

## Improving Writing Efficiency

GRS Writing Group – WED 22 FEB

**Neil:** *[on his final exam]* It was terrible. I sat in the big hall and put my packet of polos on the desk, and my spare pencil and my support gonk and my chewing gum and my extra pen, and my extra polos and my lucky gonk, and my pencil sharpener shaped like a cream cracker and three more gonks with a packet of polos in each, and lead for my retractable pencil and my retractable pencil, and my spare lead for my retractable pencil, and chewing gum and pencils and pens and more gonks and the guy said "Stop writing please."!

The Young Ones British TV comedy about four students in a share house (1982-1984)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Young\\_Ones\\_\(TV\\_series\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Young_Ones_(TV_series))



Do you have a systematic approach to writing?

What stage of writing do you find the slowest and/or the hardest?

While there are few studies [<https://scientistseessquirrel.wordpress.com/2016/06/21/how-much-time-do-you-spend-writing/>] about the proportion of time researchers spend on writing, writing is an integral part of research. While most find writing frustratingly difficult, there are some strategies you can use to improve your writing efficiency. With practice and development improvements in your writing skill and attitudes to writing are likely to improve your writing efficiency.

Writing Mindset & Approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Do you approach writing with a positive mindset?</li> <li>2) Do you have a plan for formally developing your writing skills? Are you committed to ongoing training and are you receptive to feedback?</li> <li>3) Are you committed to practicing your academic writing skills?</li> <li>4) Do you assess the academic writing skills of others? Do you model your writing on good academic writing?</li> <li>5) Do you acknowledge that academic writing involves an element of creativity? Do you know any creative writing techniques?</li> </ol>
Planning to Write	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6) Do you have a writing schedule / routine / workflow?</li> <li>7) Do you set realistic writing goals?</li> <li>8) What writing environment do you need?</li> </ol>
Writing in Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9) How do you maintain focus while writing? Do you use a writing timer?</li> <li>10) Do you multi-task in a writing session?</li> <li>11) What do you do when your writing raises a question you cannot answer at the time?</li> <li>12) When do you stop writing?</li> </ol>



Some useful articles and tools:

*The Pace of Academic Writing* will help you appreciate why writing can sometimes be a very slow process

<https://explorationsofstyle.com/2013/04/18/the-pace-of-academic-writing/>

*Waiting for the Motivation Fairy* provides a three step approach to writing

<http://www.nature.com/naturejobs/science/articles/10.1038/nj7341-127a>

*Concentration: 22 Ways to Stay Focused on Writing* some practical advice to help you fully engage with writing and enter the 'flow' state

<https://www.articulatemarketing.com/concentration-22-ways-to-stay-focused-on-writing>

*10 apps that block mobile distractions* will help you unplug from electronic distractions [www.ecampusnews.com/featured/featured-on-ecampus-news/apps-mobile-distractions/](http://www.ecampusnews.com/featured/featured-on-ecampus-news/apps-mobile-distractions/)

*Improving your writing efficiency* from Sage Research provides some detailed advice about <http://methods.sagepub.com/book/organizing-and-managing-your-research/n12.xml>



If you have some spare time you may want to further explore further:

A study that considers the factors that contribute to writing efficiency *Writing by academics: a transactional and systems approach to academic writing behaviours*

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07294360.2016.1139553>

The Thesis Whisperer's views on acknowledging that writing is not always enjoyable at the time but will give you a sense of achievement *Three reasons why I hate writing sometimes (but I do it anyway)* <https://thesiswhisperer.com/2012/08/31/3-reasons-i-hate-writing-sometimes-but-do-it-anyway>

Some general tips about how to experiment with your writing practice written by a non academic writer who blogs for a social media management company: *6 Ways I've Improved My Writing In the Past 6 Months* <https://blog.bufferapp.com/6-ways-ive-improved-my-writing-in-the-past-6-months>

A simple overview of a more complicated study that shows how repetition (for about 66 days) is the key to developing good habits - *Examined Existence - How You Can Train Your Brain to Create New Habits* <http://examinedexistence.com/how-you-can-train-your-brain-to-create-new-habits/>

An ABC radio podcast of an interview with Dr David Levitin author of *The Organized Mind: Thinking Straight in the Age of Information Overload* which explores the biochemical basis of how multi-tasking reduces efficiency: *The Distracted Mind* <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/allinthemind/the-distracted-mind/6663470#transcript>

Further details of the UWA GRS Writing Group are available here, including advice sheets to download:

<http://www.postgraduate.uwa.edu.au/students/resources/communities#writinggroup>