraud was to discuss Samuelson’s writing process, the opposition, critiques, revisions, and the success of his book. He was very thorough in his investigation of Samuelson, his motives, and the opposition that he faced. He remained objective and limited bias by referencing several sources that showed their opposition as well as gathering letters of Samuelson’s responses to some of those critics as well as referencing the actual preliminary texts that Samuelson wrote. Giraud wrote for the reader to have a clear understanding of the opposition that Samuelson faced to his more radical or liberal economic viewpoints, but also showed the support he had from MIT in his writing endeavor. Instead of just being able to write a textbook, there was the peer review process that caused lots of trouble for Samuelson. Giraud applauds him for finding that balance between politics and policy. Overall, Giraud accomplished his goal of showing his readers that when writing a textbook, opposition will come. He also gave readers and writers a path to follow in how to keep a textbook project progressing but gave a warning that multiple revisions and lots of time will be involved in the process.

This article gave a very interesting perspective on the politics and the opposition that can be encountered when writing a textbook. Any textbook can display some personal bias, and in Samuelson’s case, it seemed that he took a more modern outlook on the economics of his time. This seemed to stir up controversy in some of the older, more established members of his field. As one wants to get into the field of writing textbooks, it was eye-opening to read about all the hoops that one needs to jump through to appease peers or colleagues who may have other opposing viewpoints. However, the opposition that a writer can face may differ depending on the material that is being written. This article is a good source for others who are planning to write an economics textbook about what opposition can be encountered, and the process that might need to be followed to write a “middle-of-the-road” text. For those writing texts on other subjects, this article may not be as helpful, but could still be a great source to be enlightened on the politics of textbook writing. This article was also enlightening about the number of revisions and edits that a writer could experience. One would expect it to take a year or two, but the start of his third edition of the book was over a decade. Overall, the article was not helpful in the day-to-day textbook writing or the planning process, how to organize the text, key components, formats, etc. But this would be a good article for someone starting in the field to get a realistic view of politics and the time involved in the writing process.

Merrill, M. D. (2002). First principles of instruction. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, *50*(3), 43–59. <https://doi.org/10.1007/bf02505024>

In his article, Merrill defines key terms such as *principle*, *practice*, *program*, etc. in educational models and how he will use them in the article since he later mentions that context is similar from theory to theory, but sometimes the terminology is different. He states that four instructional phases are most effective in the learning process. These are “(a) activation of prior experience, (b) demonstration of skills, (c) application of skills, and (d) integration of these skills into real-world activities” (Merrill, 2002, p. 44). Merrill then proceeds through all four principles with explanations of how this could occur in the classroom and also gives some examples. Under these principles, he mentions gradually diminishing instructor guidance as the student gains skills and knowledge to see what the student can do on his own. Merrill also stresses that consistency is important and practice must align with the learning goal (Merrill, 2002, p. 49). After covering the principles, he starts to analyze different learning theories with their terms and shows how each theory contains some if not all four of the principles. Some of the theories that he addresses are McCarthy’s 4-MAT, Andre - Instructional episode, Nelson - collaborative problem solving, Jonassen - CLE, etc. Merrill concludes his article by saying that vocabulary is the major difference between the different theories (Merrill, 2002, p. 44).

The purpose of Merrill’s article “is to identify and articulate the prescriptive design principles on which these various design theories and models are in essential agreement” (Merrill, 2002, p. 43). He also states that “the premise of this paper is that there is a set of principles that can be found in most instructional design theories and models” even though the terminology used may differ, the context is still the same (Merrill, 2002, p. 44). Merrill did a great job presenting each of the principles and theories in an unbiased manner. Each principle was clearly defined, and while describing the different theories, he used his predefined terms to explain the concepts of the theories. But he also gives the theorists’ terms for the reader to make the connection between the different theories. Merrill did show that while terminology may be different, the basic principles are in each of the different theories the presentation of the material is just a different approach to the learning process.

This article is not intended for textbook writers, but this article does address key points and principles that should be in any curriculum. This article is good for writers to understand the design and presentation of the content. While terminology and information are crucial to the text, it should all be presented with scaffolding on prior knowledge, demonstrating information, activating the learning process, and integrating the knowledge into the student's lives. The writer would need to take these principles and find ways to present material and implement interesting and fun ways for teachers to be able to activate the knowledge through hands-on activities or “play”. Merrill also gave several different theories that the writer can build their curriculum design off of just one or a compilation of multiple. This is a good resource for any teacher or textbook writer who wants to make sure that their curriculum and class are hitting different areas to help students learn and apply the material to their lives.

Michelson, M. R., & Anagnoson, J. T. (2022). Cultivating a beginner’s mind: How textbook writing improves our undergraduate teaching. *PS, Political Science & Politics*, *55*(3), 630–632. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096521001980

Coauthors Mellissa Michelson and Theodore Anagnoson wrote this article about some valuable lessons that they learned while writing an introductory textbook with a large team of co-authors. One of the first lessons mentioned was “writing a textbook requires … a beginner’s mind” (Michelson & Anagnoson, 2022, p. 630). Do not get too in-depth for an introductory course textbook. Start with the basics because more in-depth information will come later and if too much information is given, students can become overwhelmed. Writers should remember their introductory classes and “needing everything explained in accessible language and in easily digested smaller pieces” (Michelson & Anagnoson, 2022, p. 630). The key reminder is that authors want to leave students “the basics-fundamental theorems and theories” and the rest will come later in other classes (Michelson & Anagnoson, 2022, p. 631). They also encourage writers to remain unbiased in the textbook and include controversial topics that are good for discussion and debate. The second lesson they wanted to convey was to be wary of contract negotiations about pay and royalties. They said to make sure to have language written to base pay on the amount of work put into the book. For instance, someone who wrote several chapters should be paid more than another who only wrote one. The most important lesson that they learned was from the “challenge of coordination among coauthors” (Michelson & Anagnoson, 2022, p. 632). One thing was to be wary of the overlap between the authors’ content and the different chapters. This seemed to happen more in the revisions of the book when authors did not feel the need to read other authors’ chapters of the book. Overall, proper management can take a team with much expertise to write a very good introductory textbook, but bad management can cause chaos for everyone.

Michelson and Anagnoson want to warn other possible writers of some of the difficulties that they faced while writing their introductory textbook. They pulled from their own experience so there could be some bias on how they think that a book should be written, but they did give valuable insight to possible problems that could occur and frustrate other writers. This article mainly focuses on large teams so with more people usually comes more problems with more opinions to deal with. Smaller teams may not have as many issues with writing as these two might have had. Michelson and Anagnoson did say that proper management could have been an issue. They also talked about the contract language that needed everyone to agree before an author could be removed from the team, and when one is getting paid the same amount without putting in as much work could take some convincing to do. All of these lessons are indeed beneficial to hear from someone with previous experience especially if someone wants to get into textbook writing.

This is a good article to read for anyone who is interested in writing textbooks. The authors remind readers to keep the content basic for introductory courses, but the same information would work for writing any texts for elementary or high school curricula. They also mentioned that controversial topics should be brought up in the book. While that does show an unbiased opinion, it also helps students learn how to think critically, debate, and support their arguments, which is a skill that is needed today (Michelson & Anagnoson, 2022, p. 631). It was also helpful to hear about contract negotiations. That is something that one knows needs to be done, but knowing the wording to be used to get a coauthor out of the contract if they are not contributing was helpful. Michelson and Anagnoson even mentioned pay and royalties in the contract to make sure an author gets paid based on the amount of work contributed which is also a good idea to have. Overall, this article was very helpful to potential writers of some of the housekeeping items that need to be addressed when writing textbooks.