

Academic writing: Barrier Busters

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May 14, 2015



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Faculty of Education, Research Week

Turn to your neighbour

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- Introduce yourself
- #1 reason/excuse (that you tell yourself and others) about what gets in the way of your writing



Session objectives

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- By the end of this session, participants should be able to:
 - 1) Describe some of the common barriers to pursuing academic writing.
 - 2) Explain some of the research that addresses the above barriers.
 - 3) Make an initial plan for becoming more productive academic writers.

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(PowerPoint Slides will be at my eportfolio site in the Scholarship Section for 1 week).



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Academic writing – what works?

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1. Write every day (regular writing, 5-6 days/week)
2. Reject the notion of writer's block
3. Write first and revise later
4. Break things down into small chunks
5. At the end of each session, make a plan for what you will do at the next session

References: Silvia (2007); Stevens (2012); Sword (2012) and others!

Academic writing – what works? (ctd)

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6. Know yourself as a writer
7. Join a writing group
8. Become a student of writing
9. Know there are no magic formulas or shortcuts
10. Reward yourself

1. Write every day

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Abstinent Writers

- No scheduled sessions
- Write only if you have to

Spontaneous Writers

- 5 sessions/week for 10 weeks
- Write if you're in the mood to

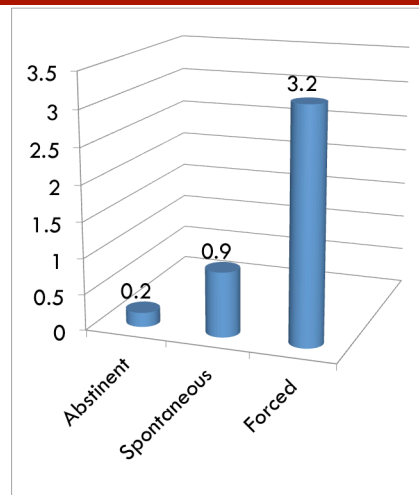
“Forced” Writers

- 5 sessions/week for 10 weeks
- Negative consequence

Boice (1990)

“Forcing” Ourselves to Write

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Boice (1990). Professors as Writers, pp. 82-83

When you engage in regular writing...

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You:

- Produce more writing
- Generate more creative ideas
- Train your writing muscles!



What works: Write every day!

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Great advice!!
BUT...

Turn to a partner....

How to write every day

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1. Set a goal (duration, # words etc)
2. Chunk it
3. WRITE!
 - Writing ≠ reading, searching sources
 - No books, articles, distractions etc
4. Write first, revise later

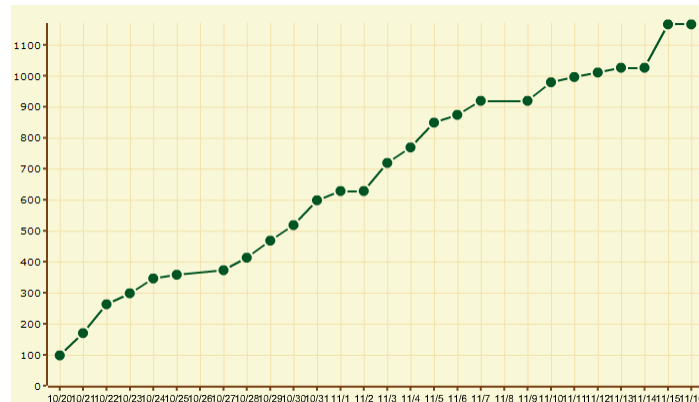
How to write every day

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5. Set aside time to write
6. Reject (?) the notion of “writer’s block”
7. Make a plan for next writing session
8. Park on the downhill slope

Just a few minutes a day add up!

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Know yourself as a writer

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- When do I work best?
- Do I feel fear? Experience procrastination and/or perfectionism?
- How do I work best?
- Where do I work best?
- What mitigates that feeling of being overwhelmed?
- What are my priorities?
- What are my strengths and how can I leverage them?

Join a writing group – Why?

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- Support for your writing (break isolation, emotional support)
- Hold each other accountable to your individual progress goals
- Peer feedback (develop skills, practice)
- Supplement input from faculty members
- New resources, perspectives and ideas
- Help you know yourself better

See UBC Writing Centre: <https://blogs.ubc.ca/wctest/graduate-students/graduate-student-writing-groups/>

What works: Writing groups

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Face to Face – <https://blogs.ubc.ca/wctest/graduate-students/graduate-student-writing-groups/>

Academic Ladder's Writing Club
<http://academicwritingclub.com>

Phinished <http://www.phinished.org>

Shut up and Write <http://thesiswhisperer.com/shut-up-and-write/>

What works: Become a student of writing

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- Books
- Blogs
 - TAA (Textbook and Academic Authors)
 - thesiswhisperer.com
 - explorationsofstyle.com
- Twitter
 - #acwrit
 - #writingtips

References and further reading

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