

12 Strategies for writing group success

Writing groups provide an opportunity for faculty authors to connect with their peers, create a sense of community, and find collaborators for joint projects.

By meeting regularly as a group, author members can provide one another with peer support and accountability while sharing advice that can help improve writing skills and lead to greater publication success.

Providing valuable resources and grant funding, TAA's Chapter Program offers an excellent foundation for establishing a successful faculty authoring community. Following are 12 TAA Chapter Program strategies designed to increase the power and success of chapter writing groups.

1 Speed networking. Form chapter members into pairs. Spend five minutes talking about three different topics: 1) their teaching interests, 2) their writing interests, 3) their hobbies. Every five minutes have one person in each pair change to a different table until everyone has networked with one another. This allows chapter members to get to know one another, and more importantly, provides the opportunity to develop relationships that could lead to coauthoring projects.

2 Productive practices. Have each chapter member share their tips for being productive in their writing. Compile the list and share it with all members. A dedicated chapter website, listserv, or LinkedIn group forum provides an excellent way to communicate as a group and post chapter updates.

3 Peer review. Invite chapter members to bring along a work in progress. Pair up with partners to read and critique each

other's work. Ask reviewers to share what was good about it, what was not good about it, what stood out, and other constructive suggestions.

4 Participate in TAA audio conferences. Hold a chapter meeting during a scheduled TAA audio conference and put it on speaker phone. Encourage your chapter members to ask questions during the call. After the call, or at the next chapter meeting, discuss what was learned and how the information, advice or strategies can be implemented. TAA's podcast library can also be used for this strategy.

5 Group review. Conduct a group edit of a rejected manuscript that a publisher sent back with suggestions for improvement. Using an overhead projector, have chapter members work together to show how they would edit that manuscript.

6 Guest speakers. Invite senior faculty members who serve as editors and/or reviewers at various journals to share what editors look for, and suggestions for getting published. Invite faculty textbook authors to share advice about some aspect of textbook publishing, or to solicit questions via email that he or she will answer at the next meeting.

7 Study Cabell's Directories. Review two sets of Cabell's Directories. Available for all disciplines, they list all the journals published in each discipline, and their acceptance rate, website address, style guidelines, types of articles accepted, and publication tips. This exercise provides chapter members with new ideas for where to submit manuscripts.

8 Work toward tenure & promotion. Ask the dean in charge of tenure and promotion at your institution to talk to chapter members about tenure expectations.

9 Set writing goals. Have each member set writing goals and at each meeting have them share any progress made toward meeting their goals.

10 Share what you know. Invite the more experienced chapter members to serve as guest "chapter chair" and to share tips and lessons learned from their publishing experiences.

11 Explore TAA website resources. Ask each chapter member to search the TAA website and find an article, book review, essay, member service or benefit, etc. they think might be helpful to other chapter members and share it at the next chapter meeting.

12 Conduct a Q&A. Ask your chapter members to write down all the questions they have about textbook and/or academic authoring. Post the questions on one or both of the TAA listservs TAATextbookAuthoring@mail-list.com or TAAAcademicAuthoring@mail-list.com and ask TAA's member network of veteran authors and publishing industry professionals to share their answers. ■

For information on TAA's Chapter Program visit TAAonline.net/chapters