

How to write a lot

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Outline

- ✧ Why write a lot?
- ✧ Barriers and attitudes
- ✧ Guiding principles
- ✧ Writing skills
- ✧ More advice...

Why write a lot? To publish more...

- ✧ Departmental, faculty-level, and/or university-level performance criterion for making employment decisions
- ✧ National and international recognition

Research vs. writing

- ✓ Research is fun!
- × Writing is difficult!
 - Different from comprehensives, dissertation, courses
 - Writing is a skill which needs to be learnt and practised

Solutions to common barriers

- × “I can’t find time to write; I would write more if I could just find big blocks of time.”
 - ✓ You have a teaching schedule that you respect.
 - ✓ The secret is the **regularity**, not the number of days

- × “I need to do more analyses, read more papers.”
 - ✓ Write more. Be strategic and mindful, not exhaustive

- × “I wait to be inspired as I write better then.”
 - × Waiting for inspiration does not work (Boice, 1990)
 - ✓ Those who force themselves to write, even without inspiration, write more.

Habit is happiness + productive

- ✧ Research by Boice (1990)
 - 3 groups of 9 professors assigned to
 - 3 experimental conditions for 50 days

	Strategy	productivity	quality
Regular	Write every day	100 pages	1 day to creative idea
Abstinence	Wait for good ideas	28 pages	2 days to creative idea
Spontaneity	Write when you feel	12 pages	5 days to creative idea

Guiding principles

- ✓ Protect time
- ✓ No binge writing
- ✓ Setting limits
- ✓ Setting goals
- ✓ Setting priorities
- ✓ Keeping tabs
- ✓ Positive feedback

Jealously protect time for writing

- The secret is the **regularity**, not the number of days
 - **ALLOT TIME TO WRITE**
- Writing session: Reserve untouchable time
- Always the same fixed period
- Always write during this period, **WITHOUT** being disturbed (email, students, colleagues, etc.)
 - Don't let **ANYONE** take up this time, **NOT ANYONE!**
- The more you write, the more ideas you have and the more ideas you have, the more you publish (Boice, 1990)

No binge writing

- ✧ Binge writing is unproductive :
 - Procrastination leads to feeling guilty/anxious
 - Devoting a full weekend to writing alleviates temporally the guilt, but cycles begin anew
 - Abandon the notion that writing is best done in large blocks of time
- ✧ If you allot regular fixed time, you no longer worry; you write during the allotted time, and **you feel happier about your writing**

Set limits: when its over...

- Set limits on time investments
- You will work more efficiently during scheduled sessions
- Submission is part of the writing process
- Revision is part of the writing process

SMART goals

- ✧ If given a goal, on average, you will perform better than just doing your best (Locke & Latham, 1984)
- ✧ Goal setting is critical to your productivity

s	Specific
m	Measurable
a	Achievable
r	Realistic
t	Timely

- ✧ Daily, weekly, monthly and long-term goals

Really existing security studies
Journal of Global Security Studies

Sovereignty and ANT: IR + Things EJIR
Failure

2015	MTI 1	IPS Handbook March/September
2016	MTI 2	Research Handbook

June 7-July 1	Change		Iqaluit
July 3	Millennium Abstract		
August	IPS Handbook		
Sept 15	IPS Editorial Bid		
Sept 23-26	EISA: Failure		Sicily
Oct 12/19	Canada/US border		Harvard
Oct 16	FAILURE		UCL
Oct 17-18	Millennium: Failure		LSE
Feb	ISA		Atlanta

Prioritize

✧ Copyedit +
Revisions

✧ Complete the draft

✧ New project

✓ Journal article

✓ Ph.D

✓ Collected work:
workshop, special
issue

× Literature reviews

× Theory

× Chapters in edited
books

Audit

- ✧ Monitoring your progress helps with self-regulation (Carver & Scheier, 2001)
- ✧ Set achievable goals and measure



Positive feedback: REWARD YOURSELF

✧ Intrinsic motivation

- Satisfaction of having written something good and having finished a good paper
- Give yourself a pat on the back

✧ Extrinsic motivation

- What will the reward be when your manuscript
 - ... is finished?
 - ... is accepted for publication?
- Restaurant treat, new guitar, weekend away...

Writing tactics

- ✧ Outlines are part of writing
 - Stay focused and be as precise as possible
 - “right-sized” project: less than kitchen-sink, more than footnote
 - Identify target + audience
- ✧ Abstract and title
 - Bring substantial focus and draw eyes
 - Be smart and google-friendly
- Write now, edit later

Strategies

- ✧ Collaborate with someone who has the same objectives
- ✧ Build on your ideas
 - Can reuse the background reading and literature review
- ✧ Get support from colleagues
 - ✧ Quick comments on your paper; ask specific questions
 - ✧ Build a network
- ✧ Write in the company of others
 - Social activity (Grant, 2006)
 - Exchange of manuscripts

- ✓ Write in your optimal time (morning, afternoon, night?)
- ✓ Plan your least demanding tasks (email!) when you are less alert
- ✓ Use the technology
 - ✓ Bibliography management RefWorks or EndNote
- ✓ Work on 3 or 4 projects simultaneously
 - ✓ Allows ideas to cross-fertilise
 - ✓ Take advantage of different time-frames (grants vs. reviews, etc)
- ✓ Select a **dedicated writing area**
 - ✓ Create a comfortable environment
 - ✓ Make sure you are not distracted
 - ✓ Turn off phone, messages, email and access to web (Freedom)

Suggested readings

- Belcher, W. L. (2009). *Writing your journal article in twelve weeks: A guide to academic publishing success*. SAGE Publications, Incorporated.
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