Time Management & Winning Habits

Travis Grandy, UMass Amherst Writing Center, umass.edu/writingcenter
Commonwealth Honors College | March 22, 2017

Workshop Produced in Partnership with the UMass Graduate School Office of Professional Development

Agenda

1. Understand Your Writing Process
2. Get Support
3. Set Manageable Goals
4. Schedule Your Writing
1. Understand Your Writing Process
We think...

But...

Feedback?

Feedback?

PLANNING  DRAFTING  REVISION  EDITING

Reflection

Freewrite:

**What are your writing habits currently?**

How do you feel about the writing you’re doing? How do you keep track of your writing tasks, goals, and deadlines? Are there any parts of your writing process that you have trouble with or want to change?
The thing about "Binge Writing"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Approx. Pages/Month</th>
<th>Pages/Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Binge Writers (irregular, long duration)</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Writers (write briefly at least 3 days/week)</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Formatting of chart borrowed from: "Quick Starters: Strategies for Junior Faculty, Research on Faculty Success," by the University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning & Teaching, 8/24/2010.

Understand Yourself as a Writer

- When and where do you write best?
- What are things that distract or interfere with your writing?
- How can you plan ahead to resolve or mitigate these distractions?

On your notes, list your best writing times and places. Next, think about what might interfere with your writing, and share with the people around you to come up with possible resolutions.
2. Get Support

Ask for Help and Share Your Writing

Your needs for support change depending on what kind of writing you’re doing and how far along you are in your process.

- **From whom?**
  - Family, Friends, Peers, Tutors, Advisor, Mentors

- **At what point?**
  - Freewriting, conversations, outlines, sections, rough drafts

- **For what purpose?**
  - Encouragement, confidence, accountability, advice, critique
Externalize Goals

Develop a system to regularly check-in with yourself and others

- Keeping a journal
- Freewriting before you start a writing session
- Dictating or writing memos as you go through research process
- Sharing goals with other people
- Scheduling regular check-ins with a writing buddy

Getting Feedback

- Before you get feedback:
  - Reflect on how your writing is going
  - Plan specific things that you want help with
- Once you have feedback:
  - Clarify comments, ask questions, ask for examples from your writing
  - Reframe criticisms into actions
- Afterward, make a plan:
  - Sort feedback by priority
  - Follow up with your reviewer
Writing Specific Support

- CHC Writing Coach
- Writing Center
- Writing Partner/Writing Group
- Peers
- Freelance Editors/Coaches
- Friends/Family
- Advisor
- Other Mentors

If You Want to Start a Writing Group

**Format**

- **On site/Online**
- **Co-working:** Working at the same place/time
- **Feedback:** Sharing works in progress for critique
- **Accountability:** Sharing and checking in about goals

**Decide**

- **Who:** classmates, friends
- **Why:** write-on-site, share writing
- **Where:** in person, online
- **When:** weekly, monthly, etc.
Reflect on your Support System

Freewrite:

- What do you need to support your writing?
- What is one concrete step you can take this week to develop part of your support system?

3. Set Manageable Goals
Productivity & Process

- Productivity = Research Tasks & Page count
- Process = Habits/Emotions
- Plan for both

Specific Goals

Specific Project Goals
- Page count
- Sections finished
- Essay/Thesis completed

Tasks
- Pages, sections, research activities, word count, hours

Specific Writing Process Goals
- Practicing good habits
- Awareness of emotions/needs
- Reflecting on writing practices

Tasks
- Write daily or regularly, keep a writing journal, share your writing
Break Big Goals into Small Pieces

**Long-Term Goal:** For semester or month
- Example: Write the Lit Review.

**Medium-Term Goal:** Concrete Piece of Project; For the week
- Example: Summarize this book.

**Short-Term Goal:** Do-able in a day or so; divide into tasks (to-do list)
- Example: Read this book—tasks: find book; scan chapters; read; annotate; write 250 word summary

Try It Out

Using the **Goals Handout**, take a current writing project and try to break it down into a series of long, medium, and short term goals.

Next, estimate how long each short term goal will take, then work backward to plan out time for the long term goal.
4. Make a Schedule

Plan Each Writing Session

Dedicate some time at the beginning of each week to plan your writing:
- Use your calendar
- Set realistic goals
- Schedule fun and rest!
- Stop writing with something left to say
## Budget Your Time

- Make a realistic estimate for each step of your project
- Assume things take longer, and pad more time into your schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Number of Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find and read an article on writing a lit. review</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read other lit. reviews</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review notes &amp; pull quotes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write the lit. review</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask others for feedback</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise the lit review</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Total project time    | 25               |
| Reality Rule          | X2.5             |
| Estimated project time| 60 Hours         |

## Make a Plan

Take a moment to fill out the **Time Management Handout**: Next, schedule your writing sessions for next week, including the specific task/s (short- and medium-term goals) you aspire to complete.

**Expect to make adjustments!**
Takeaways for Successful Writing

- Take time to reflect & make changes to your process, especially as you face new challenges
- All writers need support & feedback
- Set specific, realistic goals
- Have a plan, and make time to write a little bit every day

Questions?
Get in Touch!

UMass Writing Center
Learning Commons
413-577-1293
www.umass.edu/writingcenter
writingcenter@acad.umass.edu