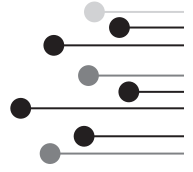


CHAPTER  
**2**

# Setting Goals and a Submission Schedule for Your Academic Writing



Often, the best ideas can follow the path of the best intentions. While excellent in terms of purposes, really good ideas can easily fail to germinate and come to fruition. In this chapter, readers will learn structures, methods, and simple but effective tools for establishing, articulating, and attaining goals and becoming more intentional in their academic writing pursuits.

## *Learning Objectives*

There are four learning objectives for this chapter:

1. Establishing a writing routine
2. Managing writing tasks
3. Plan for publication opportunities
4. Increase weekly writing time

One of the tools that some authors find helpful is a quick write. A quick write is a short, timed, typically 1–3 minute, writing activity which combines writing and thinking skills (Rief, 2002, p. 50). At the beginning of each chapter (except Chapter 8), readers will have the opportunity to engage in a quick write which is related to the chapter content. This allows the reader to actively reflect on their current practices, experiences, or knowledge on the topic at hand.

### **Quick Write # 1**

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In the first quick write, we want readers to focus on what might be their current writing routine, recognizing that there are many different forms of authoring. Think about the words *my authoring routine*, and pay attention to the images that come into your mind. Are you the kind of writer who must gather all your materials first and settle your working space before you write? Are you the kind of writer who must have the favorite coffee cup or “lucky glass” situated on your workspace before you write? Are you a writer whose routine includes working from the same home space or office space? Does your

routine mean that you need to separate from home and work in a space with few distractions? Or, are you a coffee shop writer who prefers the background noise? Are you a slow, methodical writer and have adopted that style as your routine? Or, are you a binge writer that finds itself avoiding an assignment or deadline with trepidation, then cramming your writing into a small time-frame? Do you prefer to physically write in a notebook, journal, or paper pad first? Or, are you the kind of writer who simply opens your laptop and begins? What is your routine?



Source: iStock, Ivan Pantic

What comes to mind as you review the phrase *my authoring routine*? Notice the details of your mental image and think of the various descriptions we have provided. After collecting your thoughts for a minute or two, gather a timer and your preferred writing devices. Set the timer for two minutes. Next, start the two-minute timer and write or type everything that comes to mind while you think of the mental image of yourself as a writer and the prompt, *my authoring routine*, without stopping. After your two minutes of writing time is up, (1) be proud of what you wrote—words on a page are a cause for celebration, and (2) note themes or common ideas across your free write. What does the exercise tell you about yourself, about your authorship?

## Establishing Writing Routines and Rituals

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Significant effort goes into the many facets of authoring from idea generation, to organization, to revising, to editing, to one of the ultimate goals of academic

writing—publication. Writing is a process that produces a product; improving the process improves the product. As the authors of this text, we take comfort in knowing that writers many times more successful than us, also struggle with the craft. Readers of this book should also take comfort that even highly successful writers struggle. However, the success enjoyed by high-volume writers comes with practice, discipline, workable routines, and personal rituals. We invite readers to briefly recall how their writing developed.

Many who read this book may recall writing in school settings, where formulas (think of the five-paragraph essay) were promoted. Readers of this text may also reflect upon learning about the classic strategy of The 5Ws—*who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why* (and sometimes *how*) when writing about an event or a situation. In elementary, middle, and high school, students typically explore writing genres as they plow through required English classes, in hopes that they become well-rounded students, prepared for college and career.

During this time, one may remember the writing process as always starting with some form of prewriting, oftentimes a graphic organizer of some sort, an outline, or a thesis statement. Unknowingly, these are the early beginnings of learning how to establish routines and rituals to writing that are later refined and individualized. As a novice scholar, these routines are similar to those that the elementary or middle school teacher uses to encourage students to write such as: have a clear time to start and finish writing. Timers on phones or even some writing apps can help to achieve this simple goal.

Finding a sacred space to write is paramount. Sometimes a sacred space is an actual physical space that contributes to productivity. Some of us write in our offices—with the door shut. Some writers have the luxury of a dedicated or sacred space within their home that they can claim as theirs and use to spur productivity. Others of us rely on a public space. Some writers prefer the background noise that a local coffee shop affords. Some of us have established rituals such as assembling all needed materials, putting on a favorite playlist, using the same coffee cup or mug, and writing at the same personal place or maybe a favorite table in a public space that allows for productivity. For some, a sacred space is a frame of mind—a feeling of becoming inspired and capable of production. Other writers can write on demand; those individuals take their writing everywhere and can write something when the opportunity presents itself. Some writers have a favorite pen and use specific notepads to generate jot lists, outlines, and work through ideas. Other writers prefer to compose at the keyboard or dictate orally, maintaining electronic files.

We discuss these routines and possibilities, as writing is highly personal, and every writer needs to figure out what they need, where they write best, and when they are the most productive. Author, Stephen King, a prolific and successful writer and former high school English teacher, was not always the successful, recognized author he is today. But King developed a habit of daily writing. He tells readers that he attempts to write a few pages every day (around 1,500 words) and the words and pages mount (Lawson, 1979). As a PhD student, new scholar, or novice researcher, becoming a skilled writer is paramount to your success. Like King, beginning with a daily writing routine will produce writing; steady production leads to productivity.



Source: iStock, metamorworks

There is a science to scholarly, academic writing, and whether you are producing a quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods piece of scholarship, there are commonalities regarding anticipated elements and an expectation of rigor, relevance, and accuracy. Academic writing is an acquired skill—sometimes strenuous, often challenging and exciting, but also, precise and exacting work. While academic writing as a genre of writing is demanding, it can also be highly satisfying. Seeing scholarly ideas through to fruition in order to be shared among colleagues and the public can be highly motivational.

Like most research and scholarly endeavors, academic writing calls for skill sets that are developed and honed over time. No one is born an academic writer (Casanave, 2005), although some aspects of academic writing can appear to be acquired more easily for some writers. For example, some scholarly writers seem to never lack for topics and direction and have a constant stream of projects, presentations, and resultant publications. Others appear able to quickly call up the needed, necessary, and exact words they want to convey meaning and method. Some scholars give the impression that they are natural masters of the mechanical aspects of writing. Currently within the academy, platforms and digital demands also require a nuanced degree of technical skill and expertise. All aspects of academic authoring require development, attention to detail, and time.

By demystifying the academic writing processes for PhD candidates, new scholars, and novice researchers, striving writers can access, practice, and master the aspects of scholarly writing, and productivity can increase dramatically. One of the first steps to mastering academic writing is to become skilled at how to strategize writing and to acquire the discipline needed to see writing ideas and

concepts through to fruition. While the eventual focus of academic writing is on the product—what gets accepted—concentrating on the elements of the process increases the quality of the product.

## Reviewing Generating Ideas for Writing

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In the introductory chapter, attention was given to generating ideas for writing. Here, a fuller discussion is provided. Regardless of how you select topics for research and writing, or what you decide upon, being able to establish and achieve writing goals increases publishing success.

## Learning to Set Realistic Goals

Breaking work into realistic goals or chunks and accomplishing tasks in a systematic manner results in productivity. Tightly focused goals help writers gain traction and keep momentum moving forward. But, how do you accomplish this? Writing from a set of clear, concrete, and time-bound goals is more controllable and less unwieldy—making progress tangible and much more visible. As an example, instead of being overwhelmed by large tasks and goals, divide manuscripts into requisite parts—introduction to the issues being researched or discussed, a review of literature pertinent to the issue, study design, methods, including questions, setting, participants, data sources, analysis, findings or results, and implications. These elements are the commonly required parts of a research study and subsequent manuscript for publication.

Being productive and being able to track productivity is motivating, inspiring you to continue writing. Logging writing productivity can help a scholar to discover when you are actually most productive. Despite the often-repeated advice that novice scholars need large chunks of time to write, you can accomplish much by addressing smaller tasks and goals in smaller amounts of time. To do this, we have developed a few simple forms to keep authors focused, organized, and methodically writing from a goal-oriented approach.

The form itself is not important; it is simply a means to record what is needed to be accomplished and to visually record accomplishments as they occur. It can help you to more systematically manage writing projects and to develop a writing habit. [Silva \(2007\)](#) also suggests a similar kind of record-keeping, recording writing accomplishments by minutes spent and goals achieved using an excel file. It's not the form that matters, but the structured act of recording goals, tracking writing, and recognizing when you are productive that helps develop writing habits. In order to be productive, a scholarly writer has to budget time to produce writing.

Before you can set goals and establish a viable writing routine, it is helpful to inventory how you spend time writing and to examine the timeframes within a day and week where you could budget adequate time for writing. Scholars across academia rarely just focus on writing. Writing is a part of their scholarly lives whether an individual is a research professor, on the tenure

track, or not. As authors, we are cognizant of the various types of faculty that reside at institutions as well as the ongoing changes to faculty academic ranks that various institutions are considering at this time within the academy. In a similar way, many graduate students are also working (full or part time) and many graduate students and scholars have robust personal lives that involve caring for family and loved ones. Habits developed in graduate school can contribute greatly to productivity. But, before an individual can set productive writing goals aligned to specific projects, identifying your habits and optimum times for authoring is essential. In other words, know thy writerly self.

## **Taking Inventory: Establishing a Writing Routine**

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Realizing that you have to discipline yourself, and that no one else is going to do that for you, is an important lesson. You are responsible for your writing productivity. You want to establish and maintain healthy writing habits that result in thoughtful writing. While emulating what works for others might seem like a good strategy, you need to know when your productivity is at its peak during the day, week, or month; what works for others may not work for you. Trying to cram several meaty goals into inappropriately small chunks of time isn't an optimal strategy. You also do not want to sit and stare at a blank page or screen, overwhelmed by a task that feels too large, unwieldy, or just plain unattainable. You want to be able to be thoughtful and reflective. Developing thoughtful research and writing habits that result in publication takes time.

The Logging Your Weeks Activity in this second chapter is a method that can be used to initially track writing productivity over the course of three weeks and identify possible writing times and/or times of greater productivity. Think of it as an inventory of how you spend your time. Tracking writing productivity over a three-week period allows scholars to identify days and times that are opportune, productive times to write. Tracking writing productivity over a three-week period also permits a reflective academic writer to make decisions about when they can write, what may be inhibiting them from setting a writing schedule, and be able to see what other activities consume their time and, possibly, to make any adjustments in order to schedule regular writing time.

For this four-step activity, first select an upcoming three-week period and record when you write. Do not just look for times when you have more open spaces in your calendar; rather, simply pick three weeks. Record date, day, time spent writing, and what you accomplished. Keep in mind that writing can also involve searching for sources, checking citations, addressing a Works Cited/Reference section, or rereading what you have written. However, the majority of time ought to be spent drafting or revising writing. Also, some days are sacred days—nonnegotiable or off limits. For instance, you may not write on a particular day dedicated to other tasks.

## Activity 2.1 Three-Week Writing Log Inventory



Week 1: (Month, date range, year)

Sunday, month date, year	Time from ___ to ___.	Activity accomplished
Monday, month date, year	Time from ___ to ___.	Activity accomplished
Tuesday, month date, year	Time from ___ to ___.	Activity accomplished
Wednesday, month date, year	Time from ___ to ___.	Activity accomplished





Sunday, month date, year	Time from ___ to ___.	Activity accomplished
2/3/2020	8:00–9:00 a.m.	Compare in-text references to reference page and vice versa
Monday, month date, year	Time from ___ to ___.	Activity accomplished
2/4/2020	8:00–9:00 a.m.	Create reconciliation chart for whole group instruction paper for conference call tomorrow.
Tuesday, month date, year	Time from ___ to ___.	Activity accomplished
2/5/2020	8:00–8:30 a.m.	Conference call with Aaron on whole group instruction edits requested from journal. Divide tasks.
2/5/2020	9:30–11:00 a.m.	Address whole group instruction reviewer comments.
Wednesday, month date, year	Time from ___ to ___.	Activity accomplished
2/6/2020	9:00–10:00 a.m.	Conference call with Ashley to develop IRB for active questioning study

(Continued)

(Continued)

Wednesday, month date, year	Time from ___ to ___.	Activity accomplished
Thursday, month date, year	Time from ___ to ___.	Activity accomplished
2/7/2020	4:30–6:00 a.m.	Generate outline/ literature for active questioning study
2/7/2020	10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Address whole group instruction reviewer comments
Friday, month date, year	Time from ___ to ___.	Activity accomplished
2/8/2020	8:00–9:30 a.m.	Work on literature review for executive function project
Saturday, month date, year	Time from ___ to ___.	Activity accomplished
2/9/2020	7:00–9:30 a.m.	Write methods section Cut and paste cita- tions into works cited Format tables for findings section Email Trina to read/ edit the intro
2/9/2020	10:00–11:30 p.m.	Reread findings sections and draft conclusion and implications section

Second, scrutinize your productivity after one week. Pay attention to *when* you write. Question yourself as to *why* that time or day works well. Highlight those times as potential scheduled writing blocks. Examine what you are doing during writing time and where you are physically. For example, during the hour and half block time on Saturday, did you try to do the nondrafting or crafting tasks on the couch rather than at a desk? Did you have your email or social media up in the background or your volume up on your computer so that you heard every “ping?” These questions may seem like we are getting into unnecessary minutia. However, these small distractions can consume valuable minutes of productive writing time. How many actual paragraphs and/or pages you were able to complete? After analyzing the data you have, you are ready to complete the process for another consecutive week. Using the same Activity 2.1 Three-Week Writing Log Inventory Week 1, create a Week 2, noting the consecutive month, add a second week as a date range, and add the year).

Third, examine your productivity after Week 2. Again, as in Week 1, pay attention to *when* you write, and ask yourself *why* these times or days work well. Be critical of your routines. Once again, highlight those times as potential scheduled writing blocks. Examine each week side by side for times, days, and what you are doing during writing time. Record how many actual paragraphs/pages you were able to complete. Record patterns. It is in this week that you want to get in the weeds of when were good writing or crafting times versus revision times. You may want to note the difference in when you are more productive at tasks like formatting, checking references, following up with editors or coauthors, or even when to email or schedule calls. After completing this analysis, you are ready to complete the process for a final third consecutive week. Using the same Activity 2.1 Three-Week Writing Log Inventory Week 1, create a Week 3, again noting the consecutive month. From the exemplar, examining times spent writing and tasks accomplished, this scholar writes best during morning hours. Yet, the evening time is best for other tasks that contribute to being productive.

As a fourth and final step, you will complete your inventory of time spent writing. Now that you have logged your writing time by date, day, time of day, total hours spent writing and what you have accomplished for three consecutive weeks, it's time to analyze your writing patterns. After three weeks, examine all three weeks side by side carefully. Note patterns of productivity and down times. It is a good exercise to compare how much time you actually spend relative to your contract requirements to know if you are doing “enough.” So, if you have 20% of your contract dedicated to scholarship, about 20% of your work week should consist of writing and other activities that lead into activities that will fall into that category for your setting. If you are teaching, go back and note those times as well in the margins on the form. Record on the weekly forms what other nonnegotiable or off-limits tasks you cannot reschedule.

Add your nonnegotiable or off-limits tasks to your writing log. For example, if you have children and you have to pick them up from school every afternoon,

this is an example of a nonnegotiable. If you have a weekly or reoccurring commitment whether it is religious services, a yoga class on Saturdays, or a book group during the week, record these activities as well. You may have a family or committed relationship that places certain demands on your time or other nonnegotiable activities. By examining a span of three weeks, you can ascertain when you can realistically and consistently dedicate time to writing. Now, you are ready to establish a writing routine.

The idea of the Three-Week Writing Log Inventory is to systematically record *when you write* and to record *what you are writing*. Adding nonnegotiables and other activities that have systematically consumed your time allows a novice researcher and scholar to critically examine when a dedicated, regular writing schedule can be realistically implemented. You may even notice some tasks that you can shift to make better use of your time. Using this form can be the beginning of developing productive writing habits.

As a graduate student or affiliate faculty member, you may also have other forms of employment. As a novice researcher, new scholar, and/or newly appointed academic, many issues will consume your time. Acclimation to a new unit, or campus and even city or locale, teaching, related service, and advising, will all pull at you and consume your time. Serving as a reviewer for journals in your field, which we recommend, will consume your time. Writing itself will take many forms. You may have to plan more for some manuscripts, and planning is a necessary part of writing. Watching/listening to multimedia, reading and annotating articles, book chapters, reports of research, and books is a significant part of writing. Drafting and revising are part of writing. Checking that in-text citations are part of your reference section and that your reference section does not include works cited that don't appear in your text are part of writing. All of these components are time-consuming and should be considered when budgeting your time. Therefore, these tasks should also be documented as you are gleaning when you write best versus when you may engage in other tasks.

By examining when you have time to write and what might be consuming your time, you can set a realistic writing schedule and establish a writing routine that works for you. You may realize that you have to alter priorities. As a graduate student and doctoral candidate, Margaret-Mary, one of the authors of this text, also worked (taught) full time and had two children of her own, one in middle school and one in high school. She was also an avid softball player, so involved she earned a silver medal in the Iowa Games, an annual event for postcollegiate athletes. It was her release, she told herself. But, she had to prioritize. There may be activities in your life that are fulfilling, but time-consuming, that you may decide to curtail during different seasons of your academic life.

Margaret-Mary gave up softball, both a passion and a physical release for her and carved out writing time early each morning. She tracked her productivity (or lack thereof) and, by critically examining her writing output and nonnegotiables over a three-week period, was able to set a routine wherein

she'd arise at 4:00 a.m., and write until she woke her children up at 6:00 a.m. each weekday morning and then began her workday. Initially, she scheduled these 10 hours of writing each week to take place only during the week.

Twenty years later, Margaret-Mary still maintains this early morning writing routine, generally adhering to this schedule three days per week, writing from 6:00 a.m. until noon on the days she does not teach. She writes other times as well, schedule permitting, but the early morning time slot works well for her and has become an established routine. The key to writing productivity is inventorying your productivity and other nonnegotiable activities and disciplining yourself to write when you have scheduled writing time. Careful consideration of your most productive times of day can lead to long-term productive writing habits. Your "found" time may be more or less, but guard it carefully and protect this new-found time for your writing goals. Finally, we encourage you to review this activity each semester or academic term, as commitments change, and your authoring schedule may need to adjust as well.

## Managing Writing Tasks: Setting Reasonable Goals

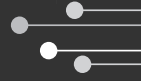
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Briefly, we have mentioned setting goals. In this section, a discussion of goal setting as an activity that allows writing to be managed is presented more fully. Begin by thinking of what you want to accomplish. Oftentimes, we have internal conversations with ourselves about large goals such as, "I need to complete Chapter 1." or "My introduction to this article needs to be completed." or "I need to write the literature review." While these are worthwhile goals, they lack specificity. A large goal can be overwhelming. Because such broad goals lack the steps to accomplishment, it may feel as if writing lacks direction. A basic outline, while a simple strategy, can provide direction with goals. What was a large task, such as a chapter or a literature review, now becomes a series of discreet tasks that are less overwhelming and more achievable. Commit to working in chunks; long sections of text can be intimidating with nothing but a blinking cursor or blank page in front of you.

Try taking your large goal, for example an introduction, and break it into smaller, more manageable chunks via an outline. Consider your first item on your outline and create a short goal statement. Ask yourself: What am I trying to accomplish? Then consider, what time commitment have you set? Are your goals still too broad? Do you include manageable steps?

Activity # 2 Writing Goal Log is a simple charting method that allows writers to take a large, overarching goals, such as a Chapter 1 or literature review, and break it into smaller, manageable goals. Think of these goals as steps to accomplish the large, overarching goal.

## Activity 2.2 Writing Goal Log



Large overarching goal		
Small goals	Task	Completed
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

Here we provide an exemplar to generate ideas about how this simple tool can be utilized.

Large overarching goal: Complete Solid Draft of Social Skills manuscript		
Small goals	Task	Completed
1 Literature review: Social Skills Project	Section: How social skills develop	12/13/2019
2 Literature review: Social Skills Project	Section: Impact of social skills on academics	12/17/2019
3 Literature review: Social Skills Project	Section: Kindergarten learning contexts	12/19/2019
4 Literature review: Social Skills Project	Methodology	12/27/2019
5 Literature review: Social Skills Project	Theoretical Framework	12/29/2019

Once you have completed your goal sheet, use it the next time you have a sizeable amount of time to write, for example, at least a two-hour block of time. Get yourself comfortable and situated; have everything you need to accomplish this goal. This means you need the head or physical space to write, the tools, such as your laptop, access to any articles, sticky notes, highlighters, etc., whatever you need when you write. Employ the **Pomodoro technique** (Cirillo, 2018): write for 25 minutes, reread what you've written, take a five-minute break, and write some more! If reading, do so actively; if reading electronically, use available tools to add comments and notables, if reading a hard copy, use sticky notes, a highlighter, and pen/pencil to note possible changes. Stop at intervals in review and also read for flow and cohesion. Take the time to revise often, and if you make changes in the document while reading, go back afterward and "make them real."

You will have times where you feel stuck, the words won't come, or you find yourself reading and rereading something over and over. When you hit a block, DO SOMETHING ELSE!! However, resist the urge to read email, scan social media, shop online, or engage in other behaviors that do not move writing forward. When you get stuck, commit to doing something useful. For example, read literature germane to this manuscript or another, proofread, check references, etc., but continue for that allotted timeframe (the example of two hours). Near the end of your time, stop and address components listed on the goal sheet provided as Activity # 2.2. Writing Goal Log. Assess what you accomplished and what next steps are needed. While at first this may seem cumbersome, accomplishing smaller goals leads to feelings of satisfaction. No matter how small the goal, once accomplished, you have gained traction. And traction is forward progress. Keep trying this method until it feels more natural and familiar. The act of time and tracking goals can become a habit as can the practice of breaking large goals into smaller goals.

## Plan for Publication Opportunities: Setting a Submission Schedule

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It is often difficult to maintain busy schedules and remain productive in your writing. Trying to remember everything, including due dates, can be overwhelming. We suggest keeping a calendar and keeping it accurate and easily accessible. Being organized is vital to being productive. Treat your established writing time as a standing appointment with yourself to focus on writing. Resist the urge to schedule other events during this dedicated time. While you want to be a good faculty citizen or collegial graduate student, give up your established writing time only as a last resort. Consider using a three-semester schedule to track important dates and upcoming calls for manuscripts as suggested in Activity 2.3: Yearly Writing Log by Academic Semester.

During each month of each semester, track what is coming due. Be opportunistic and realistic. Literally, research is everywhere and chances to craft studies and publish them abound. Often, opportunities present themselves, especially in the form of special issues of journals or edited books in your field and subsequent calls for manuscripts. Keep the previous academic year's map and use it to make decisions about conferences to attend and deadlines to manage. As an aside, as you gain productivity and publications, keep up with updating your curriculum vitae (CV) for work in progress, published, etc. That is another way to track success at your own goals as well as make sure you are updated so when you arrive at your annual review or evaluation, it is all up to date. You can place a note on your calendar once a month for 45 minutes to update your CV. And, while you may not always need the 45 minutes at this monthly juncture, it is a reminder to yourself about being strategic, organized, and timely. Being strategic and thoughtful needs to be part of the fabric of your writing routines. Activity 2.3, the three-semester schedule, is a tool that can help you think strategically about what is due and coming due and allows you to determine if an opportunity is reasonable.

### Activity 2.3 Yearly Writing Log by Academic Semesters: Increasing Weekly Writing Time

Systematically keeping track of what you need to do and what may present itself calls for organization. Start with what you know is an absolute. Each academic year, note start dates for each semester or quarter, when syllabi are due, when quarterly or annual evaluations are due, and holidays such as winter and spring break. Visit the academic calendars website at your institution and use that as



your guide. Track any upcoming due dates for annual conferences and targeted manuscript submission. This allows you to make informed decisions about what can be reasonably accomplished and accomplished well. Look at the following blank yearly log. Begin where you are and add your most important dates. As your monthly log fills out, start to think about what else can be added in a manageable fashion. The simple act of logging a semester or quarter or entire year according to your academic calendar allows you to make informed decisions about what you can accomplish. Then examine the sample, created by one of our graduate students as a model.

### Activity 2.3: Yearly Writing Log by Academic Year

August

September

October

November

December

January

February

March

April

May

June

July

August

## Activity 2.3 Exemplar: Yearly Writing Log by Academic Year



August, 2019

September, 2019

Draft case study for special collections technical services reorganization project.

Review draft literature review for academic library spaces assessment.

October, 2019

Write outline for MSERA presentation about online-only practitioner-based graduate programs.

Group presentation for ELRC 7607  
Complete all journals for ELRC 7607

“Collections as Data” grant submission by 10/31.

November, 2019

MSERA presentation on the 6th

ELRC 7601 final paper  
ELRC 7601 group presentation. Read Demographics and the Demand for Higher Education.

Draft ELRC 7607 capstone proposal.

December, 2019

EDCI 7129 paper

ELRC 7607 capstone

January, 2020

Draft case study for special collections technical services reorganization project.  
Send draft to the journal *Library Collections, Acquisitions & Technical Services*.

Explore feasibility of quantitative study of library associate deans

Review literature

Determine institutional parameters—public R1?

Draft questions

Submit proposal for Academic Library Advancement and Development Network (ALADN) conference by January 15th.

Library fundraising since recession (HE fundraising since recession?)

Manship school collaboration

February, 2020

Qualitative class assignments.

Strategic Planning class assignments.

March, 2020

Draft conference proposal for Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) 2020.

April, 2020

ASHE 2020 proposal due mid-April

ALADN presentation?

May, 2020

Library associate deans project?

Summer 2020

June, 2020

Draft comprehensive exam questions

AERA proposal?

July, 2020

AERA proposals due

Finalize comprehensive exam questions.

August, 2020

Complete and submit comprehensive exam questions?

Each of these logs serves a purpose, and that is to help you establish or reestablish a writing routine and evaluate the routines you have in place. If you are currently a graduate student or a novice scholar, you may have some systems that have been working for you. We do not suggest getting rid of what works, but perhaps these activities can become additions to systems that can help you become more efficient. Or, perhaps, these structures will allow you to examine your time differently. Also, the authors have found recreating these routines using digital methods, such as using calendar apps or software, can also be helpful.

For example, Tynisha, another author of this text, prefers the use of an online calendar. Her writing times are set as appointment times and are recurring. Because of her various administrative obligations, online calendar appointments allow her to keep this space dedicated and this time reserved. This means, once she has time scheduled, this set aside time is off limits to any other activity. She also uses the notes function in the online calendar to link when journal articles are due, editor email addresses, and she may also create detailed to do list for how she wants to spend the time. Regardless of the approach you take, digital or not, creating and following a systematic, organized writing routine is what is paramount.

## **Systematically Tracking Calls for Journal Manuscripts**

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Monthly, we suggest that spending an hour or so searching for upcoming calls is time well spent. Put these hours on your calendar log or wherever you keep your time, so you will adhere to this activity which we have found can (and does) increase publishing productivity. Specifically, we often share calls and discuss coauthored feasibility with colleagues based on ongoing research. As a graduate student, new scholar and/or novice researcher, make it a point to form relationships with faculty whose interests are similar to or intersect with yours. Collegial relationships can flourish as you share calls and discuss research ideas. Invest time and energy to send one another manuscript calls, grant notices, and other academic announcements.

Consider extending this idea of sharing information to others with whom you work or other graduate students, but also, those who are not institutional colleagues. Many colleagues reciprocate; others do not. Regardless, cultivating this kind of collegiality and fostering collegial relationships pay dividends. Sometimes these informal networks expand, other times they shrink as exchanging information may only pertain to one or two additional colleagues. But, it is a productive habit to regularly spend time looking for calls and research possibilities. And, it is also good practice to share writing and research possibilities with colleagues. As you continue your writing productivity, be sure to add new projects and submissions to your CV (at least monthly) ☺.

## SUMMARY

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In this chapter, we provided some simple tools for writers to use to track productivity, record accomplished tasks, and map upcoming deadlines. These tools and the accompanying discussion provide organizational ideas, time management strategies, and formats that can be employed as is or amended to increase productivity and maximize effort. As we close, we return to the words of successful author, Stephen King, whom we referenced earlier in this chapter. King has published countless novels, many of which appeared on the *New York Times* Best Seller List. Shares King (2010), “The scariest moment is always just before you start. After that, things can only get better” (p. 269). The point of including this quotation? You have to reach that starting point. In the next chapter, an idea is presented for how to start a manuscript using an innovative presentation strategy. Avoiding the blank page strategy is designed to assist graduate students, new scholars and novice researchers jump-start a piece of writing.

## KEY TERMS

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**Pomodoro Technique** This is a *time management* method developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s. The technique uses a *timer* to break down work into intervals, traditionally 25 minutes in length, separated by short breaks. These intervals are named *pomodoros*, the plural in English of the Italian word *pomodoro* (tomato), after the tomato-shaped kitchen timer that Cirillo used as a university student.

## CRITICAL THINKING QUESTIONS

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1. When are your peak writing times? After completing the Writing Log Inventory, did you notice this pattern? How can you capitalize on this to maximize productivity?
2. Where could you “find” additional time that could be devoted to writing?
3. How can you reprioritize your current time commitments to schedule writing time on a regular basis?
4. Who in your network has similar interests to your line of research that may be a potential collaborator?
5. What community organizations address issues similar to your field of study? What relationships could you pursue for potential collaboration?
6. What journals do you currently read or have noted contain articles you have read and cited regularly?
7. What are considered the top three to five journals in your field?

## ADDITIONAL REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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