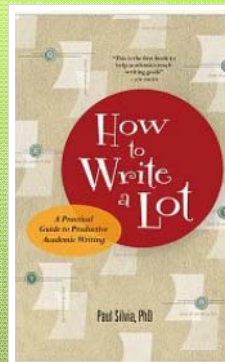


How to Write A Lot

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Adapted from
Paul Silvia's Book,
"How To Write A
Lot"

Why Faculty Struggle with Writing

- They did not write with fluency and constancy in graduate school
- They learned to work in isolation
- Writing, by nature, seems more difficult
- Writing usually remains mysterious
- Mistaken ideas about the nature of writing
- Approach writing with all-or-none thinking
- Feel overloaded by other responsibilities
- Reject simple and effective ways of writing as counterintuitive

How to write a lot

- Becoming a reflective, disciplined writer
- Practical, behavioral-oriented approach
- Writing productively is about actions you are not doing but could easily do
 - Make a schedule
 - Setting clear goals
 - Keep track of yourself
 - Reward yourself
 - Building good habits

Truth

- Writing is hard
 - Research is fun, but writing can be frustrating, complicated, and not fun
- Dark backlog of studies
 - Most try to write during breaks and 3 day weekends
- Writing is a skill
 - *How did you learn to write for publication?*
 - Most picked up writing from advisors, who also had the same problems

Barriers to Writing A Lot

- "I can't find time to write" or "I would write if I could find big blocks of time"
 - Problem is the word **FIND**
 - **Do we find time to teach? NO!**
 - Need to allot time to write
 - Key is regularity – Start with four a week
 - Don't check email, turn off the phone, close the door.
 - Binge writing is unproductive
 - Just like cramming for a test!

Barriers to Writing A Lot

- People will not respect your time to write, so you have to be firm
 - Only bad writers will hold this against you
 - Would people want to schedule meetings when you teach?
- Write when you schedule time, but not ONLY then

Barriers to Writing A Lot

- "I need to do analyses first" or "I need to read articles first"
 - Stats and literature reviews count as writing – do them in your scheduled time
- "I need a new computer (desk, chair, printer, etc.)"
 - REALLY?
- "I am waiting for inspiration"
 - Waiting for inspiration does not work
 - Contingency management (scheduled and reinforced writing time) works

Four-Step Plan to Nurture Writing Productivity

- Establish ideas and momentum for writing
 - Write for 10 minutes without stopping
- Establish a regimen
 - Limits writing to duration where tension and emotions are minimized
 - Keeps writing fresh in mind
 - Coaxes you to start before lit searches and analyses are complete
 - Finish more rapidly (need to plug the holes)

Four-Step Plan to Nurture Writing Productivity

- Encourages revision
- Helps you feel like you have done enough for the day
- Feel that scholarship is not being neglected
- Promotes conversations about ongoing writing – less isolation
- **Rearrange writing environment**
- **Rearrange writing habits**
 - goals, limits, rewards
 - Premack principle

Four-Step Plan to Nurture Writing Productivity

- Establishing comfort
 - Freewriting when stuck
 - Simple relaxation
 - Counter negative self-talk
- Making writing a socially skilled act
 - Make writing public (plan too)
 - Anticipate criticisms
 - Find ways to agree with and learn from criticism
 - Resist victimization

Motivational Tools

- Setting Goals
 - Devote a writing session a month to developing goals
 - List Project Goals
 - Display your goals for the month – ALL OF THEM
 - Set a concrete goal for each day of writing
 - Not "resubmit the paper" or "submit that grant"

Concrete goals examples

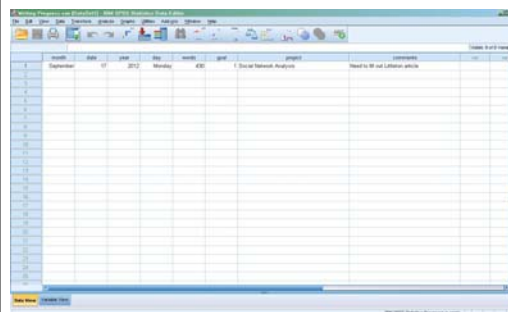
- Write 200 words
- Read and revise the draft I currently have
- Make a new list of project goals
- Write three paragraphs
- Add missing references
- Read three articles
- Make an outline
- Read reviewer comments and make a list of things to change
- Correct page proofs

Motivational Tools

- Setting priorities
 - Make your own based on your field or needs
- Example
 - Checking page proofs and copyedited manuscripts
 - Finish projects with deadlines
 - Revising manuscripts to resubmit
 - Reviewing manuscripts and grant proposals
 - Developing new manuscripts
 - Miscellaneous writing

Motivational Tools

- Monitoring Progress
 - Why?
 - Keeps goals salient
 - Monitoring behavior makes you do that behavior
 - Helps you set better goals
 - Can even track words, goal, and project using excel or SPSS!
 - Reward yourself!
 - But never with not writing



What about writer's block?

- For most people (outside of poets and creative writers), writer's block is a dispositional fantasy
 - Writer's block is the behavior of not writing
 - "You can't write because you are not writing"
 - So write!
 - Maybe write something else, but write something!

Motivational Tools

- Agraphia group
 - Group of writers who get together weekly or every other week
 - to keep each other motivated
 - To hold each other accountable

Outcomes

- Joy of scheduling is that you will start to finish your writing projects
 - Joy and internal rewards
- Leads to less wanting and more doing
- Writing isn't a race
- Enjoy life