

The Official Newsletter of Top Hat Word & Index

The Graduate School (USDA) Basic Indexing

The Graduate School Basic Indexing course is a distance learning indexing course put on through the USDA.



Paul completed the course through The Graduate School this last July.

The title "basic" indexing is deceptive, as it's anything but basic. It's an eleven-step course with a final exam, with each lesson involving extensive detail and preparation time prior to submission...so it's rather intensive and challenging, and requires a high degree of self-motivation to complete.

Convenience is king with a course like this; for someone working it simply can't be beat. The advantage with distance learning courses are that you can work through them via your own time frame, fine-tuning your schedule and allotted time for the coursework around projects and other obligations. That especially works well when you work freelance as a technical writing solopreneur.

Most fundamentals taught in the course were already part of the MO for Paul; but certain details, such as the ways various names are handled, were informative. More than anything, the one-on one instructor feedback was extremely valuable and helped to point out certain indexing tendencies while reinforcing established knowledge and strengths.



Teacher's National Board Certification

THIS JUST IN! It's now official...Kristin received notice the week before Thanksgiving break that she successfully passed her National Board exams, which she completed earlier this year in May.

While it represents a labor of love for those who dedicate their time to go through it, it's also a grueling process, to say the least.



From the time the final exam takes place and the process is officially completed, the participants

can do nothing but wait over six months before finding out if they pass or fail.

She passed, and is now donned with the title NBCT; specifically Early Adolescent History-Social Studies.

The effort that goes into the National Boards span an entire school year; in Kristin's case stemming from September of 2009. However her preparations began several months before that in early 2009 when she and her teaching partner arrived at the decision to go through it during the 2009-10 school year.

The advanced preparations paid off, allowing for extra time to plan the components of the course, and helping to avoid potential pitfalls. As team teaching partners, Kristin and her counterpart could talk through ideas, and with lesson planning hone in on the requirements of portfolio entries.

The process for NBCT certification involves a tremendous amount of planning, activity preparation, energy, and deep analysis in your teaching style; the how and why of the day-to-day approach in one's classroom. There is a meticulous writing element spanning the entire duration of the course; portfolio entries covering small group discussions, classroom interactions, and student writing improvement over time. A video component is involved, and an exam waits for you at the end of the process.

Not only do you have to go through work representing essentially a second job, but you also have to manage your life outside of the year of National Boards. That means surviving the year through illnesses, setbacks, and other unanticipated scenarios such as family emergencies. Meanwhile, you struggle to hold the fundamentals together, such as eating well and exercise.

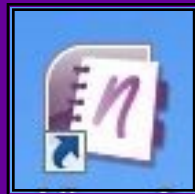
The accreditation remains active for a decade. Leading up to the end of that ten year period, NBCT certified teaching professionals have the option of going through a smaller version of the initial certification course for renewal.



To see additional issues of the newsletter, visit [Dexter's Corner](#) to find tidbits on each edition—and then simply click to read!

Visit the [Top Hat Word & Index website](#) or contact us at info@TopHatWordandIndex.com with any questions or inquiries.

OneNote and Flowcharting



Staff recently embraced a nifty little MicroSoft program called OneNote.

That program, along with flowcharting, is a helpful tool when strategizing with annual company exercises such as business and marketing plans.

Focus on more capabilities with OneNote will take place in a future post in *The Penny Farthing Commuter*.



You can find out more about Top Hat Word



& Index by visiting the website, where you can also see samples for [indexing](#), [technical writing](#), and [editing](#). In addition, check out client comments at the [testimonials](#) page!

The Training Pipeline



Even with the prior year's focus on training components for company staff, that doesn't mean we'll be resting on our laurels!

Paul is two courses away from an information design certificate (his second) from Bellevue College.

He is also considering The Graduate School's Applied Indexing course; a program that can provide valuable instructor review and feedback at advanced levels of indexing over the next two years.

