Write Your Way Through Grad School

University Writing Center
September 6, 2019
wrc@du.edu
Reflection Questions

• What do you know about the writing you will do in grad school and how it might compare to writing you have done in the past?

• What don’t you know, or what do you think you don’t know, about writing in grad school?

• What do you want to learn about writing in grad school?

• How might you learn what you don’t know?
Introduce yourself to the person next to you, and take 3 minutes to have a conversation about your experiences and expectations with writing.
Learning to Write: A Disappearing Horizon
Writing is Writing
Writing is Reading
Writing is Planning
★ Writing is Reading ★

- Identify your reading habits
- Consider the ones that work for you and the ones you might need to change or adapt
- Be intentional about the notes you take and the systems you create
  - Articulate the questions that matter to you
  - Read for the “how” as well as the “what”
**Habit 1: Double-column note-taking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What the text says</th>
<th>What you say / think / question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| “Students are writers worth reading” (Tobin 50).        | Is this first time this point has been made?  
Seems obvious now, but when did this perspective start? |
| 40+ sample student texts as evidence                    | Doesn’t seem like much now.  
Compare sample size with other things being read.       |
| Arguing for new way of positioning student writing as evidence | Reminds me of Washington’s argument about using student writing to shore up certain kinds of points. |
Habit 2: Developing a system, and using tags
archives diaries Gannett

The scrapbooks in the Smith College Archives (and many others stored in archives all over the world) offer firsthand, unmediated accounts of their creators' experiences in a particular historical moment." (362)
Gannett: “everyone knows what a diary (or journal) is, until it becomes necessary to define it” (Gannett 100)

For histories of the tradition of diaries, see Gannett, who points out that although use has attached connotations of femininity, triviality, etc to diaries, ....

“From the beginning of women’s diary traditions, then, most women have written diaries that tend to fulfill a variety of social and domestic purposes, rather than being personal in the sense of being just for one’s self” (Gannett 132).
Gannett: “Journals or diaries were a kind of writing practice that allowed for the expression of a relationally organized sense of self and were flexible enough to allow for the discontinuity, tacks, and silences that were an inevitable part of female life” (Gannett 148).

Men’s and women’s journals and diaries.
Commonplace books...and other personal journals “have obvious intellectual and scholarly uses: as an aide-memoire, a way to cultivate close observation and careful reflection, a place to store information for long-term intellectual use, and monitor progress, as well as a palace for linguistic and stylistic experimentation” (Gannett 149).
Collectively-written diaries are not unprecedented: Bunkers talks about the Chronicle of the School Sisters of Notre Dame and the Annals of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis that are “written as a community record and preserved in community archives” (Bunkers 11012). Also mentions the “Hag Bible” of the Coffee Hag in Mankato, Minnesota, which
Habit 3: Using a chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Thesis</th>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Sample/objects of study</th>
<th>Representative quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>Sample / objects of study</td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Representative quotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robillard</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Need to change the way we understand “the student paper.”</td>
<td>Student essays published in YSW</td>
<td>Theorizing; textual analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobin</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Students are also worth reading.</td>
<td>40 student texts; interviews</td>
<td>Textual analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podis &amp; Podis</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>We must stop seeing student papers as a chore.</td>
<td>Copies of papers written by their own students</td>
<td>Textual analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>No one likes to read student papers.</td>
<td>Interviews, survey with 300 faculty</td>
<td>Survey analysis, content analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Or, if you want something a bit simpler....

Table 2. Concept Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ß</td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>×</td>
<td>×</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Habit 4:
Reading like a writer

“Where are the Women?: Rhetoric of Gendered Labor in University Communities”
Rachel Riedner—George Washington University
KEYWORDS inclusion, access, gendered labor, university community, university discourse

I recently attended a panel of feminist scholars at the Conference of College Composition and Communication entitled “Rhetorical Inquiry to Change Realities: Why Feminist Methods Matter” (Belanger et al.). The question that framed the presentations was "where are the women?" There was considerable discussion from the panel and among audience members about women’s inclusion and equal participation in disciplines, university governance, and university communities, with a particular emphasis on underrepresented fields such as engineering. The discussion emphasized that women, individually and collectively, deserve access and inclusion to institutional governance and knowledge production in all areas of universities because women are demonstrably valuable members of institutions and systems. Certainly, inclusion and access are important feminist issues. Inclusion and access have been used as by feminists as keywords, “‘particular formations of meaning’ that provide ‘ways not only of discussing but at another level of seeing many of our central experiences’” (Williams, nd. in McRuer 6).

As keywords used by feminist scholars and activists, access and inclusion can help secure recognition within legal systems and religious organizations, from employers and professional organizations, and within public space and public cultures. However, given the range of women who work at universities, and the close relations and dependencies among differently, and often unequally, situated women, the particular question raised at the panel “where are the women,” with its call for access to academic employment and inclusion in university governance, seems too narrowly focused on women who do intellectual labor, i.e. faculty. At many universities, keywords of access and inclusion are not used to address the range of labor that women do at

Comment [1]: Cites very current research
Comment [2]: Identifies framing question
Comment [3]: Establishes nature and concern of discussion: topics, emphases, argument
Comment [4]: Acknowledges importance of those emphases
Comment [5]: Situates these emphases as keywords
Comment [6]: Notes value of keywords
Comment [7]: But...problematicizes keywords as overly narrow
Take 5 minutes to write your responses to any or all of these questions:

• What are your writing habits?
• When and where do you write?
• What do you find most difficult, or easiest, about forming habits in writing?
Take 5 minutes to write your responses to any or all of these questions:

• What are your writing habits?
• When and where do you write?
• What do you find most difficult, or easiest, about forming habits in writing?

Compare notes with the person next to you.
Writing is Reading

★ Writing is Planning ★
Silva writes about Boice (1990), who studied professors who struggled with writing:

- **Abstinent** writers: only for deadlines or in emergencies
- **Spontaneous** writers: write when inspired
- **Contingency management** writers: write consistently over multiple sessions
Effects of different writing strategies on the number of pages written per day.

Effects of different writing strategies on the number of days between creative writing ideas.

More successful academic writers…

- Plan when to write
- Write regularly
- Write before they’re “ready”
- Form habits that make writing *more* possible *more* often
Make your writing process …

Obvious
- Stack your habits
- Create visual cues
- Respect your time

Attractive
- Enjoy your writing space

Satisfying
- Work with your nature
- Don’t break the chain
- Reward yourself

Thanks to Elizabeth Kleinfeld (2019) for these strategies
Make your writing process easy

POMODORO CYCLE FOR 2 HR'S OF DEEP WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>25 MIN</th>
<th>25 MIN</th>
<th>25 MIN</th>
<th>25 MIN</th>
<th>25 MIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15 MIN</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WORK  BREAK
## Set SMART Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Specific: The more specific the goal, the more likely you are to achieve it. Be as precise as possible when articulating what you want to accomplish, and leave out any explanations or justifications.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Measurable: How will you know when you have achieved your goal? Good goals are measurable. If your goal is to get a B or better in a particular course, then seeing an 85% on your transcript is proof that you have achieved your goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Attainable: Can you achieve your goal? While it’s important to set challenging goals, they must be attainable. A goal of graduating from medical school in three years with a 4.0 GPA is certainly challenging, but it may not be possible. Find the balance between the two.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Relevant: Is your goal relevant to your overall long-term vision? If your life vision is to be a doctor with your own practice, then setting a goal to perform as a concert pianist will only frustrate and distract you from making your vision a reality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Time-bound: Does your goal have a due date? If your goal isn’t time-bound, it could go unachieved indefinitely. Give your goal a deadline that fits with your long-term plans.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What would be a good beginning SMART goal for you as a grad student?

Make it

– Specific
– Measurable
– Attainable
– Relevant
– Time-bound
Your planning ideally will include other people

- Talk to your professors
- Talk about your ideas with others (colleagues, friends)
- Form a writing group
- Go to the writing center!
UNIVERSITY WRITING PROGRAM

Writing Center

The University Writing Center works with all University of Denver students, staff, and faculty as part of the Writing Program’s mission to create and sustain a robust culture of writing on the DU Campus.

We believe that all university writers—from first-year undergraduates to advanced doctoral students to faculty and staff—benefit from having conversations about their writing.

In our free 45-minute consultations, we work with writers individually and in groups to discuss their work and to help them hone their skills and practices, with an eye both on the texts at hand and on the writers’ goals and needs.

In addition to our individual consultations, we offer:

- Class and department visits introducing our offerings
- Classroom and program workshops focused on specific assignments, situations, or genres
- Facilitated peer reviews for whole classes
- Custom workshops for 4+ students on any writing situation or genre
- Online resources and handouts
- Facilitators for writing groups
- Programs and events

See Our Hours
Make an Appointment
Access Resources
Ask a Writing Question
Request Faculty Support

UPCOMING WRITING CENTER EVENTS

Writing on Wednesdays: Micro-Workshops and Guided Writing Sessions
Wed, Sep 11, 2019, 3 p.m.