You're listening to You've Got This, episode 359.

Welcome to You've Got This, a weekly podcast for higher education professionals looking to increase their confidence and capacity for juggling the day-to-day demands of an academic life.

I'm your host, Dr.

Katie Linder.

On this episode, I'm offering a progress update on my book project since it was due in November and we are now quickly approaching the end of the month.

So first a quick reminder of what this project is.

So this book project is actually the first time that I've worked on a second edition of one of my books.

This is the Blended Course Design Workbook which was published in 2016 and was definitely due for a bit of an update especially following the pandemic when hybrid and blended courses became such an important trend.

I hadn't worked on a book since 2019.

I've written a couple of book chapters in the meantime, but I will admit I was a little bit nervous about diving back into book writing.

I thought it might be a little bit different to revise a book versus to write one from scratch, and that was indeed the case, but I was still pretty nervous about it.

Now you might also remember, I think I've mentioned on the show, that I took on a co-author to help support getting this project across the finish line.

And that was the best decision that I made on this project.

In addition to getting the help of this other person, my co-author also helped me so much with staying motivated.

There were so many competing things that I had to balance while I was working on this book project.

And especially towards the end, I had a lot of distracting things that were going on at my work, but we scheduled regular calls to keep each other updated on progress.

And that was just so incredibly helpful as we continue throughout this project.

You may also remember that I took some time off of work over the summer to do kind of a big push on my part of the manuscript.

Basically, my co-author and I split up different chapters of what needed to be written from scratch, of what needed to be just kind of updated and revised in terms of literature reviews and things like that.

That time that I took over the summer was a really good decision as well.

I really needed that concentrated time to focus on writing rather than trying to do a bunch of work in the margins of other areas of my life.

Now, admittedly, I don't think that marginal writing would have been completely impossible with this project, but I think it would have been so much harder for me, given my current kind of professional obligations, to try to squeeze this in and to do kind of quality work.

So I had that big chunk in the summer and then my co-author kind of had his big chunk in a different time period.

So the last couple of weeks, like the first two weeks of November basically, was the big final push on wrapping up all of this project.

And that included some final chapter revisions, working on all this paperwork for the publisher, completing a bunch of little details like getting contributor paperwork from people who were giving examples and things like that in the manuscript.

We had the formatting to do and then I wanted to print and read through the entire manuscript because I had done part of it, my co-author had done part of it, and we had a couple chapter contributors as well.

So I took a Friday off to devote to this, to kind of make sure it was like the weekend before the manuscript was due.

The manuscript was due on a Wednesday.

So the Friday before that, I took the Friday off of work, and then I spent the Sunday of that weekend reading through the entire manuscript.

And luckily this happened to fall during a prolific readathon, which is this online community that I run.

And we do these readathons throughout the year where we spend a day reading together and kind of checking in and touching base.

And so that time it worked out perfectly.

It gave me some nice motivation throughout that day to be kind of like reading this manuscript and checking in with that group.

And then after that Sunday, I had nightly calls with my co-author on Monday and Tuesday before we submitted the book on Wednesday, November 15th.

So I felt like this was one of those things where sometimes with a book project or a big writing project, you need to kind of be slow and steady.

And for this one, I felt like I had these like sprints that I had to build in throughout the project to make sure that I was able to actually just like get the brain energy I needed to really devote what I wanted to this project and to feel really good about it.

So I thought I would share some of the lessons that I kind of learned from this particular project, because it was a little bit different in terms of doing some revision work instead of writing from scratch.

And also, this is the first book that I've done in a while.

So the first thing I'm really taking away is there is absolutely no shame in asking for help.

I am completely convinced that this project would have been significantly harder to complete without my co-author's support, and I'm so grateful that he was willing to take this on with me.

And I just knew from the beginning that it would have just been so much harder.

So that was a huge takeaway for me.

And then along those lines, I think choosing a co-author that you trust is so important.

So this person that I'm working on this book with, I had written with this person before.

We had known each other for like over 10 years, so that helped a ton.

And we knew that we kind of got along in terms of like co-authorship because we had done some co-writing before in the past.

And also this person happens to be kind of an expert on this topic and does a lot of consulting and speaking on this topic.

So I think that there were so many reasons why it ended up that he was a good fit for this, but one of the biggest reasons was that I just really trusted his ability to kind of come alongside me and do this work.

I also found that blocking out time was so crucial to giving me the brain space that I needed to focus on this book and to not be distracted by a lot of other things that are on my plate right now, and really trying to find dedicated time that I could could do for this, it was a bit of a challenge to figure out when that could be.

But I'm so glad that I did it.

And I'm so glad that I prioritized this project in larger chunks, like a week at a time or a weekend at a time, because it really did help me to have the focus that I needed.

I also ended up using Asana, which is the task management system that I used to help me capture the to-do items that kind of cropped up on the project over the last several months.

And I shared kind of a list with my co-author, and we were able to add things and check things off and assign things to each other.

And for me, that was really helpful because I felt like I had a place for things to go and I wasn't always trying to remember what was that thing that I needed to do for this chapter or that chapter.

We had a place for all of that to go.

The other thing I would say as kind of a lesson that I'm taking away is when working with a co-author, I think it's really important to divide up the work based on your strengths.

And in this particular case, My co-author and I each had topical areas of interest, so we kind of divided up the chapter work that way, and that ended up working really well for both of us.

Also, of course, I have always learned the lesson of build-in margin for the unexpected.

For this particular manuscript, I had some original chapter authors who had committed to coming back and revising their chapters, and one of the contributors did not turn in their chapter.

I needed to revise an extra chapter the weekend before the manuscript was due.

This is not ideal, but I know I can build an extra time in the future for this.

And this goes back to kind of like working with people that you trust and that you know, you know, we're going to kind of do their piece of the work and it all ended up being fine in the end, but it did add a little bit of extra stress.

So building in that buffer and margin is super important.

The other lesson I'm really taking away is knowing the details of the publisher's guidelines can be super helpful.

And I was really lucky that my co-author had just finished another manuscript for the same publisher.

And so he was able to offer really good guidance to me and kind of the final steps about some of the formatting and the paperwork and things that we were going to have to complete and also just share like his experience of what had happened with this most recent manuscript.

And so I felt like I had a little bit of a leg up in terms of like working with this publisher.

And you may remember I've mentioned that the original publisher that I worked with on this first edition of this book was acquired by another publisher.

So we were working with a different editorial team, different parameters, different formatting, different guidelines.

And so I really had to kind of approach this with a fresh eye in terms of what we might have to change in the manuscript.

And that was something that it was really helpful to have someone who'd kind of gone before me and knew what were some of the things we needed to be paying attention to there.

So all that to say, the book is in.

And now it's time to celebrate that accomplishment.

And as you heard me mention in a previous episode, I am planning to relax over the Thanksgiving weekend.

I will link that episode in the show notes if you want to hear about that detail of what I'm going to be doing over Thanksgiving weekend.

And my partner and I also had the the Wednesday night that I turned in the book.

We had a nice dinner and just to of celebrate that we had gotten this manuscript submitted.

And also my co-author happens to be coming into town and into Denver later this year for a work trip and so we'll take him out to dinner as well and just kind of celebrate that accomplishment together.

So I don't know when I'm going to be working on another book project if I'm honest, but it's certainly a huge feeling of relief to have this one off my plate.

And I so appreciate that I was able to get this done and that it stayed in the timeline that I originally thought, which I have to admit there were some times where I wasn't really sure I would be able to hit that deadline.

And so it just feels really, really good to know that this is in and moving on to the next stages of publication.

So I am curious if you are working on any writing projects at the moment and what kinds of strategies are your go-tos to get these things done.

You can always email me at hello@drkatylinder.

com if if you want to share what's working for you.

And as always, thanks so much for listening.

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