

# **Authorship Module**

**Karena X. Cai**

# Outline

- Communication Skills
- Conflict Prevention
- Conflict Management
- **Authorship**
- Reflection & Self-improvement

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- Communication Skills
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- Conflict Management
- **Authorship**
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## 1. Importance of authorship.

2. Challenges of talking about authorship.
3. Setting up Expectations.
4. Managing Authorship Conflict.
5. Reflection on Assertiveness.

# Why is authorship so important?

## For You



- Gives you **credit**.
- Future **employers** may **evaluate you** based on what you have published.

## For Others



Assigns :

1. **Responsibility**
  2. **Accountability**
- (for the content of the work).

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# What are sources of conflict?

## Differences

### Expectations

Each person has a difference in expectations about authorship.

### Power Dynamics

Can be unfairly leveraged sometimes during these conversations.

### Culture

A difference in cultural norms (in/out of Caltech).

### Perception

Each person might perceive what they did (and its importance) differently.

# Quiz.

(with PolLEV)

If someone did not come up with the main intellectual idea but proved a more minor lemma, implemented a lot of the code, and wrote the paper, do they deserve to be first author of the paper?

- A. Yes.
- B. No.
- C. Maybe.

If someone you mentored has contributed a small but new technical idea and then coded it for you for your paper, should they be added as an author or acknowledged?

- A. Acknowledged.
- B. Author.
- C. It depends.

# Why authorship conversations are so challenging.

There is a lot of **ambiguity** in academia because there is **no set guidelines or set of rules** on how to assign authorship.

“There’s **no absolutely ‘correct’ answer.**”

“The **later** you talk about authorship, the **more tricky and challenging** it becomes! And most **students tend to wait...**”

“Even senior faculty still **don’t always have the best judgment...** even when they think they might.”

# Reflect.

(with Pollev)

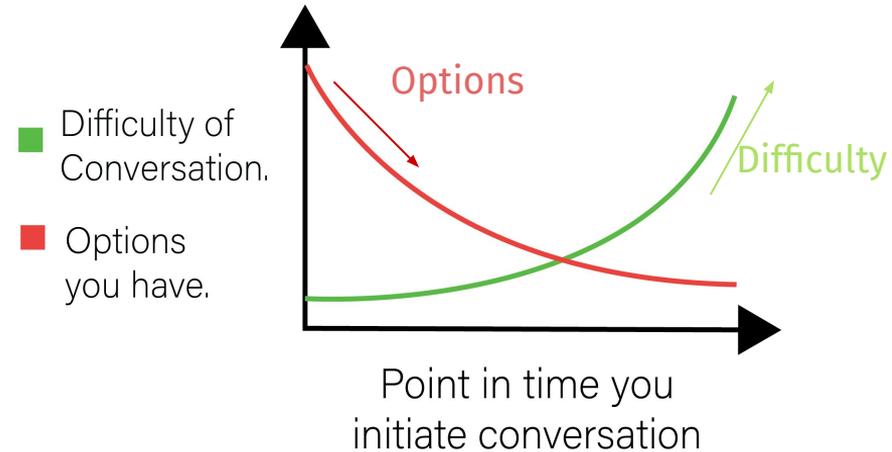
## Which could have been avoided (if collaborators had a conversation ahead of time?)

- A** Student X and Student Y disagree on who should be first author.
- B** One of the student's advisor demands to be on paper (bc of cultural norms) when paper is about to be submitted (even though they did not work on paper).
- C** A student had 1-2 conversations with about their research with a fellow post-doc. The post-doc demands to be on the student's paper.

# Reflect.

(with pollEV)

How do you think your collaborator might react if you asked about them about talking about authorship early on?



## Top Reasons for not bringing up authorship:

1. The **unpredictable nature** of research.
2. **Awkwardness** of conversation, don't want intentions to be misinterpreted.
3. **Don't know what/how** to talk about authorship.

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# What are authorship conventions in your field! (including liabilities & responsibilities)

Can ask advisor or faculty member who has been in the field for a long time.

## Ordering among authors.

- Co-authorship vs. first authorship.
- Ordering convention for co-authors (i.e. alphabetical).
- Ordering of non-first authors (students, faculty, research staff, etc.)

## Placement within manuscript.

- Author vs. Acknowledgements.
- Acknowledgements vs. Citation.

## Type of manuscript.

- Value of journal paper vs. conference paper vs. workshop paper.

- Only formal requirement is that anyone who has contributed to paper must be recognized, but all other discretion is up to collaborators involved.
- Any person listed as an author on the paper has a right to veto its submission.

**Reflect.**  
(with pollEV)

**What is (are) the authorship convention(s) in your field?**

- A. Alphabetical ordering.
- B. First author, second author, etc.
- C. First co-authors allowed.
- D. First co-authors normal?
- E. First co-authors listed alphabetically.
- F. Professors are listed last.
- G. Funding sources are acknowledged.
  
- H. Others? (chat to share)

# Additional things you might want to clarify with your collaborators

01

**More senior collaborators** might **assume** they have authorship **priority**.

02

**Advisors** might always **expect to be on a paper** their student has written.

03

Gift authorship, an advisor might **expect you to add someone** on your paper who hasn't contributed to the work..

04

**Out of sight, out of mind.** The lab group might not expect to add your name if you rotated out of the group.

# What are some things to discuss?

01

## Expectations

- What are authorship expectations in field.
- What does each person expect about authorship and how it should be decided?

02

## Metric for Evaluation

- How are you going to re-evaluate who should get what authorship?
- Are you going to use a formal process/what are your guidelines?

03

## Recording Meetings?

- Do you want to record meetings so you have an objective history of what each person did?

04

## Revisiting conversation

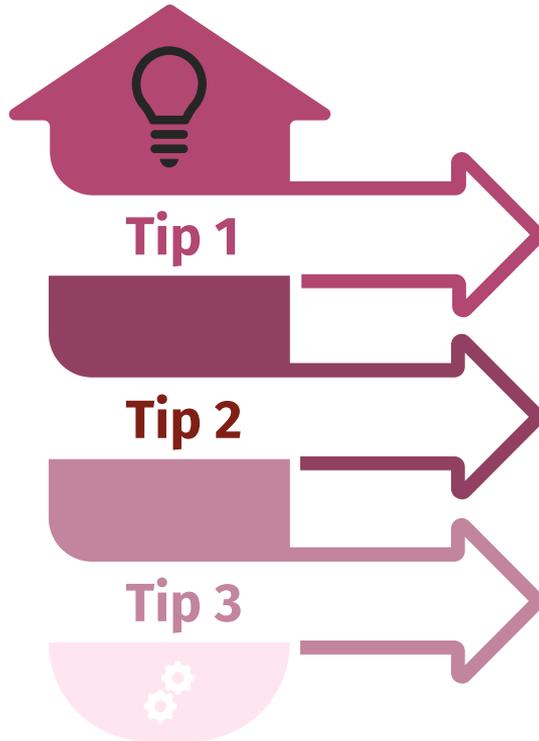
- How often/when are you going to revisit the conversation about authorship?

05

## Resolving conflicts

- What tools/methods are you going to use to resolve conflicts when they come up?

# Helpful Tips for Having Conversation About Authorship



## Tip 1

### **Make sure it is two-sided.**

#### **Discussing your expectations but also theirs!**

"I was also wondering if you would mind sharing with me what you were thinking of with respect to this collaboration as well!"

## Tip 2

### **Motivate why you want to know.**

#### **Intentions should be mutually beneficial and honest.**

"I was hoping to talk about authorship so that we can collaborate effectively together and we can find what's fair and best for everyone."

## Tip 3

### **Use positive language.**

I am really enjoying working with you and would like to continue in this collaboration.... Do you think we can talk about how we might decide authorship if this becomes a publication?"

# Transforming Language.

(with pollEV)

## Instead of saying...

You think you're lead author on a paper but want to make sure...

**“Let's make sure we're on the same page about authorship.”**

You've contributed some code, and were wondering whether you would be included in the authorship list...

**“I just wanted to make sure I was an author on this paper.”**

# Some helpful language

## Instead of...

Let's make sure we're on the same page about authorship... or... are you on the same page as me?

I just wanted to make sure I was an author on this paper...

## You might try...

Do you think we could discuss authorship? I wanted to see whether we are on the same page and if not, whether we could find a way to move forward so we can be on the same page.

I was wondering if we could take some time to discuss your expectations about being an author on this paper? I think it would be helpful for me to understand how I can best help you!

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# Conflict Management Tips

01



## Facts

Start with the facts you know about the conflict, instead of assumptions.

02



## Nature

Consider source of conflict and its significance.

03



## Parties

Understand who the parties are in the conflict, and who has an interest in the resolution

04



## Outcomes

Think about the outcome you want.

# Authorship Conflict Management Tips

**Make sure in the right emotional headspace for conversation!**

**Focus on your own contributions, not on others.**

**Focus on listening and understanding to the other person's claims.**

**Stay objective, not subjective.**

# Transforming language.

(with pollEV)

Suppose you are having a conversation to mediate an authorship dispute and you are each discussing your respective contributions.

## **Instead of...**

I thought what you did wasn't that significant and did not add much to the results of the paper...

## **In response to one of their claims which you think is an over-assertion of their contributions...**

I completely disagree with what you are saying...

# Transforming Your Language

## Instead of...

I thought what you did wasn't that significant and did not add much to the results of the paper....

I completely disagree with what you are saying...

## You might try...

I recognize that you did X, Y and Z for this paper. My contributions included A, B, and C.

If I understand correctly, what you mean is that you did X, Y, and Z ... I would just like to clarify that I think...

Be aware of confidence differences/assertiveness!

# Authorship Conflict Mediation Beyond Advisor

\*Very few cases.



[Formal Process for Authorship Mediation](#)

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# Reflect.

(with pollEV)

Do you feel you are more or less assertive about authorship than you would like to be?

- a. More.
- b. Less.
- c. About right.

# Self-Reflection: Authorship (Assertiveness)



Cost/Benefit Tradeoff!!

# Some Additional Resources

Home

## Authorship and contributorship

Clear policies (that allow for transparency around who contributed to the work and in what capacity) should be in place for requirements for authorship and contributorship as well as processes for managing potential disputes

### Cases

[Authors requesting withdrawal of articles from similarity check database in order to re-publish](#)

[Author displays bullying behaviour towards handling editor](#)

[Author admits failure to credit other authors](#)

[View all Authorship and contributorship cases](#)

<https://publicationethics.org/authorship>

## Caltech Hixon Writing Center

**What they help with:** One-to-one consultations with Writing Specialists to discuss writing

**How they help:** Help with writing plan, feedback, and collaboration strategies/challenges

Psychological Science Agenda | June 2015

## FROM THE SCIENCE STUDENT COUNCIL Determining and negotiating authorship

Frequent communication and a dynamic approach can help minimize disagreements.

By Allison Gaffey

### Why authorship matters to you

For scientifically minded graduate students, conducting research and publishing is indispensable for both professional development and career advancement. By engaging in this process, you acquire new expertise, develop collaborations and advance the body of work in your research area. Authorship is the primary way to recognize your contributions and those of other individuals who are involved in a research project.

### Negotiating authorship as a dynamic process

As a graduate student, it might at first feel daunting to discuss the roles you would like or expect and your place as a contributing author in a project. However, this step should be approached as a learning opportunity that will contribute to your professional identity as a researcher and scholar. Advisers will usually be happy to discuss authorship and will consider such discussions to be an important aspect of the mentor-mentee relationship.

<https://www.apa.org/science/about/psa/2015/06/determining-authorship>

[https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-09/documents/best\\_practices\\_designating\\_authorship.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-09/documents/best_practices_designating_authorship.pdf)

<http://www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html>

### Contract Regarding Publication Intent

We hereby enter into an agreement, as outlined below, regarding the publication of the project tentatively titled: \_\_\_\_\_

#### FIRST AUTHOR

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Percent effort: \_\_\_\_\_ Activity Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of basic responsibilities/role on project:

#### SECOND AUTHOR

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Percent effort: \_\_\_\_\_ Activity Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of basic responsibilities/role on project:

#### THIRD AUTHOR

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Percent effort: \_\_\_\_\_ Activity Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Brief description of basic responsibilities/role on project:

<https://www.apa.org/science/leadership/students/authorship-agreement.pdf>

# Special Thanks To...

**Faculty:** Richard Murray, Yisong Yue, Adam Wierman, Pete Seiler

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**Hixon Writing Center:** Erin R. Burkett (STEM Writing Specialist)

**Chief Compliance Officer:** Grace Fischer-Adams

Note, some infographics inspired from <https://slidesgo.com/>

**Thank you so much for listening!!**

**Any Questions?!?**