



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

February 3, 2015

Available Resources:

- **Forming writing groups:** <http://blogs.ubc.ca/wctest/graduate-students/graduate-student-writing-groups/>
 - This link includes a long list of resources and helpful tools for starting and maintaining your writing group
- UBC Writing Centre: <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/tutoring-studying/improve-your-writing/>
- Koerner Research Commons: <http://koerner.library.ubc.ca/services/research-commons/>
- NaNoWriMo: this creative writing challenge has been extended to other types of writing: <http://nanowrimo.org/forums/nano-rebels/threads/122925>

Extra Reading:

- U of Leicester:
<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/training/eresources/study-guides/thesis/developing>
- U of Texas at Austin:
<http://www.utexas.edu/ogs/publications/toolkit.pdf>
- Yale:
<http://www.yale.edu/graduateschool/writing/forms/Writing%20Theses%20and%20Dissertations.pdf>
- U of Illinois at Chicago:
http://tigger.uic.edu/~lubotsky/uploads/2/3/1/7/23178366/a_few_tips_for_being_a_more_successful_graduate_student_darren_lubotsky.pdf
- Challenging Assumptions Against Daily Writing:
<http://www.academiccoachingandwriting.org/academic-writing/academic-writing-blog/ii-challenge-common-assumptions-against-daily-writing/>
- Graduate Writing Groups: Shaping Writing and Writers from Student to Scholar:
<http://www.praxisuwc.com/phillips-101/>

Questions for your first meeting:

- 1. How often will the group meet? Once a week, twice a week, every other week? Where will the group meet? (See attached.)**
- 2. How will the members communicate between meetings? Phone, email, Facebook group, WordPress site, Google group, etc.? Will members share work in this same manner?**
- 3. Will one person be in charge of facilitating the meetings? Or will the position rotate? What will be the responsibilities of this facilitator? Keeping the group on track? Reminding participants of what they are supposed to bring beforehand? Taking notes during the meeting? What would be the most helpful role for the Writing Centre or other external supporting body to take?**
- 4. What would you consider the optimum number of group members? Would you prefer to stay in a larger group of ~ 20, or break into smaller sub-groups?**
- 5. How will members respond to each other's writing? By commenting directly on the draft, verbal comments in the meeting, on a separate response sheet, via e-mail? Will feedback be given during meeting time, or will it be given between meetings and discussed or clarified during meeting time?**
- 6. What happens when members who are scheduled to submit writing are unprepared or can't attend the meeting? Cancel, postpone, skip a turn?**
- 7. What kinds of writing are—or are not—suitable for consideration by the group? How short or long should submissions be?**
- 8. What will you do during the meeting (besides writing)? Discuss general writing problems, check in with each other about projects and writing goals, explain comments on work that were submitted via e-mail, workshop specific pieces of writing, state writing goals for the coming week?**



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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Did you know?

The UBC Writing Centre has been offering **skills-based academic writing courses** and **one-on-one tutoring services** to UBC students for 20 years.

Writing Coaching and Tutorial Service

Need some writing help?

- **Drop in** to our free tutorial clinic at the **Chapman Learning Commons** from 3pm to 7pm Monday to Friday: <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/what-we-offer/writing-centre/>
- **Make an appointment** with a tutor at **Ponderosa Annex C** from 10am to 3pm Monday to Friday: <https://ubcca.mywconline.com>
- Take a **non-credit course** online or in-class to improve your writing (see other side).
- Contact the **Academic English Support (AES)** program to see if they can offer you free coaching: <http://cstudies.ubc.ca/academic-english-support-program/>
- Find **free self-learning resources** online: <http://cstudies.ubc.ca/writers-workshop/writers-toolbox/index.html> or <http://cstudies.ubc.ca/writing/resources.html>

Services offered by the Writing Centre:

For the 2014-2015 Winter Session, we offer:

- An expanded list of **courses** (see other side of this handout)
- **Free tutoring**
- Online self-learning **resources**
- **Online tutoring** through WriteAway: <http://writeaway.ca>
- **Tutor-led workshops**
- **Tutor-led writing groups** (by request)

Most students who use our services meet with tutors one-on-one. Tutors may provide writing coaching or content-based tutoring (grammar, mechanics, approaching the writing process, etc.) based on the student's needs and goals for the session.

Our tutorial/coaching sessions are free, as are our workshops, self-learning resources, and writing groups.

What can I expect from a session with a Writing Centre Tutor?

- **20 minutes or 30 minutes, with the option to book back-to-back** (depending on the location of your session) spent setting or addressing your writing goal(s)
- **A professional, friendly, knowledgeable tutor** to help guide you and answer questions
- The possibility of an **ongoing conversation** with the same tutor surrounding your project or specific writing concern
- **Referrals to other UBC services** or print/online resources, if applicable
- **A polite "no" to requests for proofreading** – we take UBC's academic integrity policies very seriously

Remember: plan ahead and start your sessions early. The more time between your first meeting with a tutor and the project deadline, the more helpful your sessions will be.