Break the Isolation: Strategies for Improving Your Academic Writing Through Peer Support

Presented by the UBC Writing Centre and the Graduate Pathways for Success Program

Session Format

- Why writing groups?
- · How to run successful writing groups
- Pre-grouping questions
- Networking/connecting

Please feel free to ask questions at any time during the presentation.





What is a writing group?

Really anything you want it to be! But most effective writing groups have some things in common:

- Meet in a group to share your work and get peer feedback
- Rules or guidelines that group members have agreed on
- Structured meeting times

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• Makes you think about writing in the abstract as well as in specific situations

The Value of Peer Feedback

- Makes you focus on your audience/readers
- Feedback gives you multiple readers' perspectives
- Receiving feedback helps you learn to take critique well







- Help you go from student to scholar by forming communities of practice
- Forces you to learn about a genre to offer effective feedback
- Good practice for reviewing in a literary journal context

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Why writing groups?



Accountability



- Accountability
- · Accountability

Best Practices for Writing Groups



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When you start or join a writing group, commit to it.

Remember that you will:

- Get feedback on your writing
- · Get accountability and emotional support for your writing
- · Share expertise and ideas about the grad school experience
- · Share best practices and learn some new ones
- · Set deadlines and have external motivation to reach them
- · Learn about others' writing strategies
- Make new friends
- Create communities of practice

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Take a moment to write down:

 A three-sentence summary of your graduate research project (or area of expertise).

Set a Writing Goal

 Your personal writing goal(s): make your goal(s) specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely

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- Review resources on Writing Centre blog page
- Find friends and allies: start recruiting from people you know, and remember that not all members need to be from your discipline
- Network when and where you can (foreshadowing here...)
- Set goals: decide what you want to accomplish and stay focused on that

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Maintaining Momentum



- · Characteristics of good facilitators/meeting leaders
- · Effective communication between sessions
- Stay focused: decide on the type(s) of writing to bring and feedback to offer
- Meet regularly: don't skip meetings, and fulfill your commitments to the group
- Have fun: have a drink or play a board game after the work is over but do put the work first

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Giving Feedback



Use the language of negotiation; avoid commands and directives.

- Give feedback from your perspective:
 - "I don't know..."
 - "I'm not sure I understand..."
 - · "Could you explain this to me?"
 - "I wonder if maybe..."
 - "What if you..."

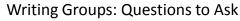
Give yourself and group members

- · Editing your own work needs to be prioritized
- · Schedule time for editing multiple drafts and incorporating feedback
- Can be done during your writing time it's part of the process!

time for editing.



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- · How often will the group meet?
- How will you communicate?
- · Will there be a facilitator? Rotating role or consistent?
- · What's the optimum number of group members?
- How will you respond to each other's writing?
- · What kinds of writing can be submitted to the group?
- What will the meeting format be?

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Talk to your fellow attendees:

- What is your ideal writing group?
- · What would you look for in other group members?
- What parts of your writing (or the writing process) do you want to improve?



Thank you!

- If you have any questions about the content here, or want to contact us for any other reason, please email us at writing.centre@ubc.ca.
- Please fill out the evaluation about this session. We appreciate your feedback.
- Check <u>http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/tutoring-</u> studying/improve-your-writing for information on the Writing Centre tutorial service and for our most recent blog posts.

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