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Faculty writing groups: The impact of protected writing time and group support

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Abstract

Faculty at teaching institutions carry high teaching loads, leaving little time to write manuscripts or grant applications, let alone getting them published or awarded. This manuscript describes the impact of protected writing time for faculty at a higher education, teaching institution who committed to focused, uninterrupted writing time on a weekly basis and exchanged writing challenges and tips with colleagues. A mixed methods approach was used to assess the impacts of the writing group which found increased productivity (manuscripts and publications, proposals and grants) and sense of a research community with enhanced structural knowledge, camaraderie, and morale.

Keywords

Writing group; Faculty development; Productivity; Scholarship

Introduction

Faculty productivity, defined loosely as the extent to which academic faculty are writing manuscripts, books, and grant applications, publishing their work, and obtaining funding for their research, is based on a combination of individual and institutional level factors. At the individual level, factors such as the faculty's age, gender, socioeconomic status, and educational background play an important role in productivity (Dundar & Lewis, 1998). Senior level faculty (i.e., older and more experienced faculty) are typically more productive than junior faculty. Organizational cultural, level of autonomy, workload expectations, and support are institutional level factors that may affect productivity (Bland, Center, Finstad, Risbey & Staples, 2005). Unlike faculty at research-intensive institutions whose main

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focus may be on research and the writing of grant proposals and manuscripts (Golden & Carstensen, 1992), faculty at public teaching institutions have higher teaching load expectations, often teaching 4 to 5 courses per semester. Coupled with serving as academic advisors to students and service on various university- or college-level committees, this leaves little time for faculty at teaching institutions to conduct research, let alone, write and publish manuscripts in reputable peer-reviewed journals (Hampton-Farmer et al., 2013), all of which are considered pillars of scholarship of the professoriate (Boyer, 1990).

The purpose of this manuscript is to describe the impact of faculty writing groups (FWG) designed to provide faculty at a large teaching institution with dedicated, uninterrupted writing time and group accountability and support. The work presented in this manuscript address the central research question regarding faculty productivity. More specifically, does participation in the FWG increase productivity among faculty participants? And in addition to productivity, does participation in the FWG have other benefits? As noted, faculty at teaching institutions often have high teaching loads and other service commitments, thus limiting their time and ability to write. The FWG format discussed in this manuscript was composed of 3+ hours of writing sessions where faculty did nothing but write and shared their writing progress with other faculty members in their group. On a weekly basis, faculty in these groups dedicated their time to writing manuscripts, books, grant applications, and other writing materials and committed to not answering their phone or emails, tending to other university service, planning for classes – just writing. We hypothesize that having weekly, dedicated writing times and check-ins with other faculty would increase productivity and provide additional benefits for those involved.

Faculty writing groups

Faculty writing groups (FWG) or writing circles have been successfully employed to enhance faculty productivity in terms of manuscript writing and publications. These writing opportunities have ranged from writing retreats where faculty meet off-site for an extended period of time (Cable, Boyer, Colbert & Boyer, 2013) to writing groups where faculty meet on-campus weekly for a few hours to dedicate their uninterrupted time to writing, mentoring, and exchanging tips and techniques for productivity (Grzybowski et al., 2008). Other successful writing groups meet regularly to provide updates on each member's progress but write on their own time (Page, Edwards & Wilson, 2012). Evidence suggests that FWG increase faculty productivity (Badenhorst, 2013; Chai et al., 2019). In fact, research has shown that faculty who participate in FWG are more productive; compared to those who do not participate in FWG, participants publish at an increased rate (McGrail, Rickard & Jones, 2006; Tysick & Babb, 2006) and submit grant applications (Houfek et al., 2010). Meeting in groups and keeping members accountable for their work and progress also helps to jumpstart and advance writing for novice writers (Franks, 2018).

Beside increasing productivity through enhancing grant and manuscript writing, FWG have other benefits for the faculty participant. In addition to tenure and promotion (Davis, Provost & Major, 2011), improvements in teaching have been cited as an additional benefit of FWG. In these groups and during regular exchange of information, faculty obtain new teaching methods that were utilized in their classrooms and through their own personal experiences

in trying to write, faculty develop greater empathy for their students as writers (Fassinger, Gilliland & Johnson, 1992). Development and/or improvements of writing relationships and collaborations have also be cited as an added benefit of writing groups (Badenhorst, 2013). Social support, particularly for women faculty, have also been an important by-product of writing groups. A qualitative study of 11 women faculty found that writing groups served as a form of social support for women who have to balance work and family. The writing group, which consisted of all women, had shared gender-specific experiences around things such as parenting, academic work, and family vs. work commitments (Penney et al., 2015). Faculty who participated in writing groups also saw themselves as more confident and competent writers (Packer, 2013). Increased morale around scholarship and institutional support and a sense of community (Herman, Abate & Walker, 2013) and having work-life balance and satisfaction with the workplace (Davis et al., 2011) have all been identified as positive outcomes of participation in the FWG.

BUILD PODER faculty writing groups

The FWG described in this manuscript are supported by the BUILD PODER Center at California State University Northridge (CSUN). Funded by the National Institutes of Health, the Building Infrastructure Leading to Diversity (BUILD) Initiative launched in 2014 with a mission to engage, support, and retain undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds in biomedical research and other STEM-related fields. CSUN is one of ten institutions, nationwide, to receive this award. Locally, BUILD is known as BUILD PODER or BUILD Promoting Opportunities for Diversity in Education and Research. BUILD PODER provides training opportunities to both students and faculty. For students, these opportunities include tuition assistance, stipends, research training, mentoring, and peer support networks. For faculty, BUILD PODER provides opportunities for pilot project funds, networking with internal and external experts, grant writing seminars, and faculty learning communities in formats like the FWG and the Faculty Scholar Academy where less experienced researchers are mentored by more experienced ones.

The idea for the BUILD PODER writing groups came from concepts around team science (Stokols, Hall, Taylor & Moser, 2008) and was an extension of the Faculty Scholar Academy where it was learnt that faculty wanted to write but did not have time to write. Most of what was provided through the faculty writing groups came from empirical observations and reports that faculty needed to have delineated time and accountability because they had so many demands on their time. However, the overall premise of what BUILD PODER provides to faculty were adapted from business and organization productivity models such as Ruch and Hershauer (1974) Model of Individual Productivity (Ruch & Hershauer, 1974), Vroom's Expectancy Theory of Motivation (Vroom, 1964), and Heskett's Service Profit Chain (Heskett, Jones, Loveman, Sasser & Schlesinger, 1994) which explain how individual productivity is influenced by factors such as institutional support and resources and individual knowledge, skills, and abilities (Ruch & Hershauer, 1974), and indicates that motivation to complete tasks is guided by an individual's assessment of the rewards associated with that outcome (Vroom, 1964). Guided by these models, the BUILD PODER writing groups provide support (i.e., time, writing tips, a career development/planning tool, and social/emotional support) for faculty to write and incentivizes them to continue doing

so via stipends and group accountability. The reward for writing is, of course, publications, grant submissions, and perhaps grant awards.

We report on the experiences and results of the 2019 BUILD PODER FWG which took place during spring 2019 (i.e., January–May) and summer 2019 (i.e., June). During the spring semester, faculty met weekly for 3 hours to write, focused and uninterrupted, as well as provide moral support, exchange writing struggles and tips, and engage in discussions about their research. Using similar structures from previous successful writing groups (Grant, 2006; Penney et al., 2015), the first portion of the group sessions is dedicated to updating the group on each person's writing progress and plans for the week, followed by focused writing time, and ending with a quick debrief about what was accomplished during the focused writing time. It was during these open discussion sections that faculty were able to engaged in additional conversations, share resources, and provide support. Faculty shared writing tips including ways to stay focused and how to come back to writing after not writing for a few days (e.g., making a note on what to do next or intentionally not finishing a section so one can come back to that section later). Faculty also engaged in discussions about the types of journals to submit their work and how to respond to feedback from editors or reviewers. Resources and skills such as data analysis were also exchanged (i.e., faculty offering to conduct data analysis for each other or connecting each other to biostatisticians they have worked with). During summer 2019, BUILD PODER had a more "intensive" writing group which required faculty to write a minimum of 1–3 h per day (Monday-Friday) for an average of 15 h per week of writing plus 15 h per week of writing preparation (i.e., formatting, literature reviews, data analysis) over a one-month period. Faculty also took part in one-hour weekly meetings with the entire group, exchanging ideas and providing support, and a 15 min weekly 1:1 mentor session with the Principal Investigator of BUILD PODER. During both spring and summer, faculty complete an Individualized Development Plan (IDP) at the beginning of the writing group and asked to revisit and revise their IDP throughout the weeks. Unique to the BUILD PODER FWG and encouraged by the National Institutes Health to enhance career development, the IDP is a tool used to assess individual research and career needs and objectives through development of short- and long-term goals then identifying steps needed to accomplish these goals (Meyers et al., 2016). Faculty were also given a stipend, not unit release, to incentivize participation. A total of 20 faculty members participated in the academic-year writing group, and 19 participated in the summer writing group. Six faculty members participated in both groups, so there were 33 unique writing group members overall.

Method

A mixed-methods approach utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data to determine the impact of the FWG on faculty participants was employed in this study (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark & Smith, 2011). More specifically, a focus group was conducted via Zoom among a representative sample of writing group participants ($n = 10$). To enhance the findings from the focus group discussion, all 33 FWG participants were later invited to complete a quantitative 8-item survey.

Focus group

Recruitment—Using census recruitment, 29 of the 33 participants were invited, via email, to share their feedback and experiences in the FWG. We used census recruitment to give all participants the opportunity to provide feedback and to maximize our chances of getting at least 8–12 participants. Since higher numbers of focus group participants are associated with more ideas being generated and greater likelihood that conclusions could be drawn from the information presented, the ideal number of focus group participants range from 4 to 12 (Tang & Davis, 1995). Hence, the final pool of 10 participants for the FWG focus group was ideal. Since focus group members may not respond as candidly with a project stakeholder present (Merner & Porter, 2019), BUILD PODER's Principal Investigators were excluded from the recruitment process. The invitation email included a *When Is Good* scheduling link and indicated that the focus group would be scheduled at a time that accommodated most participants' schedules. An email was later sent indicating the focus group date, time, Zoom meeting link, and instructions for those who were new to the platform. To encourage high participation, a follow-up reminder including the same information was sent to all participants the day before the scheduled focus group.

As mentioned, 10 out of 33 FWG members (34%) participated in the focus group. Seventy percent of the participants were female and 50% took part in both the regular academic semester and summer writing groups. White/Caucasian faculty made up half of the focus group (50%) while Latinx faculty made up 30%. Of the 10 focus group participants, 5 were at the Associate Professor level, 3 were Assistant Professors and 1 was a full Professor. They represented a variety of academic disciplines including psychology, health sciences, biology, and chemistry. Based on this demographic breakdown, the focus group participants depict a representative sample of the total pool of writing group participants (See Table 1).

Data collection and analysis—A member of the evaluation team led the focus group, following a protocol approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). This protocol included consenting information and a variety of questions to probe for detailed information about the participants' academic background, funding experience, writing facilitators and barriers, productivity, and collaboration research self-efficacy. Participants of the focus group were asked three main questions that evolved around the benefits of the FWG, barriers, and facilitators to writing. Namely, faculty were asked "Beside time to write and what you may have already mentioned, what other benefits or positive things, if any, did you obtain from being a member of the writing group?". To gauge their barriers and facilitators to writing, we asked "Prior to joining the writing group, what were some barriers, if any, that you had in writing? In what ways, if at all, did the writing group reduce/change these barriers?" and "Prior to joining the writing group, what were some facilitators of writing and publishing your manuscripts? That is, what helped you to write and publish your work? How, if at all, did the writing group enhance/support/compliment these facilitators?". Additional questions focused on the culture of research at CSUN and ways in which the writing groups helped facilitate the writing process and overcome writing challenges for its members.

The interviewer instructed participants to un-mute themselves by clicking on the microphone icon when they had something to say, and to try not to speak over one another. The interviewer used best practice focus group interviewing techniques such as talking briefly with participants initially, probing with follow-up questions, regulating reactions to participant responses, verbally encouraging participants to share their thoughts freely and calling upon participants individually, at times, for a broader range of responses (Casey & Krueger, 2004). The focus group was recorded, manually transcribed, and subsequently, the transcription was reviewed alongside the recording to increase accuracy (Eidinger, 2019).

The final, de-identified transcripts with participant codes in place of names, and the key of participant names and codes was saved and uploaded into MAXQDA coding software (VERBI Software, 2019). Descriptive coding (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2013) was utilized to sort the focus group data into primary and secondary codes based on interview questions and common respondent themes. Two researchers independently coded the transcript, sorting participant excerpts into primary and secondary codes within the coding structure as shown in Table 2. This process resulted in good intercoder agreement based on the MAXQDA software's determination that both raters agreed on the occurrence or absence of 75% of the codes (Tinsley & Weiss, 2000).

Survey

Recruitment—As with the focus group, census recruitment was employed to invite all 33 faculty writing group members to respond to a short online survey in order to give all writing group participants the opportunity to share their feedback. We did not exclude the project's Principal Investigators from the survey because their engagement would not impact the responses of other respondents as it may have during a focus group. The invitation email included a link from Qualtrics, a web-based survey-development software, directing participants to the survey. We then sent 2 reminder emails, a few weeks apart to encourage a high response rate.

A total of 33 faculty members were invited to complete a follow-up brief survey about their productivity in the faculty writing groups. Of the 33 faculty members invited, 28 (85%) completed the survey (Table 1). Like the focus group, a majority of the respondents were female (79%). Whites/Caucasians made up the largest group (45%) followed by Latinx (32%) and Asians (13%). Assistant Professors made up the largest group at 43%, followed by Associate Professors at 29% and full Professors at 18%. Since the survey response rate is high (85%), this demographic breakdown is a good estimate of the total pool of writing group participants.

Data collection and analysis—The purpose of the anonymous survey was to acquire data related to manuscript and grant productivity as well as demographic reach, while also keeping it short to improve response rates. Measures of productivity was the main variable of interest on the survey because it was the main research question of the FWG. Productivity was assessed through questions such as "How many manuscript submissions do you attribute (directly or indirectly, in whole or in part) to your BUILD PODER Writing Group participation?" and "How many grant submissions do you attribute (directly or

indirectly, in whole or in part) to your BUILD PODER Writing Group participation?" with a drop-down box ranging from 0 to 20+. Measuring overall satisfaction and identifying participant demographics was also important as it would help to provide context to the data presented. To assess satisfaction, the question was "Overall, how do you feel your participation in the BUILD PODER Writing Group(s) influenced your productivity?". Demographic variables included questions on gender with response options for "Male", "Female", "Non-binary/third gender", "Prefer not to say". An "Other" response option with a text box for additional detail was provided where appropriate. Survey respondents followed the link in the recruitment email to a Qualtrics survey approved by the IRB. As with the focus group data, survey data were securely stored in Box and analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 27.0, to examine descriptive statistics (i.e., frequencies, averages, ranges).

Results

Overall, both quantitative and qualitative data showed that participation in the FWG resulted in increased *productivity* (manuscripts and publications, proposals and grants) and an increased sense of a *research community* with enhanced structural knowledge, camaraderie, and morale.

Productivity

The majority of FWG survey participants (85.7%) reported a "very positive" influence of the group on their productivity. While close to 18% ($n = 5$) did not write a manuscript, 64% wrote 1 or 2 manuscripts and 18% wrote 3 or more manuscripts during their FWG. Of these manuscripts, there were 14 participants (50%) who published one article, 6 (21%) who published 2 or 3 articles and 2 FWG participants who published 4+ articles from their writing group time. In addition, 18 FWG participants (64%) wrote a grant and 11 grants (39%) were awarded (see Table 3). According to focus group responses, the FWG enhanced productivity in several ways, including: (a) accountability to others and the program guidelines, (b) removing social distractions like student and family demands, and (c) an investment in oneself and on one's own writing process through self-reflection and "endurance writing."

Accountability was an important part of several participants' statements; requiring that specific activities to be completed during the time (no e-mail, literature review, etc., 3 h block of writing, specific product at end of period) and knowing that others were aware of attendance and outcomes increased focused and perseverance.

> My memory of it is that it was mostly about accountability, about setting aside a minimum number of hours every day that we were going to be writing, having a specific product that we were going to get done by the end of the writing time, then, sharing strategies and ideas in the weekly meeting. I found it to be very helpful.
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> It also gave me an excuse to turn everything off.
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> For me, because it was that intensity's like, "All right, everybody's working. I cannot be doing other stuff like, answering emails. I actually have to write and stick to this one task."

Accountability was fortified by *removing social distractions* by students, colleagues, and family members whose expectations were tempered by FWG obligations. In addition, the FWG gave participants "guilt-free" time to work on their own productivity. FWG boundaries allowed faculty members to be both at peace with writing and with the people who rely upon them. Indeed, one faculty member found that by giving her research assistants more freedom while she was writing, they grew in their own work, and she grew as a professor by learning to set boundaries with students, something rarely taught to graduate students or faculty members.

> I think it was probably more…about the boundaries. For example, for the June Intensive [summer writing group], I let all my students know that I was not going to be available in June, and that I was going to be gone. I gave them other tasks, and I completely focused on writing… Also, I wanted to write, so I think that it helped me develop boundary skills.
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> I remember when, my family was like, "What are you doing?" I'm like, "I have to do this. I have to. I'm going to get paid." Then, it they would be like, "Alright, alright, you know I understand," so I do think that putting that incentive in there, it helps for you, but it also helps for others to understand you're actually getting paid to do this.
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> It's like, "Oh, okay. I guess you can have boundaries, and you need that. You need this protected time, in order to get the things done, and your students will understand. They can figure it out, and they can usually figure it out among each other. That helps build skills that they also need to navigate life and academia," so some good skills that, did not think I was going to develop that. I just thought it was going to be writing.

The decision to protect writing time was, for some, a way to prioritize one's own work and career, an *investment in oneself*. Allowing distractions to melt away, FWG participants felt released from other obligations to focus on themselves and their writing. This even allowed FWG participants to develop new strategies for efficiency and perseverance in writing.

> This is a way to make it more real and to make, not only the commitment to myself, which I think was really important… I needed to make it matter as much as other things like, needing a break.
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> I think that I certainly did learn more about writing, in particular, partly because I was forced to sit down and spend that time writing. I had to think about my writing process and how to make it more efficient.

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> I realized one, the value of blocking that time on my calendar, but then, sometimes, I could not work on what I was working on for six hours. I could not do that, so it made me learn a little bit better how to manage doing two projects at once or being able to step away from something and come back to it.

Research community

A research community was built by: (a) interdisciplinary opportunities to learn more about how they were situated within their institution, colleges, and departments, (b) learning more about writing strategies, opportunities, and career advancement, (c) reducing stress, increasing social support, and building a sense of interpersonal connection. Through interdisciplinary interactions, faculty were able to *learn more about where they were situated at their institution* and within their units – departments and colleges. The siloed nature of universities can be challenged through writing groups that bring together faculty with similar interests across units and can point out institutional inequities.

> We also learned of different opportunities that were coming up…Also, learning about how things are done differently within each College at CSUN…that then, we can take it back to our own college.

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> Also, learning about how things are done differently within each College at CSUN. Some of that… I do not know if frustrations the right word… a feeling like, I'm not advancing as fast as I would like on certain projects or on certain grants, but then, when you realize, "Well, yeah but you're also expected to teach you know more classes."

Several participants said that a benefit of the group interaction was *learning more about writing strategies, opportunities, and career advancement* that remained a part of FWG participants' routines.

> …people had some tips that were helpful or tips that worked for them and, so trying some of their strategies out also helped in seeing how you could tweak it a little bit for what would work for you in terms of being able to write more efficiently.

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> A lot of people talk about the idea of writing 10 min a day, and I was able to…learn this idea of writing in little bits, and that you do not have to wait until you have inspiration to be able to be productive with your writing.

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> *I think in our group, we also learned of different opportunities that were coming up, which was nice, and I think during our time the RSCA Grant* [internal grant opportunity provided by the University] *was due, I think.*

The regularity of meetings as well as the career consequences of writing helped to *mediate some of the stressors* felt by newer faculty members especially. A positive consequence was a strong sense of *connection* felt among nearly all participants.

> I think sharing those struggles also was cathartic in a way. Then, actually modeling, seeing [senior faculty/researcher] hunker down and go do-do-do-do (mechanic-like vocal sound) because she's the grant whisperer, kind of. Seeing that was really, I'm like, "Oh, even she has struggles" because she shared them too, and this is how she does it to…especially, when you're all in a room working in parallel… It was like a little community connection, and I was able to. We were able to pump stuff out."
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> …we had those moments to connect, vent about writing, and I think our writing group we were all faculty of color, minus [one person]. It was nice to have that space where we could connect and be like, "Oh, okay. I'm not the only one going through this. Oh, I'm not crazy." It was not just about writing, having a small space to connect with the community and then go into writing, for me, was very helpful.
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> I remember, or one of the internal grants was due, and I thought it was also nice to have that encouragement within our group like, "Did you get your grant in?"
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> … it was a space to share the challenges in trying to commit to writing during the semester. That was nice. I think it was nice to have a space where it was okay, you could share that and that we know our realities.

Several themes emerged from this analysis. The FWG were, to these participants, not only a way to increase their productivity, it was a way to reconcile social obligations, remove distractions, and to share time with others who made a large campus feel like a small community. Financial incentives and program structures removed some of the role conflict experienced by some participants, allowing them to focus and persevere. Indeed, one participant noted, nearly a year after her June Writing Intensive, that she anticipated not being as productive this summer:

> *I'm seeing now this summer* [about a year later when the interview was conducted], *I'm not being as productive because I do not have that structure and accountability of having to report to someone.*

Conclusions

Findings from this mixed methods study demonstrated that FWG do increase productivity and provide additional benefits such as a sense of research community among faculty. Data showed that participation in the FWG positively influenced productivity for a majority of the study participants (over 85%) and that having a supportive group of like-minded individuals who share similar needs are crucial. Faculty who took part in the writing group reported being more productive, writing more papers, and submitting more grant applications when

compared to times when they are not in writing groups. Faculty mentioned that protected writing time afforded them the opportunity to focus on their writing and set boundaries with others. They learned writing tips from colleagues and developed collaborations with others that they otherwise would not have developed. The group setting made faculty feel accountable for their work and progress as well as supported emotionally because writing and staying focused can be a challenge particularly when there are conflicting priorities. There were no major differences between the regular, academic year writing group and the summer writing group after taking time into consideration. That is, faculty who participated in the summer writing group produced more but they also had more time to write and little to no teaching or university service commitments during the summer.

The findings described in this manuscript corroborate with existing literature that writing groups increase productivity (McGrail et al., 2006; Tysick & Babb, 2006) and that there are many benefits to the group beyond just writing (Badenhorst, 2013 ; Fassinger et al., 1992; Penney et al., 2015). In addition, the findings also aligned with previous works which say that writing can be challenging at institutions with high teaching loads but that it can be done when the right systems are in place (Hampton-Farmer et al., 2013; Page et al., 2012). FWG not only provide protected writing time but provide each member of the group an opportunity to improve and build upon their scholarly agenda (Hockett & Morton, 2017). Similar to the BUILD PODER FWG, members of an all-women FWG at a private university in Oregon, met weekly over 4 h to first check-in with the group about their weekly writing progress, followed by individual writing time, and then a debriefing. These structured sessions encouraged group members to make the writing time a priority while being supportive of one another and allowed space for members to celebrate their writing accomplishments all of which lead to productivity and good morale (Hockett & Morton, 2017). Like the FWG participants of BUILD PODER, faculty who participate in the writing groups have improved morale and a sense of community and collegiality with others (Brandon et al., 2015).

Limitations

Some limitations should be noted when reviewing the findings of this manuscript. First, the information presented here are based on self-report data. Self-report data was used here because it would have been impossible to track productivity both directly (actually writing on a specific project) and indirectly (using writing and organizational skills, collaborations, etc. acquired through writing group) through other means. Second, we had two types of writing groups (summer vs. traditional acaedemic year) but were not able to collect information from the groups separately or analyze our results by writing group type. This is negliable given that up to 30% of the faculty participated in both writing groups. Last, some self-selection bias may have occurred. That is, faculty who are more active and engaged in writing and publishing may have selected to be part of the writing group (i.e., they need to write anyways) versus those who are committed in other areas.

Implications

The authors of this manuscrip hope to provide further evidence in support of protected writing time and similar strategies that can enhance faculty productivity, particularly at

teaching institutions were faculty are expected to hold high teaching loads, provide academic advising to students, and engage in service to the university. We hope universities and college administrators and other faculty members see the value in these groups and support and develop similar groups on their respective campuses.

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Highlights

- Faculty writing groups are effective at increasing faculty productivity (i.e., writing of manuscripts, books, grants applications, etc.).
- Having protected, uninterrupted writing time allows faculty to prioritize and focus on their writing.
- Not only does participation in writing groups increase faculty productivity, it also serves as a venue for faculty to exchange writing tips and challenges, thereby increasing their sense of research community.

Table 1

Demographic breakdown of focus group participants vs. remaining FWG participants.

	FWG Participants** (*n* = 33)	Focus GroupParticipants(*n* = 10)	SurveyParticipants(*n* = 28)
Gender			
Male	7 (21%)	3 (30%)	6 (21%_
Female	26 (79%)	7 (70%)	22 (79%)
Race/Ethnicity			
African American	n/a	1(10%)	2 (7%)
American Indian	n/a	0	0
Asian American *	n/a	0.5 (5%)	3.5 (13%)
Latinx	n/a	30%	9 (32%)
Pacific Islander	n/a	0.5 (5%)	0
White/Caucasian	n/a	5 (50%)	12.5 (45%)
Rank			
Assistant Professor	9 (27%)	3 (30%)	12 (43%)
Associate Professor	13 (39%)	5 (50%)	8 (29%)
Full Professor	6 (18%)	1 (10%)	5 (18%)
Lecturer/Instructor/Adjunct, etc.	2 (6%)	1 (10%)	1 (4%)
Post-doctoral Researcher	3 (9%)	0	1 (4%)
Department			
Biology	9 (27%)	2 (20%)	n/a
Chemistry	1 (3%)	1 (10%)	n/a
Family Consumer Sciences	2 (6%)	1 (10%)	n/a
Health Sciences	5 (15%)	1 (10%)	n/a
Child & Adolescent Development	5 (15%)	0	n/a
Kinesiology	2 (6%)	1 (10%)	n/a
Psychology	8 (24%)	4 (40%)	n/a
Community College Partner	1 (3%)	0	n/a
Writing Group Format			
Summer	12 (36%)	5 (50%)	n/a
Academic Year	14 (42%)	2 (20%)	n/a

	FWG Participants** (*n* = 33)	Focus GroupParticipants(*n* = 10)	SurveyParticipants(*n* = 28)
Both	7 (21%)	3 (30%)	n/a

*One participant identifies as both Asian American and Pacific Islander, so the percentage was split between the two. In the survey, one participant identified as both Asian American and White, so the percentage was split between the two.

**Information obtained from program data.

Table 2.

Focus group analysis primary and secondary codes.

Primary Code	Secondary Codes
Demographics	
Participant's department	Biology Chemistry Family Consumer Sciences Health Sciences Kinesiology Psychology
Themes specific to Writing Group	
Writing Group description	
Writing Group benefits	
Writing Group's impact on collaboration	
Writing Group's impact on productivity	Better organization/time-management Increased writing, publications, grant awards Meeting other researchers Exposure to other areas of research/disciplines
Other writing- and research-related themes	
Writing facilitators prior to Writing Group	
Writing barriers prior to Writing Group	
Actions taken to increase funding prior to Writing Group	Editing others' grants Working with a mentor Writing/submitting funding proposals Learning about writing, submitting and running grants Performing pilot or grant-funded research
BUILD PODER support/participant needs	Proposal review/feedback Other support providing by BUILD PODER Suggestion: Arranging for others outside BUILD PODER to provide feedback/ mentorship
Culture of research	College/departmental support Lack of resources/equipment Institutional focus on teaching over research
Importance of collaboration	For expertise in other areas Best to find collaborators naturally
Research self-efficacy	Increased by participation in BUILD PODER

Table 3

Productivity ($n = 28$).

	Frequency (%)
FWG influenced productivity	
Very positively	24 (85.7%)
Somewhat positively	1 (3.6%)
Neither positively or negatively	1 (3.6%)
Negatively	2 (7.1%)
Number of manuscripts submitted that can be attributed to the FWG	
None	5 (17.9%)
1	9 (32.1%)
2	9 (32.1%)
3	2 (7.1%)
4+	3 (10.8%)
Number of manuscripts accepted that can be attributed to the FWG	
0	6 (21.4%)
1	14 (50.0%)
2	3 (10.7%)
3	3 (10.7%)
4+	2 (7.2%)
Number of grants submitted that can be attributed to the FWG	
0	10 (35.7%)
1	9 (32.1%)
2	4 (14.3%)
3	3 (10.7%)
4+	2 (7.2%)
Number of grants awarded that can be attributed to the FWG	
0	17 (60.7%)
1	9 (32.1%)
2	1 (3.6%)
3	0
4	1 (3.6%)