THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF
EDUCATION AND HUMAN ECOLOGY

CRANE CENTER
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD
RESEARCH AND POLICY (CCEC)

Writing Group Guidelines

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The CCEC Writing Group provides an open forum for CCEC members to share empirical results and "works in progress" to build dissemination skills. "Works in progress" may be at any stage of the writing or dissemination process, from initial ideas to almost-final products. Writing Group is largely meant to support early career scholars, including doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, but is open to all CCEC members, associates, and affiliates. Writing Group strives to maintain a collegial, conversational, low-stakes atmosphere in which scholars at all levels can present their work and receive constructive feedback. To ensure that Writing Group runs smoothly and is a productive use of time, the following guidelines have been established.

1. **Basics of Writing Group**

    1.1. **Administration**

    Writing Group is managed by CCEC doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers, under the leadership of a CCEC Faculty Associate. Students and postdocs share the responsibility for leading the group, with a convener selected on a rotating basis each semester. The role of the convener is described further in section 4.

    1.2. **Time and Location**

    Writing Group currently meets at 1pm on Wednesdays in Room 260 on the second floor of the Schoenbaum Family Center. Recommendations to change the meeting time or location should be made to the convener, who will communicate these to the relevant CCEC Faculty Associate.

    Any cancellations will be communicated via the convener (also see section 3.1.1 regarding the deadline and cancellation).

    1.3. **Membership**

    Membership in Writing Group is voluntary and open to all CCEC members and associates. Writing Group is largely targeted towards doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and other early career scholars; however, Writing Group members often benefit from the participation of more seasoned researchers. Doctoral students and postdoctoral researchers are encouraged to discuss Writing Group membership with their advisors/mentors.

Members join (and rejoin) Writing Group on a semester-by-semester basis. There is no limit on the number of semesters in which members may participate in Writing Group and ongoing membership is encouraged as it meets members' interests and needs.

To join a given semester's Writing Group, interested persons should attend the first Writing Group meeting of the semester (as established and communicated by the convener) to sign up.

1.4. Communication

Communication to Writing Group members is largely completed via the Writing Group email listserv (clrcwritegroup@lists.osu.edu). Members will provide preferred email addresses to be added to the listserv at the initial Writing Group meeting of the semester; the convener will ensure that the listserv is updated each semester, adding new members and remove members who have opted out. Note that only the email address provided to the convener can be used to send emails to the listserv.

1.5. "Works in Progress"

For purposes of Writing Group, "works in progress" is loosely defined. Although sharing of scholarly written works is typical and encouraged, Writing Group recognizes the many facets of the dissemination process. Members are encouraged to share work that is meaningful for their progress in research and dissemination activities. Those who are at the beginning stages of a particular research project or dissemination activity may wish to lead a discussion on their research topic. This might include providing a well-chosen published article on the topic, outlining ideas for the research study, and having others help brainstorm research questions and/or other articles to access. Those who have completed a literature review may wish to present a synthesis of the literature and ask for help in creating an outline for an introduction, whereas those who have begun analyzing data may wish to present their research plan, describe their analyses and results, and solicit feedback on interpreting results or other analyses to conduct. Those at later stages may have full drafts of manuscripts to share. In addition, Writing Group may be used to share and solicit feedback on formal scholarly presentations or hold discussions/workshops concerning topics relevant to any portion of the dissemination process.

Note that although the same "work in progress" may be shared multiple times, care should be taken that substantial forward progress has been made to warrant subsequent sharings.

1.6. Meeting Structure

For each Writing Group meeting, one member serves as the presenter and shares his or her "work in progress" with the group. The work (or a reading relevant to the work) is shared ahead of time via email. Members read and reflect on the work prior to the Writing Group meeting. At the meeting, the presenter shares a brief overview of the work that lasts no more than 15 minutes and then guides a conversation about the work that is most meaningful to him or her. All members participate in the conversation and provide feedback.

2. Members' Responsibilities

2.1. Attendance

Members commit to attending Writing Group for a full semester. The membership expectation is similar to that for a university course: Members are expected to attend all Writing Group meetings in a given semester, barring out-of-town travel or other such reasons for legitimate absence.

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2.2. Readings

Members commit to completing the assigned reading prior to the Writing Group meeting at which it will be discussed. Reading is critical for facilitating discussion and providing meaningful feedback to presenters.

2.3. Written and Verbal Feedback

Members commit to providing verbal and/or written feedback to presenters. Members should strive to provide both positive and constructive feedback – noting what the author did well, suggesting changes, asking challenging but considerate questions, providing ideas for improvements, and so forth. To be the most helpful, feedback should be as specific as possible (e.g., "This is unclear to me. I'm not sure if you're talking about the children or the teachers." as opposed to "huh?"). All feedback should be provided tactfully, respectfully, and with empathy for the presenter's position.

Members are also welcome to provide written editorial (e.g., "You forgot to indent here." "You could add some citations here.").

2.4. Active Participation

The success of Writing Group is dependent on the active engagement and participation of its members. All members should feel welcome and comfortable to contribute their thoughts, questions, and suggestions in constructive ways. Members should be sure to stay on topic and follow the lead of the presenter as he or she guides the conversation. Members should provide feedback aligned to the priority areas identified by the presenter, and respect any guidelines that the presenter puts in place at the beginning of the meeting (e.g., "please save questions for the end of the overview").

Writing Group members are encouraged to ask clarifying questions whenever necessary. Writing Group is a learning opportunity for everyone. Members may be at different stages in their careers and/or come from different disciplines and backgrounds, necessitating explanations of certain terms, methodologies, and so forth. Members should always feel free to ask for further clarification.

2.5. Sharing/Presenting

Members are expected to share in presentation responsibilities. Members should volunteer to share their own "works of progress" as they see fit. Although not every member may have a chance to share in a given semester, the expectation is that members will participate in both the sharing/presenting and feedback aspects of Writing Group. Members will sign up for a presentation slot at the first Writing Group meeting of the semester.

3. Presenters' Responsibilities

3.1. Sharing Before the Meeting

Before the meeting, the presenter uses the Writing Group listserv to email the "work in progress" (or a reading relevant to the work) to all members (see section 3.1.1 concerning deadline). In the body of the email, the present also delineates questions or requests for specific feedback (i.e., priority areas). These priority areas should help readers focus their attention and provide feedback that is most meaningful/helpful to the presenter.

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Note that a "work in progress" or relevant reading should be shared for every Writing Group meeting. Thus, the presenter should always send an email to the Writing Group listserv.

At the meeting, the presenter shares a brief overview of the work that lasts no more than 15 minutes and then guides a conversation about the work that is most meaningful to him or her.

3.1.1.Deadline

The deadline for sharing the "work in progress" (or relevant reading) is noon on the Friday prior to the scheduled Writing Group meeting. This is a hard deadline. Success as a scholar partially depends on learning to set aside time to work on research and dissemination despite various other obligations. *If a presenter fails to meet this deadline, he or she forfeits the opportunity to present, and the Writing Group meeting for that upcoming week is automatically cancelled.*

3.2. Sharing At the Meeting

At the meeting, the presenter should adhere to a basic Writing Group meeting format. This includes providing a brief overview and then leading a conversation/discussion.

The overview serves as an introduction and should include basic elements of a formal research presentation (e.g., research questions, rational, methods and analysis, findings, and implications) to the extent possible, noting that some "works in progress" at earlier stages may not include all components. The overview should also reiterate the priority areas identified by the presenter, as a reminder to Writing Group members. It is strongly recommended that the introduction take the form of a Powerpoint research presentation, to allow practice in developing and delivering such presentations. Moreover, the overview should last no more than 15 minutes. This time limit is set for two reasons. First, it preserves the majority of the meeting for discussion and feedback. Second, many formal scholarly presentations are only 10-20 minutes long (e.g., presentations at conferences) without the possibility of extra time. Scholars must learn to present the essential elements of their work within a short time frame. Before beginning the overview, the presenter should indicate whether or not he or she prefers that members save questions until the end of the presentation; an uninterrupted presentation may be desirable particularly when working on improving formal presentation skills.

After the overview, the presenter should guide the conversation and discussion to solicit feedback that best meets his or her needs. The presenter should strive to receive any feedback graciously and not defensively.

4. Convener's Responsibilities

4.1. Schedule and Calendar

The convener is responsible for setting the Writing Group schedule for the semester. This includes identifying all meeting dates, soliciting presenters at the first Writing Group meeting of the semester, and ensuring that the room is booked for Writing Group meetings (use SFCCCEC_scheduling@osu.edu)..

4.2. Communication and Listserv

The convener is responsible for all Writing Group communications. The convener should notify the Writing Group of any changes in schedule, including cancelled meetings. The convener

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should also send an email indicating the time and location of the first Writing Group meeting of the semester at least 2 weeks prior to that date. This email should be sent to the current Writing Group listserv as well as to the CCEC Coordinator, with an accompanying request to distribute to all CCEC GRAs, doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, research scientists, faculty members, and associates.

The convener is also responsible for ensuring that the Writing Group listserv is up to date. The convener should collect the names and email addresses of Writing Group members at the first Writing Group of the semester. This list should be used to update the Writing Group listserv, removing any email addresses for those who are not members for the given semester and adding any new members. Note that the Writing Group listserv should always include the emails of the CCEC Coordinator and the relevant CCEC Faculty Associate. The convener should communicate any necessary updates to the listserv to the CCEC Coordinator, who will make the changes.

4.3. First Writing Group of the Semester

The first meeting of the semester will be an informal organizational meeting led by the convener. As indicated (see section 4.2), the convener should send an email to notify potential members about the first Writing Group meeting ahead of time. This email should:

- Invite CCEC members to participate in Writing Group by attending the first meeting of the semester
- Clearly indicate the date, time, and location for the first Writing Group meeting
- Indicate the dates, time, and location for all subsequent Writing Group meetings for that semester
- Ask potential members to arrive at the first meeting (a) having read the Writing Group guidelines (attached to the email), (b) prepared with any questions concerning Writing Group, and (c) with their calendars to sign up for presentation dates.

At the first meeting, the convener is responsible for accomplishing four tasks:

1) The convener should facilitate a conversation between continuing and new members, to familiarize everyone with the culture of Writing Group and how to maximize the Writing Group experience.

2) The convener should also share any news and/or reminders with the group. He or she is encouraged to schedule a meeting with the Director of Research ahead of the Writing Group meeting to discuss such items.

3) The convener should ask those interested in membership to complete a sign up sheet that affirms their commitment to the guidelines and solicits their email addresses (see Appendix).

4) The convener should also ask members to sign up to present at the Writing Group meetings scheduled for that semester.

4.4. Transition to Next Convener

The convener is responsible for ensuring that a new convener for the upcoming semester is established. The convener should notify the Director of Research as to the new convener prior to the end of the semester.

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APPENDIX

Writing Group Sign Up Sheet

By signing this sheet, I am joining the CCEC Writing Group for the _____ semester.
I have read the Writing Group guidelines and would like to be added to the listserv.

Signature	Printed Name	Email Address for Listserv