



GOAL-PLANNING WORKSHOP

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MATERIALS NEEDED

Sign-in sheet

Room with a blackboard and chalk

LEARNING GOALS

At the close of the workshop, students will be able to:

- o Students will learn how to plan and track long-term writing projects
- o Students will learn how to set specific, measurable, and achievable goals
- o Students will leave the workshop with a plan for completing their writing goals for the semester

OVERVIEW

Make a plan to meet your writing goals!

In this workshop, we will discuss how to schedule time and keep oneself accountable to academic research and writing goals and deadlines. Each participant will make a plan for completing their writing goals, breaking down long-term goals into manageable short-term goals. Writing Center Fellows will follow up with students' progress via scheduled check-in emails throughout the semester.

- o Learn about goal-planning
- o Create a plan!
- o Follow up with a Writing Center fellow on your progress

EXIT SURVEY

At the end of the workshop, students can offer anonymous feedback via an exit survey.

LESSON PLAN

Learning Goals

- Students will learn how to plan and track long-term writing projects
- Students will learn how to set specific, measurable, and achievable goals
- Students will leave the workshop with a plan for completing their writing goals for the semester

Lesson Plan

1. Discuss the lesson plan: students will learn how to set and meet realistic long-term writing goals and will leave the workshop with a concrete series of tasks that will lead to the completion of their specific writing goals for the semester. **(5 minutes)**
2. Ask students to introduce themselves to the group and to identify one or two specific problems with goal-setting and time management that they've been facing. **(10 minutes)**
3. Solicit students' habitual, short-, and long-term goals, writing their answers on the board. **(10 minutes)**. Make sure that one of the workshop leaders plays the role of note-taker, recording all goals mentioned either on a board or on a piece of paper.
4. Incorporate student responses into a discussion of the advantages of setting specific, measurable, achievable goals. Clarify the meaning of each of these terms: *specific* goals are clearly identifiable and often constitute one piece of a broader, longer-term goal. *Measurable* can refer to the amount of work completed (page or word count) or the amount of time spent on work. Finally, *achievable* goals are those that can be realistically completed in the time available. Throughout, try to find examples they participants generated to illustrate either positive or negative accounts (ones that fit with these principles or that fall short and could be the cause of difficulty). **(10 minutes)**.
5. Distribute the time management worksheet. Divide the students between the workshop facilitators. Discuss goals for the semester with each student. Employing the tactics discussed above, break goals into smaller, concrete tasks and assign a deadline for each task. **(30 minutes)**
6. Distribute workshop handout. **(5 minutes)**

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7. After students have left, schedule check-in emails with students on the date of each deadline. In the emails, include a reminder of the next deadline. (25 minutes)

GOAL-PLANNING WORKSHOP

TIME MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

Writing Goal:

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Goal completion date:

Aim for goals that are specific, measurable, and achievable!

Plan, in steps:

Step	Goal	Date
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		

GOAL-PLANNING HANDOUT

To make your writing project manageable and keep yourself on track, break a bigger project (writing a paper, chapter, thesis, dissertation, etc.) into smaller goals. Make each goal specific, measurable, and achievable. This way you can easily determine that you've completed a given goal, check it off your list, and move on to the next. Allow for some flexibility! You can always update and adjust your goals, if you need to, as you go. Setting habitual goals might also help you to complete your short-term goals. Think of giving yourself some kind of reward for completing each goal, to keep the positive thoughts flowing.

Examples of **long-term project goals**:

- Write a paper/chapter
- Rework a paper/chapter
- Submit a paper/chapter
- Finish a thesis/dissertation

Examples of **short-term project goals**:

- Choose the topic of your piece of writing
- Read 5 sources on your topic
- Outline your piece
- Write a draft of the piece's thesis
- Write the introduction to your piece
- Write a section of your chapter/paper
- Write the conclusion of your paper
- Edit your Bibliography

Examples of **habitual goals**:

- Write for a set number of Pomodoro sessions today (e.g. 20 minutes of writing at a time, with 5-minute breaks between writing sessions)
- Write for a set number of hours per day (e.g. 3 hrs)
- Write a set number of words/pages per day (300 words, 750 words, 2 pages, etc.)
- Leave yourself a memo about where you left off and what you're planning to do next

RESOURCES

Belcher, Wendy Laura. *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019.

In the first section of her book, Belcher asks her reader to design a twelve-week plan for writing and submitting an article to an academic journal. While the outcome is in this case rather specific, her methodology is adaptable to a variety of writing tasks.

Bolker, Joan. *Writing Your Dissertation in 15 Minutes A Day: A Guide to Starting, Revising, and Finishing Your Doctoral Thesis*. New York: H. Holt.

Bolker takes her reader through the entire dissertation-writing process, from choosing a topic to revising the final document for manuscript publication. Chapters 3-5 are particularly useful for writers beginning a project and looking to build good writing habits, while chapters 9-10 are more helpful for those who are midway through the process and looking to finish the damn thing.

Silva, Paul J. *How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing*.

This short guide is largely meant to direct students toward good writing habits, and chapter 2 is particularly helpful in identifying the ways in which we create barriers for ourselves.

Staw, Jane Anne, *Unstuck: A Supportive and Practical Guide to Working Through Writer's Block*. Boston: St. Martin's Press, 2003.

A writing coach and instructor, Staw offers discusses a range of practical solutions for writer's block. Topics including handling anxiety and fear, carving out time and space to write, and managing expectations.

COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID

- **Virtuous procrastination:** avoid accomplishing tasks that give you a sense of achievement without advancing your writing goals. In other words, your writing time should be spent on writing, not on cleaning your apartment, preparing for class, or writing your bibliography.
- **Negative self-talk:** avoid criticizing your work, your productivity, etc., while you are working. Think nice things to yourself! Be kind and gentle!
- **Setting unrealistic goals:** avoid setting goals that require energy, time, or other resources that you do not currently have.

EXIT SURVEY

1. What was **most helpful or useful** about this workshop?
2. What was **least helpful or useful** about this workshop?
3. What **changes would you recommend** for the next time this workshop is held?