

Facilitating writing seminars: beyond shutting up and writing down

Creating Knowledge 2021

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Why writing seminars?

- "On one hand then, getting writing done is an essential component of scholarly life, and yet much research shows that it continues to be marginalized and squeezed out of the everyday practices of researchers and academics." (Aitchison & Guerin, 2014: 4)
- Mental health
- Social class
- Others write
 - "The definition of a common purpose for the group, in terms of both writing and accountability, was a watershed moment that provided the impetus for the establishment of other practices commonly associated with team effectiveness. These included an informal, tacit negotiation of roles and responsibilities and a conscious commitment to continuous learning." (Wardale et al., 2015: 1308)
 - "[...] engagement of anyone's attention, motivation or desire is not usually attained without providing something of value in return, and in the case of doctoral writing groups, the value that keeps participants returning is a mixture of affordances: scholarly writing progress, social nourishment, resilience, enhancement of reflexive capacities and the simple pleasure of writing." (Fegan, 2016: 28)
 - "[...] writing retreats are effective not so much in terms of the cognitive dimension of writing but can best be explained by looking at the positive emotions they generate and their impact on the students' identities as writers. The retreats produced hard (numbers of words written) and 'soft outcomes' – social and emotional effects." (Papen & Thériault, 2018: 177-178)
- What is it then?
 - writing vs. reading and giving feedback
 - closed vs. open attendance
 - physical vs. online
 - continuous vs. event
 - synchronous vs. asynchronous
 - flat structure vs. clear leadership
 - strict vs. loose rules
 - For more see Haas (2014) and Wardale et al. (2015) in reference list.
- The TODOS experiment
 - TODOS: Tromsø Doctoral Students
 - Shut Up & Write
 - bi-weekly
 - physical
 - reflection activities
 - Problems:
 - limited outreach

- inflexible

A new writing support at UiT NAU

- Set up writing seminars
- Assist existing seminars
- Tailored
- Workshop
- The 2021 Pilot
 - Targeting PhD-students
 - Hidden marketing
 - TODOS
 - Nansen-project
- Questionnaire
 - Before workshop
 - Have you previously attended writing seminars?
 - Are you satisfied with your writing habits?
 - In your experience, what is the main challenge you face when writing (e.g. time, content, format, language)?
 - To which degree do you feel that you master the writing process?
 - Gender (female/ male/ other/ do not wish to answer)?
 - After workshop
 - Are you satisfied with your writing habits?
 - Have your habits changed after attending the workshop?
 - To which degree do you feel that you master the writing process now?
 - Gender?

Reference list

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