Faculty Writing Groups: Best Practices and Opportunities

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Today:

- What does the literature tell us about faculty writing groups?
- How does this process benefit you?
- Explain the structure & process for the joint CTL/MSU-QEP Faculty Writing Group project!
Why do faculty struggle with writing?

- Not enough time
- Lack of momentum
- Isolation
- Too many committees
- Perfectionism

STRESS
What can a writing group bring to this process?

- Regular writing sessions
- Support
- Encouragement
- Structure
- Accountability
- Productivity
How to Write a Lot (Paul J. Silvia)

• Set concrete, short-term goals and monitor the group’s progress.
• Stick to writing goals, not other professional goals.
• Big carrots can double as sticks.
• Have different groups for faculty and students.
• Drink coffee.


Best Practices: Setting Writing Goals

• Writing goals should be doable.
• Writing goals should be concrete.
• Writing goals should specify a time frame.
  – My goals is to write the Great American novel.
  – My goal is to have the journal article to the editor for review by March 1.
What can a writing group not do for you?

• Can’t get you a better job.
• Can’t get you tenure.
• Can’t get you promoted.
• Not going to write your article.

So what can a writing group do for you?
Faculty Writing Group Project

• Design:
  – Groups of 3-4 faculty, initially brought together by CTL/MSU-QEP
  – Interdisciplinary
  – Voluntary
  – Typically not friendship groups
  – Meet throughout the 2015/2016 academic year
Faculty Writing Group Project

• Objective:
  – Groups meet and work together
  – Group members identify a project they would like to work on
  – Each individual lets the group know what they need most
Group Roles

• Chair: Keeps time, schedules meeting and gives a 1-minute warning.

• Recorder (optional): record summary of group members’ goals and accomplishments.

• Monitor: EVERY member. Speaks up if the group is off track.
First Meeting

- Time should be EQUALLY divided for each person.
- Where are you now and where do you want to be?
- What’s getting in the way?
- What do you hope this group will provide?
- By the next time we meet: I will....(set goals for next meeting)
Process

What goal did you set yourself last time?

Achieved!
INFORM YOUR GROUP

What is your new goal?
PICK SOMETHING IMPORTANT!

How are you going to reach this goal?
LET THE GROUP SUPPORT AND CHALLENGE YOU

What is your action plan to be done by next meeting?
BE CONCRETE AND REALISTIC

Not yet achieved!
INFORM YOUR GROUP

Graphic: David Green, Seattle University
Guidelines for Working Effectively

- Equally divide the time.
- Meet at least every two weeks.
- Maintain a positive, collegial atmosphere.
- Set clear goals for each meeting.
- There are no rules; make the process work for your group.
References

Acknowledgement!

David Green, Center for Faculty Development, Seattle University
Questions?