

Writing Programs as Virtual Social Support Structures

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Fall 2020 Initiative: Office of Graduate Professional Development Writing Program

Program Purpose and Goals:

- Help create a structured social support system for graduate students with writing projects.
- Mitigate potential feelings of isolation in the writing stage of graduate studies, most likely exacerbated due to the ongoing pandemic
- Provide students with the opportunity to meet other students and support each other in a manner conducive to social distancing practices

Program Structure:

- Weekly 90-minute meetings on Zoom divided into:
 - 5-minute coordinator check-in and introduction of weekly discussion topic
 - Break-out into groups of 4-7 students:
 - 10 minutes: Discuss the weekly topic (coping with writing anxiety, developing a writing practice, self-care and productivity, overcoming writer's block, and more)
 - 60 minutes: Writing
 - 10 minutes: Set writing goals for the coming week, discuss the success and challenges in reaching the previous weeks' writing goals, and provide accountability and support to other group members
 - 5-minute coordinator encouragement and wrap-up

Canvas Classroom:

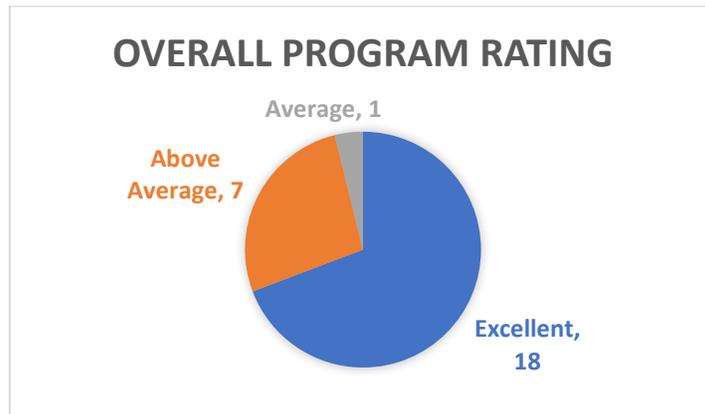
- Writing program format and schedule
- Weekly discussion topics with suggested discussion questions and assigned discussion leaders
- Resource page for on-campus and off-campus writing resources
- Collaboration pages for individual discussion groups to post progress and goals
- 100% accessibility score for each page and image

Program Inclusivity and Accessibility

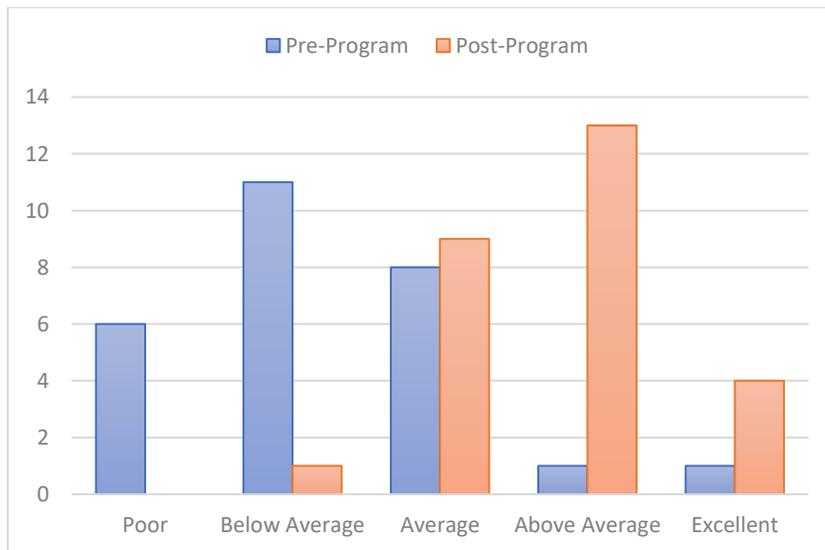
- Application Requirements: An academic writing project and schedule availability
- Publicity and Branding: Representation of diverse student populations (including nappy.co stock photos)
- Group Creation: Schedule → Writing Project Type → General Field
- Multiple Modes for Interaction: Zoom, Canvas page, Canvas small group discussion pages, Student-led: Additional Zoom meetings, WhatsApp groups, Slack
- Discussion Topics: Address many facets of academic writing ([Full list here](#))
- Designated Discussion Leader Each Week: Everyone has a chance to contribute
- Students Unable to Keep Commitment (for any reason): Drop-In Virtual Writing Hours (Write Time)

End of Fall 2020 Anonymous Writing Program Evaluation (56% response rate):

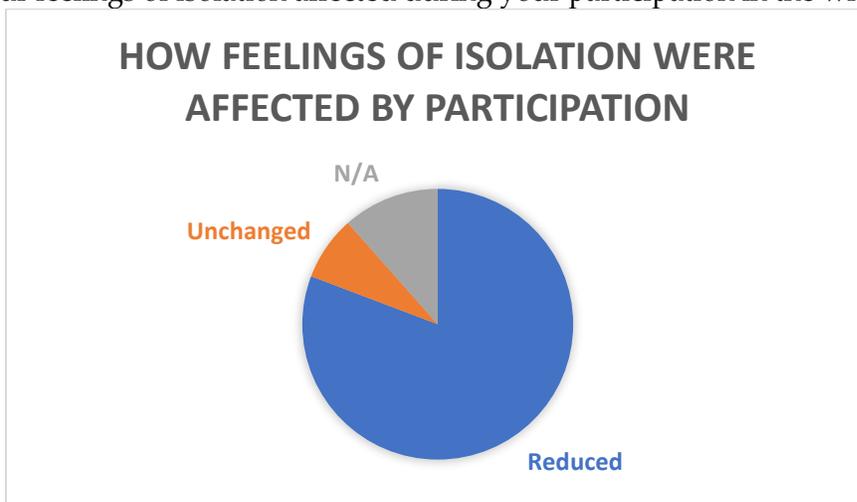
1. "What is your overall assessment of the OGPD Writing Program?"



2. How would you rate your writing habits and goal setting BEFORE attending the OGPD Writing Program?" and "How would you rate your writing habits and goal setting AFTER attending the OGPD Writing Program?"



3. "How were your feelings of isolation affected during your participation in the writing program?"



4. Participant suggestions for improving the Writing Program led to minor program changes for the second offering in Spring 2021 including:
 - A resource share day in lieu of required viewing of recorded workshops
 - An electronic certificate of participation to incentivize continued participation for the entirety of the semester
 - The development of biweekly drop-in writing hours on Zoom for graduate students for Spring 2021, dubbed [Write Time](#) and coordination with the [Office of Graduate Diversity Initiatives](#) (OGDI) for all-day drop-in Writing Wednesdays