



WRITING ACCOUNTABILITY GROUPS

Scholarly writing is a key activity for faculty members for whom scholarship is a part of their expected work. Yet it is also the thing that faculty say is the most difficult to make time for. Research shows that faculty do the most writing when they schedule regular, frequent and shorter writing sessions (for example, daily for 30 minutes) and are part of an accountability group that checks in with one another. Being part of a writing group (whether online or in person) can be a great way to build community and get writing done. These groups can be useful to any type of faculty member at any time in their career who needs to get writing done. See this article: Skarupski, K. A., & Foucher, K. C. (2018). Writing accountability groups (WAGs): A tool to help junior faculty members build sustainable writing habits. *The Journal of Faculty Development*, 32(3), 47-54.

Here is the basic way a writing group works:

- Bring together a group of people. (Hint: this is a great way to get some regular time with interdisciplinary colleagues you don't see in your building very often).
- Decide when and how you will meet – online? In person? Weekly? For one hour? Two?
- Typically, each meeting will start with a short check in. Members of the group describe what they will work on during the writing session. Once everyone has checked in, people begin their own writing. In online spaces people can leave cameras on or off. Latecomers can check in using the chat. Usually about 10-15 minutes before the end of the session the group does a check out. Each person reports about how their writing goes.
- Even if your group only meets once a week, just being part of it may help you with other short writing sessions in between.
- The main idea is that people are working on their own writing projects. It is not usually a group collaborative session (see below for how that might work).

Other ideas for what you might do:

- Create a syllabus prep group instead and have groups of teaching faculty meet to work on curriculum projects that require writing and time.
- Create an online writing group with members of a large research project who might be across institutions. You can do writing check-ins but also quick project check-ins. When working on papers from a common project together, if two co-authors get stuck and need to check-in they can go into a zoom breakout room to discuss before going back to their writing.
- Create a writing retreat. Plan several days in a space on campus to get writing done.
- If you know your writing group well you could go off-site and create a destination writing retreat.

Here are some links to other institutions who provide guidance about writing groups:

John's Hopkins: <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/faculty-development/career-path/wags>

UNC: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/writing-groups/>