A Summer of Writing (Plans)

How many times have you thought “this summer I’m going to get all those manuscripts written that I’ve let pile up because now I’m not teaching, and I will have a lot

more time to devote to getting some things to the finish line!” And how many times have those best-made plans somehow evaporated because, despite the somewhat slower pace of summer and fewer required meetings, our plans to produce somehow drift away or get subsumed by other competing demands?

The best advice I’ve been given about turning this around is to view the act of writing the same way that one views training a muscle. Set a goal, find a consistent time to work that muscle (even if on some days it is only re-writing something you already have written), write something *every day* so that writing becomes a regular part of the day and not something that is viewed with dread. Be realistic about what you can accomplish in the short time between semesters. Set the

“just right” goal that ends with achievement instead of frustration and disappointment.

The experts say to break it down into doable parts: (1) decide on the idea, and (2) outline the entire idea, the same way you might plan a trip. After all, for a successful trip, you have to know where you are going to ensure that you get there. Thinking through a manuscript really isn’t that much different. After making your outline, tackle the writing in doable chunks, rather than focusing on the whole manuscript, but make sure that the outline gets followed so that you finish in the intended spot. At this point, you have a solid draft!

The next step is key and can be difficult for some people: ask for feedback. I can’t think of a manuscript I have written that didn’t get better when I asked others to read it and tell me the good, the bad, and the, well, very bad. Feedback really is a gift, even if it can be hard to take sometimes.

What are other elements that can help keep writing on track? Connecting with a writing partner or a writing group can help to keep you going, even when it is tempting to let something else take up your writing time.

Being accountable to a partner or group establishes a sense of “being in it together” and may help to keep you producing, even when you encounter challenging pieces of the manuscript. Beyond providing support, partners and groups can also offer the opportunity to discover other resources and tips that can help when the writing gets tough.

Last, the editors invite you to take advantage of the SNEB Annual Conference session, Rapid Reviews, which will be held virtually on Tuesday, August 10, 2:15 – 3:35 p.m. ET. Come and share your ideas, abstracts, and manuscripts with our group of editors to get the benefit of their experience and feedback to help you present a polished manuscript before you return to the classroom. Conference attendees may sign up at <https://www.signupgeenius.com/go/20F0A4FADA62DABFE3-sneb7> to reserve a 20-minute session.

Get determined. Get support. Get to the finish line! We’re looking forward to seeing you at our Rapid Reviews session!

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