



AUTHORAID

*Writing Clubs in the Research
Communication Context*
Toolkit

Resources to run
research writing clubs
at your institution

ABOUT INASP

Founded in 1992, INASP is an international development organization working with a global network of partners in Africa, Latin America and Asia. In line with the vision of research and knowledge at the heart of development, INASP works to support individuals and institutions to produce, share and use research and knowledge, which can transform lives.

INASP's approaches are based on the core pillars of capacity development, convening, influencing and working in partnership. INASP promotes equity by actively addressing the needs of both men and women across all our work and addressing issues of power within the research and knowledge system. INASP has projects in 28 countries, supporting all aspects of research and knowledge systems, from facilitating the provision of information to researchers to helping parliamentarians and civil servants to use research and evidence in policy making.

INASP designs and runs capacity development activities that cater for both women and men's interests and needs. We use methods that increase active participation and an inclusive learning environment, adopting attitudes and behaviours that value differential experiences and perspectives and ensuring listening and respect for each other's experiences and views.

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ABOUT AUTHORAID

AuthorAID is a free, pioneering global network that provides support, mentoring, resources and training for researchers in low- and middle-income countries.

AuthorAID provides support through mentoring, online training and opportunities to network with other researchers. Via the AuthorAID platform, a network of currently 17,000 researchers in low- and middle-income countries can connect with mentors, mentees and collaborators and get support to publish and communicate their work.

AuthorAID also works directly with Southern universities and institutions to build local capacity.

www.authoraid.info



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Facilitation Notes

Introduction to the workshop materials for the trainer/s

Thank you for your interest in the AuthorAID writing clubs toolkit, designed primarily for individuals in low- and medium-income countries who are considering, or might consider, starting a writing club. It can also serve individuals who wish to develop existing writing clubs further. Participants may be at any career stage - administrators, faculty members of various ranks, postdoctoral fellows and postgraduate students have all established successful writing clubs.

For the purposes of this toolkit, a writing club consists of people who meet periodically to discuss their writing, within the context of research communication. The club may be in person, electronically, or both. And it may focus on the writing process, the writing product, or both.

At the outset, please go through the toolkit and understand the materials, which have been designed by AuthorAID Associate Dr Barbara Gastel together with the AuthorAID team at INASP. You will then be in a better position to adapt the materials, if necessary, so that they are relevant to your context and audience and in turn, will be able to design an AuthorAID workshop that is fit for purpose.

These resources can be freestanding. However, they can also be included for example:

- Near the end of a workshop on research communication or on mentoring in research communication
- As part guidance on embedding research communication assistance in an institution or professional organization or
- At conferences attended by individuals who might consider setting up a writing club

Please do the following **at least one month before your AuthorAID workshop**:

- Carefully go through all the facilitation notes, referring to the other materials (the pre-workshop reading, the handouts and trainers' PowerPoint slides) wherever indicated in the facilitation notes.

After going through the facilitation notes, think about your own AuthorAID workshop:

- How long is your workshop going to be?
- What is the profile of the participants who will attend your workshop? What do they already know about the topic and what would they expect to learn or do during your workshop?
- Which activities would be the most relevant for your workshop? Do you have a good rationale for selecting some activities and leaving out or adding others?
- Would you need to include activities on any other topic not included in these materials? If so, who will develop the materials for these activities and who will facilitate them at the workshop?
- Decide who is going to be part of the workshop team, for example, the workshop administrator (the person in charge of logistics and arrangements), a co-trainer and/or resource person. Share your thoughts with your team and seek their feedback.
- Design a selection process to recruit the right participants for your workshop. Tell the workshop candidates what the workshop is about, and what they will be expected to do during the workshop.

Then, **at least two weeks before your AuthorAID workshop**, please do the following:

1. Draft the agenda (plus intended learning outcomes) for your workshop and share it with your workshop team. Some example intended learning outcomes have been provided on slide 5 in the trainers' PowerPoint slides.
2. Select the participants for your workshop.
3. Share the workshop agenda (plus intended learning outcomes) and any pre-workshop information, for example advance reading material noted at the start of the module, with your workshop participants.
4. Put together the materials for your AuthorAID workshop by using or adapting the materials in this module and by developing materials you may need for any new activities you have designed.

Guidance for trainer/s

Background knowledge and skills for trainer/s

Those who are looking to facilitate this workshop should ideally have:

- Experience with or exposure to writing clubs in the research communication context.
- Experience in mentorship or developing other people's skills in research communication.
- A positive attitude towards active learning and an interest in using active learning techniques in the training room.

Organization of workshop

- This is a workshop design for 10-15 people, in order to optimize discussion and can function well even with just a few people (for example, in a department considering starting a writing club). The materials can also be adapted so that the module can be reasonably delivered to up to 25 participants, however the time for discussion may be reduced.
- It is strongly recommended that a second resource person or co-trainer who can facilitate group work and write up any activity outputs support the lead trainer of this workshop.
- Every participant should receive, at the start of the workshop, the finalized agenda (plus intended learning outcomes).
- The trainer/s can insert relevant photos/images into the PowerPoint slides and, edit or re-format text and content so that it is better tailored to the participant audience. For instance, if they have experience with a writing club, they may add one or more slides about it; such slides might fit well shortly before or after those outlining the writing clubs at the University of Colombo.
- It is recommended that if any PowerPoint slides are shared with participants, then this be done after rather than before the workshop.
- The timings are an approximate guide and trainer/s are expected to make adjustments during the course of the workshop.
- As good workshop practice dictates, trainer/s need to spend time in advance of the workshop, to study the facilitation notes and training materials. It is also recommended that trainer/s consider how best to format the facilitation notes so that they are easy to use on the day and that they match the trainer/s' preferred note format.
- The trainer/s will need to monitor the atmosphere in the training room, and use energizers when a change of pace or in energy levels is required.

The active learning approach

The design of the module is informed by the active learning approach and trainer/s of this workshop might want to refer to the AuthorAID Training of Trainers Toolkit,¹ which provides more detail on what active learning looks like in practice.

Active learning is an approach, rather than a fixed set of activities. It can include any activity that encourages learners to take an active, engaged part in the learning process, such as: group discussions, participatory presentations and problem-solving. It involves providing opportunities for learners to meaningfully talk and listen, read, write and reflect on the ideas being studied. This is in contrast to more traditional methods of teaching such as an instructor trying to 'transmit' knowledge to learners as they sit and listen.

It concerns itself with "creating an environment where students can take charge of their learning, see relevance in it and engage in it, instead of having information just delivered to them".²

From time to time, certain individuals and/or groups of participants can dominate workshop discussions and activities. It is the trainer/s' responsibility to be pro-active in managing these types of situations. Strategies can be adopted by trainer/s to ensure that there is equal participation by both women and men, as well as by participants of differing levels of seniority. It is recommended that when trainer/s take questions and/or comments from the full-group, that female-first

1. www.inasp.info/publications/authoraid-training-trainers-toolkit

2. A. Walsh and P. Inala, *Active Learning Techniques for Librarians: Practical Examples* (Oxford: Chandos Publishing, 2010).

contributions are prioritized, particularly at the start of the workshop. In addition, trainer/s should focus on the whole room, and maintain as much balance as possible, with respect to gender and seniority of the participants posing questions and/or making contributions. Also keeping questions and answers short will allow more questions to be asked during a given question and answer session, allowing a greater balance in the questions asked. For more background and the research behind these strategies, the trainer/s might want to read the Oxfam blog here: www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/how-to-stop-men-asking-all-the-questions-in-seminars-its-really-easy.

The training room

The trainer/s together with the workshop administrator need to ensure that a suitable training room and layout is organized in advance of the workshop. If possible, the room layout should be one that facilitates interaction.

It is recommended that, for the smooth and successful delivery of the workshop, the following training room and layout arrangements be made:

- Small, moveable tables are sourced, comfortably sitting up to four participants (for example if a total of 15 participants, four tables are required).
- Two small extra tables are provided: one to house the laptop and projector and one for the trainers' workshop materials.
- Light, movable chairs are sourced, enough for each participant and two as spare.
- Find a training room, with wall space on which flipcharts can be attached.
- Identify a blank wall to act as a screen if no screen for the projector is available at the training venue.
- Remove any raised platform or stage at the head of the room, it is not required.

Workshop stationary and resources

Please make sure the following are available:

- Stapler
- Sticky notes (or post-it notes) of three different colours
- At least two sets of flipchart paper pads and two flipchart stands
- Five sets of colour marker pens
- Projector and screen
- Computer to connect to the projector (in case the trainer/s will not be using their own laptop computer)
- A few flash drives
- Optionally, a chalkboard and chalk or a whiteboard (in this case, make sure the whiteboard markers are different from the markers used for flipcharts as the latter kind could have permanent ink!)

Writing Clubs in the Research Communication Context

Length of module	Approximately 3 hours 30 minutes to 5 hours 30 minutes
Module summary	This module is intended to increase participants' awareness of writing clubs and their benefits and to guide participants in establishing or in further developing their writing club/s. Participants are encouraged to draw on their own experiences of writing clubs and the lessons gained from them, during discussions.
Equipment, visual aids and handouts (on the day)	<p>PowerPoint projector, screen and laptop Internet connection Flip chart paper and marker pens Sticky notes (or post-it notes) of three different colours Chalkboard and chalk, or a whiteboard and whiteboard pens Stapler</p> <p>Writing clubs module.pptx</p> <p>Prepared by trainer/s in advance: participant workshop agenda (+ intended learning outcomes) one agenda per participant and workshop administrator. Some example intended learning outcomes have been provided on slide 5 in the trainers' PowerPoint slides.</p> <p>If trainers choose to use the University of Colombo writing clubs example (currently slides 11-13 in the trainers' PowerPoint slides), it is recommended that participants are sent the publication in advance of the workshop to read. It can be found at www.inasp.info/publications/research-writing-clubs.</p> <p>HO1 UoC writing clubs overview.docx: if trainers choose to use the above writing clubs example, it is recommended that participants are given this handout after discussing the example.</p> <p>HO2 detailed questions.doc: to hand out to each participant as indicated.</p> <p>Prepared by trainer/s in advance (if necessary): evaluation forms</p> <p>Prepared by workshop administrator in advance (if necessary): certificates of completion</p>
Guidance to facilitating learning activities	<p>Display Writing clubs module.pptx-slide 1 as a holding slide while participants enter the room and get settled. Start off with some gentle banter or informal conversation with participants, to create a relaxed, positive and friendly atmosphere.</p> <p>Welcome and general introductions (10-20 mins)</p> <p>If the workshop is to be 'opened' by a senior administrator, politely request that this person keeps their speech to under 10 minutes if possible.</p> <p>Explain that <i>we will start by establishing a sense of 'geography' for the workshop, also agreeing on how we want to work together and what we want in the learning environment and from each other to feel ready and free to learn.</i> Display slide 2 and quickly run through the agenda for the welcome and introductions session.</p> <p>Next invite the participants to introduce themselves and say a little about their background and what they hope to gain from the workshop.</p> <p>The trainer/s should note their backgrounds, especially as related to the subject matter of the workshop. Try to project a positive attitude, for example <i>by saying that you are looking forward to exchanging views and experiences during the workshop and noting that it is a chance for all present to learn from each other.</i></p>

Guidance to facilitating learning activities (continued)

Warm up activity: Desert island survival (15-20 mins)

Pick five objects that are different, for example a clothes peg, a bottle cap, a fork, one sock and a ball of string. Line these objects up in front of the participants. The idea is to not select a choice of objects that makes it too easy to solve the problem outlined in the following scenario.

Split all the participants into even teams (a minimum of two and a maximum of five teams).

Describe the scenario on **slide 3**. Note that the survivors do not have any additional objects with them (this includes mobile phones).

Once the five minutes are up, invite each group to briefly outline their survival plans based on the five objects. If there is time hold a full-group vote to decide which team would survive for the longest.

To conclude, ask participants how they think this exercise relates to participating in a writing club, for example *the exercise draws on many heads rather than one, it stimulates creative and critical thinking (prompt for what kind of skills), it encourages deeper collaboration etc.*

Housekeeping (3-5 mins)

Trainer/s cover basic information participants need to know about the venue, facilities, comfort breaks, refreshments, security of belongings and room etc.

Introduction to workshop (5-15 mins)

Display **slide 4** and explain that this workshop is intended mainly to increase participants' awareness of writing clubs and their benefits, to introduce them to some types of writing clubs and to guide and encourage participants in establishing and/or further developing their writing clubs.

Note that the workshop is based on the active learning approach. This means that the module contains activities that encourage participants to take an active, engaged part in the learning process, such as: group discussions, participatory presentations and problem-solving.

Share the learning outcomes for the workshop on **slide 5** (these can be modified if needs be). Invite any questions or comments from participants.

Then next do a quick run through the **participant workshop agenda**.

Learning contract (5-10 mins)

Explain that the following activity is a way of agreeing how participants and trainer/s want to work together, is a way of ensuring that everyone has a focus and that the group is productive. Display **slide 6** (on animated fade setting) with suggested ways of working, that have proved effective in past workshops.

Ask participants if they have any questions of clarification and/or any changes/additions they would like to make and why. Trainer/s can make the appropriate changes to the learning contract slide (remember that these are for the trainer/s as well so make sure points which are important to the trainer/s are not deleted!).

Display **slide 7** and note the topics that the module will address, which reflect the learning outcomes presented earlier.

Paired discussion: What is a writing club? (10-20 mins)

Still displaying **slide 7**, ask the participants in pairs or in groups of three, to discuss the first two questions on the slide (on animated brush colour setting). Participants can then share their answers with the full-group for a short follow-up discussion.

Display **slide 8**, it is recommended that the trainer/s make the following key points in relation to the first question, if not already made by participants:

- Note that writing clubs can be face-to-face (for example, with periodic meetings in a given place), electronic (via one or more distance media), or a combination (for example, with contact by email or telephone between face-to-face meetings).

Guidance to facilitating learning activities (continued)

- Also note that writing clubs may focus on the product (for example, drafts that members prepare), the process (for example, ways to be more productive in one's writing), or both.

If appropriate, ask participants whether they have taken part in, or otherwise know of, writing clubs. If so, ask them to briefly describe these writing clubs.

It is recommended that the trainer/s make the following key points in relation to the second question, if not already made by participants:

- Can provide support, including both practical support (for example, by providing advice and suggesting resources) and psychological support (for example, by providing encouragement).
- Can provide accountability (for example, by having people report on their progress).
- Can provide feedback (for example, on drafts of participants' work).
- Note that often writing clubs have more than one of these functions.

Presentation: Types of writing clubs (20-30 mins)

Next display **slide 9** which provides some examples of writing clubs. The trainer/s can make the following points:

- Groups providing mainly feedback: participants discuss one or more members' drafts (or parts thereof). Typically, they should note strengths of the drafts and make suggestions for improvement. If long drafts are to be discussed, distributing them beforehand can be helpful.
- Accountability groups: focus largely on ensuring that members are productive. Members may, for example, report on how much they have written or how much time they have spent writing and revising. They may also discuss ways to overcome barriers to such progress.
- Write on-site groups: members get together to write. Although each member writes individually, the presence of the group provides support and ensures that each member spends time writing. They can help each other solve writing problems as they arise and can provide feedback and encouragement.
- Online groups with daily contact: members chat daily via email, online forums, or other such means. In addition to reporting on their progress, members may confer about overcoming difficulties that they are facing, share resources that they have come across, and otherwise provide mutual guidance and support.
- Hybrids of these types: use a combination of approaches. Trainer/s can present their own example or note that the University of Colombo writing clubs that will be discussed shortly uses such a hybrid approach. If any writing clubs described earlier by participants were hybrids, it could be good to note that fact.
- Other: can also be of other types or have other activities. For example, some writing clubs regularly have guest speakers.

Invite participants to share with the full-group, any other types of writing clubs or writing club activities, not already mentioned in these discussions.

Next ask participants individually to identify one challenge related to research communication within their professional context, which could be addressed by one of the writing clubs and/or activities discussed so far.

Invite some participants to share their challenges and the type of writing club and/or activities that could help address them.

Guidance to facilitating learning activities (continued)

Mid workshop reflection (15-25 mins)

Display **Slide 10** and invite participants individually to write down their responses to the three bullet points on the slide. Allow around five minutes for this part.

Next invite participants to form pairs and discuss their responses to the three bullet points. Again, allow around five minutes for this part.

Finally, invite the pairs to find another pair to form a group of four, to discuss their responses to the three bullet points.

Select a spokesperson, in each group of four, to feed back their key questions only to the full-group for discussion. It is recommended that one of the trainer/s writes them up on a flipchart for reference, so that they can be reviewed with the full-group later in the workshop.

Presentation: an AuthorAID writing clubs example (15-30 mins)

Slides 11-13 touches on a successful series of writing clubs developed as part of an initiative to embed AuthorAID work at the University of Colombo Faculty of Medicine in Sri Lanka. These writing clubs can serve as a helpful example.

The trainer/s will need to have thoroughly read the publication and overview slides (see www.inasp.info/publications/research-writing-clubs and **HO1 UoC writing clubs overview.docx**) before facilitating this part of the workshop.

If the trainer/s wish to describe a different writing club instead or in addition, they can add or substitute slides in that regard.

Display **Slide 11** and introduce the next part of the module.

Display **Slide 12**:

- This slide lists some of the main features of the University of Colombo Faculty of Medicine writing clubs and is fairly self-explanatory. For additional detail, the trainer/s can refer back to the overview slides and publication.
- A main concept to present is that each of these writing clubs is intended to help the junior researchers within it, to each move forward in writing, revising, and publishing a journal article.

Display **Slide 13**:

- Note that a successful writing club requires some planning and coordination.
- Run through some of the main activities of the coordinator of the University of Colombo Faculty of Medicine writing clubs. Note that a coordinator of these writing clubs found it convenient to designate one day per week for doing most of the writing club coordination.
- If participants in the current workshop have coordinated or helped coordinate writing clubs, perhaps have them identify activities in this regard and share tips.
- Conclude this section by noting that many people find writing clubs useful and enjoyable, but others don't. Also, that different types of writing clubs and/or activities may suit different people.
- Writing clubs should be an opportunity, not a requirement. Also, having more than one kind of writing club may be worthwhile.
- Elicit participants' thoughts in the full-group regarding these concluding points.
- The trainer/s can hand out **HO1 UoC writing clubs overview.docx** to each participant, if they think it would be useful.

Guidance to facilitating learning activities (continued)

Display **Slide 14**.

- Note that the key questions on the slide are the “5 Ws and an H” that need to be answered when forming a writing club.
- Journalists often make sure to include these in their stories. In general, other types of communications, such as those about research, also should address most or all of these key questions.
- Note that there are many more detailed questions which need be considered when forming a writing club, as illustrated on the slide. Some of these questions will be explored next. At this point the trainer/s can hand out **HO2 club detailed questions.doc** to each participant.

Forming a writing club: questions to consider (30-40 mins)

Invite participants individually to spend 10 to 15 minutes first reading through the handout, noting down any questions of clarification they might have and any additional questions that they think are missing.

Next briefly run through the handout, covering the following points.

1. Why:

- Note that the answers to the other questions in the handout will depend largely on the function(s) of the writing club - and thus that the function(s) should be identified early.
- Remind the group of the common functions of writing clubs (as noted in **Slide 8**: support, accountability, and feedback).
- Additional outputs and/or outcomes of a writing club could include: successful grant proposals, increased knowledge of the publication process, greater confidence in one’s ability to write successfully and motivation to continue writing.
- Ask for any questions of clarification and/or additional questions participants think are missing.

2. Who and 3. What:

- These sections present questions about who should be involved and on what the main activities of the writing club will be.
- Ask for any questions of clarification and/or additional questions participants think are missing.

4. When:

- This section focuses on scheduling the activities of the writing club.
- Ask for any questions of clarification and/or additional questions participants think are missing.

5. Where:

- Perhaps note that there may be trade-offs in terms of where the club meets. For example, meeting at the group members’ workplace might be the most efficient, but some other settings (for example, a mentor’s home) may promote a more positive atmosphere and have fewer work-related distractions.
- Ask for any questions of clarification and/or additional questions participants think are missing.

6. How:

- This slide provides opportunity to discuss other items to consider when establishing a writing club.
- Ask for any questions of clarification and/or additional questions participants think are missing.

Guidance to facilitating learning activities (continued)

Small group discussion: Review of questions from mid-workshop reflection (5-10 mins)

Invite participants to form groups of three or four and allow them around five or so minutes to discuss the questions on the flipchart paper prepared earlier by the trainer. Bring the participants back to the full-group and invite them to share any of the questions that they think have been answered or still remain unanswered.

Drafting a preliminary plan for a writing club (40-50 mins)

Display **Slide 15** which outlines the task, in which small groups of participants each draft a plan for a writing club. Each small group's plan should address the 5 Ws and an H and should include the reasons for their choices. Allow 15 to 20 minutes for the groups to prepare their plans.

If there are six or more participants in total, this task should be done in groups of about three or four participants. However, if five or fewer individuals are participating in the module, they should do the exercise in one single group.

If participants are from more than one worksite, it can be helpful to place participants from the same worksite in the same group, to help maximize likelihood that the plans developed will be instituted.

Invite participants to write their plans on flip charts or PowerPoint slides for presentation to the full-group. Each group should summarize its plan orally, and discussion of the plan should follow:

- If the module is for about 10 to 15 participants (in which case there would be about three to five groups), each group should summarize its plan in about three minutes or less.
- The summaries should include reasons for choices made. The full-group should then have opportunity to comment. The trainers should then briefly comment, noting strengths and identifying additional aspects to consider or potential pitfalls to address. The comments from the participants and trainers can be a good chance to reinforce content from earlier in the module.
- If the module is for a smaller group of participants and thus there are only one or two subgroups, each group may present at greater length, and more extensive discussion may follow.
- If more than about 15 individuals are taking part in the module, having all subgroups report to the full-group probably will not be feasible. One option is for some subgroups to report to the full-group. Another option, especially if one or more co-trainers are available, is to break the full-group into two or more sets of subgroups and have presentations and feedback within the subgroups.

At the end of the activity, sum up. In doing so, it may be helpful to compliment the groups on their work, reinforce some key points with regard to planning a writing club, and encourage participants to actually start writing clubs.

End of module reflection (20-30 mins)

Trainer/s can share a summary of the module's activities and the highlights for them as trainer/s. Then invite participants to share their reflections on the module and impressions of the workshop.

Finish by asking participants to individually fill out exit cards. Display **slide 16** (on animation fade setting) with the instructions. Make sure the colours of the sticky notes correspond with those named on the slide. They can be of any colour, as long as they are of three different colours, and preferably not white.

If there is time, invite participants to share some of their contributions with the full-group for a brief discussion.

Guidance to facilitating learning activities (continued)

Evaluation (3-5 mins)

If relevant, the trainer should have the participants complete a workshop evaluation.

Closing remarks (3-5 mins)

If the module is part of a wider series of learning and professional development initiatives, then the trainer/s should note what is upcoming.

Trainer/s should express the hope that the workshop was helpful and wish participants success in their writing clubs and otherwise.

If applicable, offer to be available for future support and perhaps encourage participants to share their learning points and resources from the module with others.


Presentation of certificates (10-15 mins)

research and knowledge at the heart of development 

Welcome and introductions


- Welcome and general introductions
- Warm up activity
- Housekeeping
- Introduction to workshop
- Learning contract


07/06/18 

research and knowledge at the heart of development 

Task:


- Your team has survived a ship wreck and is stranded on a desert island with only five objects.
- You have to use these objects to help survive on the island - think of ways to put them to good use.
- You have five minutes to come up with your best survival plan using these objects.
- Be ready to share your plan with the full-group!


07/06/18 

research and knowledge at the heart of development 

Aim

- The workshop is intended mainly:
 - To increase your awareness of writing clubs and their benefits and to encourage and guide you in establishing and/or further developing your writing clubs
 - Based on the active learning approach


07/06/18 

research and knowledge at the heart of development 

Learning outcomes

By the end of this module, you should be able to:

- Outline what writing clubs are and state some of their functions and benefits
- List major questions to consider when establishing a writing club
- Create a plan for establishing a new or improving an existing writing club


07/06/18 

research and knowledge at the heart of development 

Learning contract


- Arrive on time and keep to time
- Cell phones on silent - calls made on breaks
- Respectful challenge
- Actively participate in activities
- Listen when others are speaking
- Be responsible for our own learning
- Respect confidentiality
- Support the learning of others

07/06/18 

research and knowledge at the heart of development 

Overview

- What is a writing club?
- What are the functions of a writing club?
- An example of a writing club
- Forming a writing club: questions to consider
- Planning a writing club

07/06/18 

What is it?

- Group of people who meet periodically to discuss their writing
- May be face-to-face, electronic, or a combination
- May focus on the product, process, or both

Functions?

Usually writing clubs have one or more of the following functions:

- Support
- Accountability
- Feedback

07/06/18



8

What are some types of writing clubs?

- Groups providing mainly feedback
- Accountability groups
- Write on-site groups
- Online groups with daily contact
- Hybrids of these types
- Other

07/06/18



9

Task:

- Write one question you have coming out of the discussions so far.
- Write one learning point you have from participating in discussions so far.
- Write one new idea you have - sparked from the discussions so far.

07/06/18



10

Writing clubs at University of Colombo Faculty of Medicine, Sri Lanka

- An AuthorAID example

07/06/18



11

Colombo writing clubs: some features

- Mainly to help junior researchers writing journal articles
- Each group: a few junior researchers (mentees) plus a senior researcher (mentor)
- Duration: several months per club
- Periodic meetings
- Online interactions (for example, weekly updates) between meetings

07/06/18



12

Colombo writing clubs: coordinator role

- Activities include:
 - Recruiting mentees and mentors
 - Formulating groups
 - Coordinating monthly meetings and online teams
 - Sending messages to motivate members
 - Dealing with problems if they arise
- Helpful to assign one day per week

07/06/18



13

Forming a writing club: questions to consider



07/06/18



Task:

Draft a preliminary plan for a writing club at your institution, department or unit. Include the 5 Ws and the H and reasons for your choices.

Be ready to summarize your plan to the full group.

07/06/18



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End of module review

- Two things that you have learned (blue)
- One question related to what has been covered, that you will go away and find the answer to (lime green)
- One suggestion as to how the training or logistics can be improved in future (yellow)

07/06/18



Handouts

HO1: Writing clubs overview - Research Promotion and Facilitation Centre (RPFC), Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo

RPFC-AuthorAID Research Writing Support Programme:

Writing Club

Tharanga Thoradeniya, PhD
RPFC working group member/Coordinator MoU - INASP
Senior Lecturer in Biochemistry
Faculty of Medicine
University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

By taking this Programme Mentees will:

- Improve your scientific writing skills
 - Gain knowledge on the publication process and research ethics
 - Provide constructive feedback to peers on research writing
 - Submit a research paper to a peer reviewed journal or have a solid draft to finalise
 - Built a robust social and research network with mentees and mentors
- **What else is in it for you?**
- Digital badge from RPFC-AuthorAid /INASP for **successful completion of online course and the entire programme.**
 - Participants who will have a paper ready for submission will receive a free coupon (worth of \$250) for getting your manuscript copyedited from American Journal Experts!

What is in it for the Mentors?

- A certificate from RPFC-AuthorAid /INASP recognising you as a Research Mentor following successful completion of the Research Writing Support Programme
- A free coupon (worth of \$250) to get one of your manuscripts copyedited from "American Journal experts"
- You will advance your own research writing skills by being part of a mentor community
- You will gain or improve mentoring skills
- Contributed to the development of research writing skills of their mentees
- Most importantly, you will have personal satisfaction of having contributed to the development of research capacity in Sri Lanka
- Built a robust social and research network with mentees and mentors in the Faculty of Medicine, Colombo.

The Writing Club

Participants divided into small groups (5-6 mentees)

Each group: 3-4 mentors

One Senior mentor

Groups will meet at regular intervals

with the aim of completing the research paper and submitting for publication

Duties & Responsibilities of Mentors

- **Provide motivation**
- Provide advice / guidance on:
 - Identify the focus of the paper
 - Writing style
 - Structure of the paper
 - How to choose an appropriate journal
 - Identify & use of model paper
 - The peer review process and responding to referees' comments
 - Planning the time line*
 - How to find resources related to writing and publishing
- Provide constructive criticism
- Give monthly targets (individual)
- Review outcomes / Monitor progress

Its **NOT** the mentors job to....

- Conduct scientific assessment
- **Accuracy** of data analysis
- **Accuracy** of results / interpretation



Authors in the research papers take responsibility for the above

Mentors are NOT authors in the research papers !

You are all encouraged to join online discussions, one mentor be responsible for supporting online activities

- initiate the **Writing team forum** by summarizing the targets for the month
- reply to queries by mentees and act as a link to other mentor (where necessary)
- ask mentees to send updates on their progress on a weekly basis
- send reminders about deadlines for submitting the targets and passing them on to the other mentors.

• *Mentors who are new to the online platform will be trained on how to use it to support their research writing team.*

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Duties & responsibilities of Mentees

- **Keep writing... be committed**



- **Help each other in the group... peers are a great resource!**

- Peer review each other's writing
- Motivate each other

Duties & responsibilities of Mentees

Contd.

- **Be open to criticism**

**PRAISE
MAKES YOU
FEEL GOOD
CRITIQUE
MAKES YOU
BETTER**

- **Appreciate the mentors**

- Be aware of what to and what NOT to expect
- They give guidance and advice only
- Getting the paper published is your responsibility

- **Acknowledge the mentors in your paper**
(where applicable)

- **Keep your supervisors informed of your activities in the writing club**

- **Report your progress to the RPFC – even after the course is over!**

- Submission of article
- Publication of article

WE HOPE THAT THE WRITING CLUB

Will create a good learning situation

So that you all will

- be highly motivated
- be highly committed
- Actively write!

...hope this will be quite enjoyable !!!

HO2: Forming a writing club: detailed and important questions to consider

Task: What other questions do you think are missing?

<p>1. Why?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What will the function(s) of the writing club be?• What are the main desired output(s) or outcome(s) of the writing club? <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Publishable papers• Increased numbers of conference - presentation abstracts submitted and accepted• Completion of theses or dissertations more quickly and with less stress• Increased knowledge and skill regarding research writing• Increased ability to mentor others in writing	<p>2. Who?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who will the members be?• Should the members be trainees, researchers who have completed their training, or both?• How will they be obtained?• What criteria should they meet?• Should the members have research that they are writing up?• Will there be mentors? If so, who will they be?• How will they be recruited?• How much experience should the mentors have, for example in publishing papers?• Should retirees be recruited as mentors?• How large will the groups be?• Will the writing club meet as a full-group, as subgroups, or both?• If there will be subgroups, what size would suit their function?• How will a coordinator be chosen, and what will they do?• Will the coordinator have the time, organizational and communication skills, contacts, and other resources to fulfil the role?• Will they have funds, e.g. if refreshments are to be served?• Will they have clerical help, e.g. if participants are to receive certificates?
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<p>3. What?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will be done during the meetings? • Will at least some meetings include presentations, either by group members or by guests? • At the meetings, will members give progress reports on their work? • Will meetings include opportunity for members to receive feedback on their work? • What will be done between meetings? • Will there be interactions between meetings? If so, of what will the interactions consist of? • For e.g. will members provide updates on their progress? Will they have opportunity to ask questions? Will they have opportunity to receive feedback? 	<p>4. When?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often will the groups meet? • Will the groups meet weekly, every two weeks, once a month, or at some other interval? Why? • Will there be other regularly scheduled interactions? If so, when or how often? • If there will be regularly scheduled interactions (such as updates on progress) between meetings, at what times or intervals should they be? Why? • What times of day or week would be best for members? • Are there dates (for e.g., near the end of the semester or around holidays) that it wouldn't be convenient to meet? • Should any writing club activities be oriented to specific dates (for e.g. deadlines for grant proposals or for conference-presentation abstracts)? • Should the writing club have a specified duration (for e.g. one semester), or should it continue indefinitely?
<p>5. Where?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where will the groups meet? Why? • Where would it be convenient for members to meet? • What settings have the desired atmosphere? • What settings are relatively free of distractions? • What settings have suitable physical arrangements for the desired type(s) of discussion? (e.g. if small-group discussion is desired, a lecture hall with seats bolted to the floor and facing forward would not be suitable). 	<p>6. How?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the club function? e.g. should a policy be established regarding cell phone use during meetings? Should certificates be given? If so, what should be the criteria for receiving one? • How will the club be evaluated? • Should the club be formally evaluated? If so how and by whom? e.g. will members be surveyed regarding how well they think the club is fulfilling its functions? Will members be asked to identify strengths of the club and suggest improvements? If desired outputs or outcomes have been defined, what will be done to determine to what extent they have been achieved?



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