

## **Plenary Session Writing a Dissertation/Thesis: Getting Started...and Getting Done**

Workshop Leader: Kathie Gossett

There are many difficulties associated with completing a dissertation or thesis. The two of the most challenging phases are beginning to write and finishing. Each phase comes with its own unique (and personal) challenges. This presentation will offer some tools for helping you to establish priorities and finding available resources to help you begin and complete your project. We'll also cover goal setting and how to design a realistic work plan for your dissertation. This presentation will be hands-on, meaning you'll need to have something handy to write with and on (e.g., pencil/paper, stylus/tablet, keyboard/computer, etc.).

Kathie Gossett (Ph.D. Writing Studies, 2008, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign) is a lecturer in the University Writing Program and Associate Director of Graduate Writing Across the Curriculum. Her research interests include Graduate Writing, Digital Dissertations, Multimedia Writing/Composition, User Experience Theory & Practice, and Medieval Rhetoric & Gothic Design. She has published articles in journals such as *Kairos* and *Communication Design Quarterly*, book chapters in collections such as *The Digital Dissertation: History, Theory, Practice and Copy(write)*, and several white papers for projects about digital dissertations and graduate writing funded by the *NEH Office of Digital Humanities*. Kathie has been teaching writing since 1995 at research universities and community colleges. She teaches a wide range of classes such as introductions to graduate writing in the humanities and social sciences, introductions to dissertation writing, technical writing, user experience design and writing, advanced composition, and multimedia writing. In addition to completing her own dissertation, Kathie has worked with many graduate students to help them complete their dissertations both as a dissertation chair and a committee member.

## **Moving From Research to Writing**

Workshop Leader: Lisa Klotz

You've narrowed your project's topic and focused what your research will look at, but now what? Join us for an interactive discussion on how to effectively manage your research notes to enable success. We'll work to build individualized plans to help you transition from research to writing and create a schedule that is realistic for you and your project.

## **Writing the Literature Reviews**

Workshop Leader: Katie Rodger

The literature review is one of the most important and prevalent documents in academic and professional writing. Designed for graduate students earlier in the research process, this workshop will provide an overview of what a literature review is and why we write them. Since one of the hardest parts of writing a review is synthesizing the literature, we will focus on using a spreadsheet to synthesize studies and hands-on activities to help you consider relevant points of comparison across studies. This workshop is half presentation and half writing and discussion. There will be a short reading to complete in preparation for this workshop.

### **Overcoming Writer's Block**

Workshop Leader: Wrye Sententia

At some point, despite talent and effort, most people working on a large writing project will hit a wall. If you're dismayed at a lack of progress, ashamed of what is (or isn't) being written for your thesis or dissertation, this may be the workshop for you.

No shame. The struggle is real.

In this workshop, you will learn how to overcome many of the impediments or "blocks" to writing--some of them may surprise you. If you feel stressed out, anxious, overwhelmed, or under-prepared as you face the task of writing an academic, or book length manuscript, I hope you'll join me in learning some tips to overcome writer's block.

### **Managing Large Projects**

Workshop Leader: Wrye Sententia

In this workshop you will learn strategies for successfully:

- Organizing and managing your project.
- Planning writing, and completing your doctoral dissertation or master's thesis.
- Getting a jump start on the writing: *even if you haven't finished your data collection.*
- Obtaining timely approval of your work from your thesis or dissertation committee.
- Gaining confidence as an academic in your field.
- Staying on track to finish and thrive, from "A.B.D." to Ph.D!

As an experienced UCD writing instructor (15 years) and a long-time dissertation coach, Dr. Sententia knows how to help students make more meaningful and enjoyable progress toward an advanced degree. Dr. Sententia enjoys helping people to improve their writing and to deepen their understanding of their own writing process. She is committed to helping students cultivate positive habits and professional success through, and beyond, their writing. Read more about her [here](#).

## **Writing Resources for Multilingual Graduate Writers**

Workshop Leader: Erika I-Tremblay

For many multilingual writers, finding the right word or phrase can be a challenge, so we sometimes take the long way. But, we need our reader to grasp these ideas and not get lost in the wordiness of very long and overly complex sentences. This workshop will help shape direct sentences to match complex thoughts. Participants will review the principles of clarity, directness, and conciseness with examples and plenty of practice. Feel free to bring writing samples of your own to contribute to the discussion.

## **“Principles for Writing a Humanities/Social Science Thesis/Dissertation”**

Workshop Leader: Nate Williams

After passing qualifying exams, coming up with a research topic, and drafting out a writing plan, you may find that you are still feeling a bit unsure about what this whole process will look like in practical terms. In this workshop, we will discuss how to build a good communication system with your committee and how to have realistic expectations for your project by looking at samples from your discipline. Most important, we will talk about self-care and its importance for accomplishing a task that is mostly self-motivated and sometimes quite isolating.

## **“Principles for Writing a STEM Thesis/Dissertation”**

Workshop Leader: Cassie Hemstrom

Writing your thesis or dissertation is a large project and it can be easy to get overwhelmed or confused, or to feel like you don't know where to start. This workshop will help to demystify the thesis/dissertation and give you tools that you can use in planning, drafting, and revising your dissertation. Designed for graduate students who are preparing to write their thesis/dissertation, or who are currently drafting their thesis/dissertation, this workshop focuses on identifying the writing moves and genre conventions of a thesis or dissertation in your specific STEM field, and on formulating strategies to use those moves and conventions to outline, draft or revise a successful thesis/dissertation. This workshop is one-third presentation, one-third guided research, and one-third analysis and application of the strategies we discuss. You will leave the workshop with a clearer understanding of the expectations for theses/dissertations in your field, and methods for achieving these expectations in your own writing.

Dr. Cassie Hemstrom (PhD Literature 2014, University of Nevada, Reno) is a Lecturer in the University Writing Program at UC Davis. She teaches a variety of lower and upper division composition courses including Writing for Business and Writing in the Health Sciences. Cassie's interdisciplinary research focuses on intersections of composition pedagogy, identity theory, and information literacy. Cassie is also the Professional Writing Minor Internship Coordinator and helps students pursuing the minor find and complete internships that will prepare them to do the types of professional writing, researching, editing, and digital composition that they will encounter in their careers.

### **Formulating, Focusing, and Developing Your Research Question**

Workshop Leader: Alison Bright

Crafting a research question helps you conceptualize your topic and think through the significance of your work. In this workshop, we'll discuss the importance of the research question and its value during the research process as well as participate in collaborative activities to help generate and interrogate potential research questions.

Alison Bright is a continuing lecturer in the University Writing Program at the UC Davis and a teacher-consultant with the National Writing Project. She serves as the University California representative on the Advisory Board for the California Writing Project. Her research interests include: writing program administration; writing across the curriculum; writing centers; tutor preparation; teacher identity; and the professional development of teacher/writers. She has published the results of these research interests in *English Education* and *Teaching/Writing*. Alison and several of her colleagues collaboratively authored the *English Education* article "Beyond strategies: Teacher practice, writing process, and the influence of inquiry," which was the recipient of the 2009 NCTE Janet Emig Award. She holds a Ph.D. in education from the University of California, Santa Barbara, an MA in English, with an emphasis in rhetoric and the teaching of English, from Sonoma State University, and BA in Spanish literature from the University of California, Santa Cruz.