

## BOOK KNOWLEDGE VS. EXPERIENCE

Copyediting is an intense, rule-guided yet adaptable field. Things that seem straightforward aren't always so. You may have thought you understood the split infinitive, but discovered you were sadly mistaken. Or, while we all learned the rule barring double negatives in grade school, sometimes breaking that rule enhances the piece in question.

The topic of whether an emerging copyeditor should learn experientially or take courses (and, if so, which courses) has come up a couple of times this week. It's hard to imagine getting a good start in any profession without some sort of instruction. My introduction to the world of editing took place during my first job at the WEEA Equity Resource Center. Anyone who has worked on a grant-funded project knows that staff members regularly work outside the responsibilities outlined in job descriptions. And so the Marketing Assistant was suddenly tracking inventory, coordinating reprints and serving as the unofficially official proofreader for a national publishing center.

That introduction became my source of inspiration and was soon followed by proofreading and editing classes. Little did I know that every subsequent job would require some level of proofreading or copyediting. From public relations to grantwriting to conducting research, there was always some brochure in need of proofreading, report that required one final review before submission, or research tool in need of copyediting.

Together, formal training and hands-on learning created a solid foundation for my future as a writer and editor. My advice to someone interested in editing or writing is to follow both paths to career growth, determining the appropriate balance herself.

Here are some places to start building a skill set and a community of associates:

### **Be Your Own Editor**

<http://www.beyouroweditor.com/>

### **Copyediting-L**

<http://www.copyediting-l.info/>

### **Copyeditors' Knowledge Base**

<http://www.kokedit.com>

### **Emerging Writers Network**

<http://emergingwriters.typepad.com/>

*G.L. Honeycutt Consulting, LLC, and its creative division Weirding Word<sup>SM</sup>, helps businesses find, understand and share information through strategic research, analysis, and print and electronic publication development services. Contact us today at 703-360-1718 or [info@honeycuttconsulting.us](mailto:info@honeycuttconsulting.us) to learn more.*