Part II  Professional Writers
Doctoral Students, Post-docs
& New Faculty
Elena Plante, PhD
The University of Arizona

Things to Remember
- You are teaching them to produce the “currency” of their future profession
  - Publications
  - Grants
  - Book chapters?
- You are providing a model they will draw on when they teach their own students

Key Writing Values
- Writing is the second most important thing (data collection is the first most important thing).
- Writing happens all the time.
- Writing is re-writing.
- The written product is done when it meets professional standards and not before.
Values in Action
All doc students shown own their own APA publication manual
All doc students should schedule regular writing time
All doc students should hand over drafts weekly
Everyone edits every grant that goes out of the lab

The Big Picture
› Exposure to writing instruction you do
  • With them (largely one-on-one)
  • With students at other levels of education
  • Class-based writing goals and methods
  • Strategies for writing improvement
› Exposure to the writing forms you do
  • Articles
  • Grants
  • White papers

Advanced Writing Skills
• Expert writers
  – are goal directed
  – understand their topics
  – consider how paragraphs and sentences advance the goal
  – use cohesive devises to tie sentences and paragraphs together
  – aware of and anticipate readers needs
  – attend more to meaning than form in writing
  – make more revisions than non-expert writers

(Flower and colleagues, 1980, 1986)
Expert Writers According to Me

- Have a story to tell.
- See writing as an iterative process rather than a linear process.
- See writing as a product rather than an extension of their psyche.

Stages of Advanced Writing

- Planning
  - idea generation / goal setting
  - research / organizing ideas
- Translating
- Reviewing
  - substantive modifications
  - clarification of ideas
  - selection of precise vocabulary
  - Superficial modifications

(©liners and colleagues, 1980, 1986)

Models of Writing Development

- Start to finish
  - Get sense of the whole
  - Reinforces the myth of “blocks of time”
  - Limits number of experiences possible
- Project parts
  - Sequence the experience
  - Method (learning to follow the format)
  - Results (wait for them to have some stats)
  - Intro/discussions
    - Format is more subtle
    - Integration of literature
  - Realistic for “Team Science” projects
Regular writing time

- Develop the habit early
- Avoid relegating writing to “big blocks of time”
- Novice writers misjudge the time required for writing tasks

When students need more practice

- Precise of relevant articles.
- Peer editing
- Internal journal-style article reviews
- Internal grant reviews

Back Door Skill Builders

- Assist you in grading undergrad papers

- But make the experience work for building their own meta-writing skills
Back Door Skill Builders

- Teach in areas related to writing
  - Writing development units
  - Treatment of writing disorders units
  - Narrative language units
- Paired reviews of journal articles
  - Come with a focus on trees
  - Mentor in a parallel focus on the forest

Understanding Writing Problems

- Do they know what the target is?
  - Have they read primary literature?
  - Have they ever seen a grant?
  - Do they have a model that fits their project?
- Is it a conceptualization problem masquerading as a writing problem?
- If it really is about writing, what level of problem am I dealing with?
Use your professional background

Levels of Narrative Structure

- Macrostructure
  - Text structure
  - Paragraph structure
  - Transitions

- Microstructure
  - Syntax
  - Morphology
  - Word choice precision
  - Referencing
  - Spelling
  - Punctuation

Therapy Maxim

- Treat Macrostructure first
- Treat Microstructure second

NB: Novice writers have difficulty handling multiple levels of feedback simultaneously.

Styles of Writers

- Just get something down “on paper”
- Outline first, then write the text.
Tips for proper English

1. Verbs HAS to agree with their subjects.
2. Never use a preposition to end a sentence with.
3. Don’t use no double negatives.
4. And don’t start a sentence with a conjunction.
5. Don’t use commas, which aren’t necessary.
6. Correct spelling is essential.
7. Try to not ever split infinitives.
8. Make each pronoun agree with their antecedent.
9. It is important to use apostrophe’s correctly.
10. Always read what you have written to see you any words out.

http://teachers.norreg.dk/mb/gram_pr ojekt/grammarhumour.htm

http://hyperboleandahalf.blogspot.com/
Useful Resources

Models of Developing Writing Skills

- **My old method**
  - Edited the draft
  - Made notes about the edit
  - Met with student and went over the notes
  - Sent them off to rewrite

- **My current method**
  - Edit with them sitting there
  - Talk my way through in terms of reactions and why change is needed
  - Demonstrate the back-and-forth nature of editing
  - Take on either macro- or microstructure (but not both)
  - Flag major areas of re-write for them to take on
  - Make minor changes together right then and there

Supporting Faculty Writing
Faculty Writing Problems

- Poor basic writing skills
- Lack of familiarity with writing formats
  - Grants
  - Publications
- Under–performing in publication numbers

Poor Basic Writing Skills

- Why were they hired?
- Campus writing resources
  - ESL center
  - University writing centers
  - Your clinical expertise
- Career strategizing
  - Career scientist track
  - Strength in numbers

Lack of Familiarity

- Publications
  - Invest mentoring time as a retention strategy
  - Back up to what they should have gotten as a doc student
  - Do not serve only as a editor; build their skills
    - Get an APA manual
    - Follow a model
    - Serve as a reviewer
      - NOT unassisted at first!
Other Resources

› **Hear it from someone else**
  ▶ Find a mentor outside your department
  ▶ ASHA convention sessions on writing
  ▶ Books

Under-Performance in Publication Numbers

› **Mentoring issues**
  ▶ No data coming in, no papers going out.
  ▶ Misconceptions about the role of writing in their job.
  ▶ Misconceptions about necessary conditions for productive writing.
  ▶ Where is time being allocated?

Specious Barriers to Writing A Lot

› I don’t have enough time to write.
› I need to do (fill in task here)...FIRST.
› I need BETTER...(fill in resources here)
› I’m waiting for inspiration.
› I have writers block.

Paraphrased from P. Silvia, *How to Write A Lot*
Illusions and Delusions

- Writing is perceived as having special status, requiring special circumstances to occur.
  - Writers need inspiration!!!
  - Writers block???

"You are not plumbing the depths of the human soul. It's a methods section for goodness sake!!"

- Writing is not a special event for an academic.
- Convey expectations unambiguously.
  With tenure at stake, better to be blunt than misunderstood.

Script of the day:

"Writing is the currency of the academy. It is absolutely central to your job description. If you are not writing, weekly, if not daily, you are not doing the job we are paying you to do. Given it's central role in your job, I expect that you will dedicate time to it every day."

The Myth of Blocks of Time

PROCRASTINATION, BUSINESS AND BINGEING

ROBERT BORC
Course in Faculty Development Center for New Faculty, Long Beach, CA 90840 USA
Instructed 2 April 1993

The myth is not only widespread amongst faculty and many descriptions of procrastination as a personality trait or cognitive style is a common misconception. Just as we often overlook the importance of small tasks, we may also neglect the potential benefits of small, frequent writing sessions. The actual problem lies not in the size of the task, but in the ways we allocate our time. By breaking larger tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces, we can increase our productivity and reduce the chances of procrastination.
Data on Time for Writing

- People who squeezed in writing time here and there wrote more pages than people who wrote only when they had blocks of time.
- People who “waited for inspiration” wrote only marginally more than people instructed not to write at all!

Boice, 1989, 1990

How I write A LOT

- Schedules worked in time BC (Before Chair)
- Chair obligations trump “me” time.
- Match the job to the time between appointments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 minute jobs</th>
<th>20 minute jobs</th>
<th>30 minute jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First paragraph of intro</td>
<td>Table or figure</td>
<td>Run statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose statement</td>
<td>First paragraph of discussion</td>
<td>Procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant description</td>
<td>Section edit</td>
<td>2nd paragraph of intro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject selection methods</td>
<td>2nd paragraph discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Therapy Works
Types of Interventions

- Writing schedules
- Writing courses
- Writing support groups
- Writing coaches

The Myth of Time

- I need blocks of time to write
- I can’t find time to write

Where is the time going?

Procrastination

Ideally:

In reality:
Time Logs

- People cannot reliably account for their time

Time Logs

- Confusing Busy with Productive

Expectation–Performance Dissociation

- Given the tenure stakes, why don’t faculty develop a laser focus on writing?

Because we are Americans

We have no memory for the past
We live in the present
Events of the future are always far off…
…until they are not.
First: Address Avoidance

› Appreciate the fear…
   Better to fail by avoiding writing than to fail despite focusing on writing
› …but don’t feed into it.

Script of the day
“You are bleeding away your time on secondary activities. This cannot possibly give you a sense of accomplishment at the end of the work day. Be sure that at the end of every day, you can point to one activity that advanced you towards the goal of tenure.”

Mentoring on Time Allocation

› Re-allocate time with tenure expectations
› Recognize avoidance behaviors when they occur
› Manage the drive to “cross things off the list”
   • Easiest ones aren’t the important ones
   • Keep two lists
   • Make the writing list into smaller chunks
› Implement writing plans

The Two List System

› Chore List  › Writing List
Tenure

- Do your junior faculty REALLY understand tenure expectations?
  - University P&T are often too broad to guide day-to-day behavior.
  - Your departmental performance review can serve this role.

Rethink Your Annual Performance Review as a Mentoring Tool

- The Performance Review should convey what the job is all about.
- Lists all faculty activities that the department supports
- Weights activities relative to
  - The P&T process
  - The departmental mission

Performance in Writing

A. List publications (not abstracts) that appeared in peer-reviewed journals in the calendar year (award four points for every original article).* Note: that data-based journal publications are weighted more heavily in the P&T process than are review articles, books, or chapters.

Points = _______

B. List peer-reviewed presentations at meetings at the state, national, or international level or at peer institutions (award 3.0 points for every poster presentation up to 6 points).

Points = _______
Recruiting Faculty Mentors

- Creating a Culture of Writing Support
  - Monthly Peer-to-Peer mentoring lunches
    - Junior faculty pick the topics
    - Sr. faculty attend because they learn things
  - Writing Circles
    - Forum for tips and feedback
    - Creates deadlines where none exist otherwise
  - Performance reviews
    - Reward the behaviors you want to see

Reward Desired Behaviors

A. List grant or contract proposals (training, research, clinical) that were submitted by you during the calendar year (award 0.5 points for submitted proposals up to $5,000, 1 point for grants over $5,000 to $50,000, and 2 points for grants over $50,000).

  Points =

B. List grants or contracts on which you served as a consultant. (Award 3 points for each.)

  Points =

C. Conducted a peer review of a grant proposal (award 2 points for a review).

  Points =

Remember that mentoring is also a learned skill.

"I haven't read your proposed yet, but I already have some great ideas on how to improve it!"
Recommended Resources

- **Academic sources**

- **Fun websites for horrifying examples**
  - Mangled English written by high school and college students: [http://history-world.org/essays.htm](http://history-world.org/essays.htm)
  - Cake Wrecks, When professional cakes go horribly, hilariously wrong: [http://cakewrecks.blogspot.com/](http://cakewrecks.blogspot.com/)