

# Writing Success Through Accountability

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Description: Writing often gets left behind in the whirlwind of responsibilities. We will present one model for a successful writing accountability group that has propelled participants to significant production and professional inspiration. This model relies on key features of successful behavior change: experiencing nudges, addressing barriers, record keeping, community building, behavior modeling, and reducing imposter syndrome, among other features. As both participants and architects of the experience, we will report specific examples that make the general advice "do what works for you" real for writers, namely through trial (those of ourselves and others), error, and reflection. Further, we will engage session participants in planning a group writing accountability system that works in their institutional or personal contexts and with the typical publication types in their disciplines. We will provide a research-informed resource guide to support implementation of a writing accountability group, and help writers experience significant productivity gains.

Our accountability model is positive and celebratory, by connecting 7-9 people across the institute bimonthly, using a shared file system.

Our focus is professional activity. We are systematically producing higher levels of professional work using strategies and structures to promote work on the “important and not urgent”.

Who would be in your accountability group?

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

✓

Our framework supports participants in developing goals and reinforcing behaviors for themselves, and includes off-week writing time and reminders.

Notes:

If you were a participant in our Writing Accountability Group:

What writing project is my top priority?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

What is the time period for completing this project? (end of summer, end of year, etc.)

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

Write at least two specific subtasks that can be completed in one or two sittings in the next two weeks and are measurable with quantification.

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

Where do these subtasks fit in your actual schedule?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

What is one productivity strategy that you might try that you haven't tried before?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

What are you willing to give up in order to have time to meet these goals?

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

Element	At RHIT	At Your Institution
Record Keeping	Record goals in shared doc Track collective production	
Behavior Modeling	Name SFDs + MASDs Separate editing from producing Manage the publication process Speak the self-talk	
Nudging	Challenge others to specify goals Suggest new work strategies Remind of past success and failure	
Identifying, Modifying, & Removing Barriers	Focus on what's really important Talk through why the barrier exists	
Overcoming Imposter Syndrome	Show vulnerability Celebrate achievements	
Building Community	Commit to fun and prove it Share meals Use names Be present	

### My Very Next Step

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### For Me to Do Soon

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### For Someone on My Team to Do

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### For Me to Think About

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

After the workshop: What fundamentals would you want to include in your WAG?

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

After the workshop: Brainstorm five rewards that might motivate you. Brainstorm five negative motivators that might influence you.

Rewards

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

Negative Motivators

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

After the workshop: The accountability model can be expanded beyond achieving writing goals. What areas in your life might you consider using an accountability model?

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓
- ✓

### Some Unexpected Books to Support Your Writing

- Allen, D. (2015). *Getting Things Done: The Art of Stress-Free Productivity* (revised edition). New York, NY: Penguin Books.
- Boice, R. (2000). *Advice for New Faculty Members: Nihil Nimus*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2008). *The Craft of Research* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Clear, J. (2018). *Atomic Habits: An Easy & Proven Way to Build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones*. New York, NY: Avery/Penguin Random House
- Dweck, C. S. (2006). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. New York, NY: Ballantine Books.
- Keller, G., & J. Papasan. (2012). *The ONE Thing: The Surprisingly Simple Truth Behind Extraordinary Results*. Austin, TX: Bard Press. **Keller recommends planning your time in this order: 1. schedule vacation time, taken regularly to refresh and recharge, 2. schedule time (at least half a day) for the most important thing you should be doing (your ONE thing), 3. schedule planning time with weekly, quarterly, and annual checks, 4. everything else.**
- Robison, S. (2013). *The Peak Performing Professor: Faculty Guide to Productivity and Happiness*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

### Other Resources to Support Your Writing

Tony Onwuegbuzie, editor of *Research in the Schools*, has taken editorship to the highest level. He regularly analyzes submitted and accepted papers. See the collection at <http://www.msera.org/publications-rits.html>. (Examples: Evidence-based Guidelines for Avoiding Poor Readability (Vol. 20, No. 1); Typology of Verbs for Scholarly Writing (Vol. 17, No. 1))

Write or Die: <https://writeordie.com/>

Freedom <https://freedom.to/>

Voice typing using Google Docs – ctrl + shift + s or use the Tools drop down menu

Meggin McIntosh, the PhD of Productivity, <https://meggin.com...synchronous> and asynchronous workshops, top 10 tips, articles, and much more. Everything Meggin does is great; she's a long-time member of the traveling workshop group for TAA.

Academic Phrasebank <https://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>

ProWritingAid <https://prowritingaid.com/Free>

### References

- Save More Tomorrow... Thaler, R. H., & S. Benartzi. (2004). Save more tomorrow<sup>TM</sup>: Using behavioral economics to increase employee saving. *Journal of Political Economy*, 112(S1), S164-S187.
- Medication Compliance... Yentzer, B. A., A. A. Wood, M. J. Sagramsky, J. L. O'Neill, A. R. Clarke, L. L. Williams, S. R. Feldman. (2011). An internet-based survey and improvement of acne treatment outcomes. *Archives of Dermatology*, 147(10), 1223–1224.





Michelle Marincel Payne is an environmental engineer and Associate Professor at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. Michelle has benefited from writing accountability groups since graduate school. Michelle co-created a cross-discipline Undergraduate Research Community to support undergraduates; learning and writing through research. She mentors undergraduates investigating the efficacy of engineered wetlands for the removal of stormwater pollutants and enjoys supporting them as they develop their critical thinking and writing skills.



Manda Riehl is a biomathematician and Associate Professor at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. While educating students at teaching-focused liberal arts and engineering schools, Manda has published 24 peer-reviewed articles and 2 book chapters. She particularly loves to engage undergraduates in all stages of the research and writing process, and 15 of the articles were substantially co-written by undergraduates.



Ella Ingram is a biologist and Associate Dean at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology. Ella works with faculty and staff campus-wide to help them become more effective and efficient professionals in all aspects of their work. Recent efforts have centered on helping colleagues adopt inclusive practices, including gender equity and anti-racism, and skill development in change management. She facilitates WORKshops on writing success strategies, teaching effectiveness, leadership development, and more.

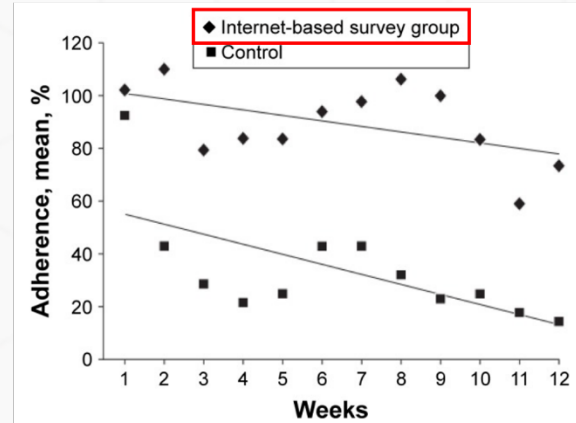


# Research supports the benefits of accountability for behavior change.

TABLE 2  
AVERAGE SAVING RATES (%) FOR THE FIRST IMPLEMENTATION OF SMarT

	Participants Who Did Not Contact the Financial Consultant	Participants Who Accepted the Consultant's Recommended Saving Rate	Participants Who Joined the SMarT Plan	Participants Who Declined the SMarT Plan	All
Participants initially choosing each option*	29	79	162	45	315
Pre-advice	6.6	4.4	3.5	6.1	4.4
First pay raise	6.5	9.1	6.5	6.3	7.1
Second pay raise	6.8	8.9	9.4	6.2	8.6
Third pay raise	6.6	8.7	11.6	6.1	9.8
Fourth pay raise	6.2	8.8	13.6	5.9	10.6

\* There is attrition from each group over time. The number of employees who remain by the time of the fourth pay raise is 229.



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Michelle Marincel Payne

#### The projects I'm focused on:

- Presentation prep (TAA and EESD conferences)
- Luoma proposal

#### My realistic but ambitious 10-week goal:

1. Prepare remarks for IAS president's round table
2. TAA talk prep - slides and notes prepared
3. EESD keynote talk prep - slides and notes prepared
4. Submit Luoma proposal

#### The productivity strategies I will test this term:

- Schedule time on calendar - Monday afternoons, and Tuesday/Thursday afternoons when not traveling

#### One thing I will give up to get this done:

- I am pushing students to moodle vs. emailing to respond to their questions
- I am trying significant up-front teaming content and coaching to helpfully reign in my time spent managing teams

# Our WAG meetings focused on goals and behaviors.

Two things I will accomplish before the next meeting (01/14/19):

1. Send Dwuena draft Student Affairs brochure **DONE**
2. Send Dwuena draft EIT brochure **DONE**
3. Perform summary stats for numerical summaries for GENERAL **DONE**
4. Add the numerical summaries to the document: population, % roster, critical needs **DONE**
5. Send Dwuena draft General brochure **DONE**

ADDED 01/07/19

1. 3x20 free-writing/brainstorming about April presentation **DONE**
2. Find 10 news pieces and 10 scholarly articles to support April presentation **DONE**

I will make time for these things by: Committing to three one-hour work sessions per week – already scheduled as of 01/14/19

From: Ingram, Ella

Sent: Monday, February 17, 2020 8:22 AM

Subject: Week 10 WAG: Accountability Nudge

"Make time for planning: Wars are won in the general's tent." – Stephen Covey

Resource of the Week: My Backward Planning Model, borrowed from Susan Robinson (attached – pgs 9-10)...you might recognize material from the remainder of the workbook as I've borrowed and adapted much from the accountability groups for this workshop!

Strategy of the Week: What's the goal for next term? Do some backward planning right now.

Reminder: Lunch Next Week! Tuesday, 12pm, AACR – BYOB!

[Accountability Statements](#)

[Writing Support Resources](#)

If I accomplish all my ASUs for the next session, then I will sew all Sunday afternoon. If I do not accomplish all my ASUs for the next session, I will clean the bathroom that week.

## We keep records of our accomplishments to celebrate and motivate.

- At each session, participants added their progress and new goals to a shared document
- At the end of each term, we collected the group's achievements

Two things I will accomplish before 09/24/19:

1. Contact paper collaborators (resurrection) and background reading for this. **Done**
2. Evaluate systems literature in-hand and install program. **Not done**
3. Contact ASCE journal editor. **Done**

Also applied to ASCE Legislative Fly-In, prepared 2-pg info and budget for URC (for CCPEO)

Letter of Rec: 28	Student Poster: 2
ASEE Review: 3	Journal Review: 6
SFD: 1	Article Submitted: 2
Conference Abstract: 5	Blog Post: 3
Abstract Reviews: 5	Grant Submitted: 3
Conference Paper: 2	Internal Grant: 1
Workshop: 3	

## Behavior modeling by all participants empowers and motivates work.

- We referred to our drafts as SFDs and MASDs, removing our perfectionist self-pressure and the expectation to edit while writing
- We observed others: dealing with unresponsive editors, rebounding from rejection, selecting the next venue



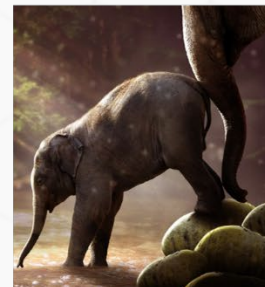
## The group nudges (and pushes!) to write achievable goals.

**“I’d like to work on my journal article draft this week.”**

- How many words will you get on the page?
- How many minutes will you spend on the draft this week?
- What part of the article will you work on? (bibliography, methods, editing, etc.)

**“I’m struggling with the literature review for this paper.”**

- What if you shifted from a production goal to a time goal?
- What’s an upper limit for the length in words and number of paragraphs?



## The group helps participants identify, modify, and remove barriers.

“I just can’t get myself to spend time on this project.”

- Is this still a project that deserves your time?
- What do you hear in your head when you think about starting?
- Can you spend 5 minutes on it this week or commit to 50 words?

“My writing time always gets eaten up by putting out fires and urgent tasks.”

- Can you schedule writing first thing, even before breakfast?
- Maybe you need to spend less time on teaching or turn off email notifications or lock your office door.



## We reduce imposter syndrome by modeling vulnerabilities and celebrating achievements.

- Modeling vulnerability: Hearing senior members reveal “I can’t believe they invited me”
- Celebrating achievements: Adding effusive words in the records kept, and asking “What allowed you to succeed in this?”





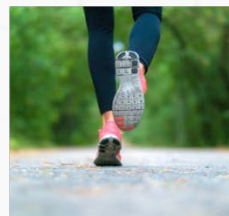
These actions build community, critical for the group's success.

- Before break week: Each participant was required to have one “fun” goal. We shared photos afterward.
- Celebratory group lunch at the end of term



The accountability model can be expanded beyond achieving writing goals.

- Progress in academic research or consulting projects
- Manage household tasks or chores
- Reach kids' homework, music, or sports goals
- Advance financial stability: budgeting and money management
- Foster healthy living: exercise, nutrition, meditation





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