**Maintaining Momentum Writing Workshop:**

**Day One, Beginning-of-Day Goal-Setting Activity**

Setting (daily and weekly) incremental goals will help you manage your time and complete the steps necessary to writing your thesis or dissertation.

Often, we have obstacles or challenges that may come up when trying to complete our work. They can be external (e.g., not having dedicated writing space, not having childcare) or internal (e.g., anxiety, writer’s block). For the purposes of this workshop, we’re minimizing some of the external challenges by providing the dedicated writing space and time and offering support for some internal challenges. It’s always a good idea to reflect on what challenges you may have and create a plan to deal with them.

Goal setting begins with breaking your project down into parts and then deciding which part you want to work on. From there, you identify what your goal is for that day, week, month, etc., and then you break down the steps to accomplish that goal–in other words, create your action plan.

After you have set up your goal(s) and action plan, set up a **reward** for yourself that will positively reinforce completion of particular goals and, in turn, increase your motivation and productivity. There is no one way or right way to reward yourself. You may want to give yourself small rewards as you achieve smaller goals or a big reward at the end of completing multiple goals. What reward will you give yourself? Take a walk? Have a dance party? Eat some chocolate? The main thing is: *do something* to celebrate that you have completed a goal.

Lastly, after you complete each goal, it’s helpful to evaluate and reflect on how you did. Was the original goal you set achievable, practical? Do you need to adjust it into even smaller steps?

**The goals you write should be:**

**Specific**: Avoid vague language. Directly state what you will do.

**Measurable:** How many words, sentences, paragraphs, or pages do you want to write? How long do you want to stay on task for this goal?

**Achievable:** Can you complete the goal in this timeframe? Is it too large? Are there more steps than anticipated?

**Relevant:** What’s the importance of this goal to the current project you’re working on? Will it goal produce pages? Will it create more data that you have to analyze?

**Timely:** Have you set a reasonable timeline? Include the date you want to have the goal accomplished by so that you can evaluate how you did.

**Examples of short-term goals:**

* Read and annotate 5 sources on one part of the topic
* Outline a chapter
* Write a draft of the introductory section to a chapter
* Revise methods chapter draft
* Edit the bibliography/references/works cited chapter

How we break down the steps to accomplish our goals are individualized to our writing process. Some people need a single step and others need to break it down further. The following examples offer different ways to break down your goals.

***Examples of creating a goal & plan in steps***

**Reward: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Step** | **Goal:** Write the opening of my introduction chapter |
| 1 | Write for 30 minutes |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |

**Reward: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Step** | **Goal:** Write the opening to my introduction chapter |
| 1 | Reread the purpose of the chapter (2 mins.) |
| 2 | Do a brain dump of what I want to say (3 mins.) |
| 3 | Make an outline (5 mins.) |
| 4 | Write the opening section (15 mins.) |
| 5 | Compare it to my outline (5 mins.) |

**Day 1 Beginning-of-Day Writing Activities**

1. What am I working on today? What are the different parts that make up this project? Which part do I want to work on? (Remember, if you’re unsure, you can do a brain dump, mind-map, make a list, etc., to better visualize what you need to do).
2. Now that I have chosen what I want to work on, what is my goal?

* Is the goal specific?
* Is the goal measurable?
* Is the goal achievable?
* Is the goal relevant?
* Is the goal timely? (i.e., will I complete this in today’s focused sessions or over the two days?)

1. What are the steps I need to break this goal into to complete it?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Step** | **Goal:** |
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |

**Write out: Today’s Goal & Plan in Steps:**

**Reward:**

**Maintaining Momentum Writing Workshop**

**If you’re Stuck, Try to Clear your Mind**

Prior to the focused writing sessions, you may find it helpful to clear your mind if you’re feeling stuck or anxious or if any emotion is impacting your ability to begin. Here are some possible prompts:

1. Today, I am anxious about:
2. Today, I am excited about:
3. The following is currently on my mind:
4. I have the following questions or concerns:

**Maintaining Momentum Writing Workshop:**

**Day One, End-of-Day Reflection**

1. How do I feel after today’s writing session(s)?
2. What went well for me?
3. What was challenging for me?
4. What do I want to do differently for Day 2?
5. What questions do I still have about goal-setting, my writing practice, how to tackle my thesis or dissertation, etc.?

**Maintaining Momentum Writing Workshop:**

**Day Two, Beginning-of-Day Goal-Setting Activity**

**Day 2 Beginning-of-Day Writing Activities**

1. What am I working on today? What are the different parts that make up this project? Which part do I want to work on? (Remember, if you’re unsure, you can do a brain dump, mind-map, make a list, etc. to better visualize what you need to do).
2. Now that I have chosen what I want to work on, what is my goal?

* Is the goal specific?
* Is the goal measurable?
* Is the goal achievable?
* Is the goal relevant?
* Is the goal timely? (i.e., Will I complete this in today’s focused sessions)

1. What are the steps I need to break this goal into to complete it?

**Write out: Today’s Goal & Plan in Steps**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Step** | **Goal:** |
| 1 |  |
| 2 |  |
| 3 |  |
| 4 |  |
| 5 |  |

**Reward:**

**Maintaining Momentum Writing Workshop:**

**Day Two, End-of-Day Goal-Setting Activities**

**Long-Term Goals:**

Setting long-term goals will help you see the big picture of what you need to complete after this writing-intensive workshop. Make your timeline by filling in the following:

Date I plan to graduate:

My graduation forms need to be submitted by (If you don’t know, look it up: <https://gradschool.utk.edu/academics/graduation/graduation-deadlines/> ):

The number of months between now and graduation:

I have completed the following from my thesis or dissertation:

I still need to complete/write/do:

Looking at my digital or print calendar, I want to complete each section by the following dates:

I have added the following dates to check in with my committee/advisor as I complete each section:

**Maintaining Momentum Writing Workshop:**

**Day Two, End-of-Day Goal-Setting Activities**

**Medium-Term/Month-Long Goals:**

Between each Maintaining Momentum session, it will be helpful to set up a month-long goal and chart your progress.

Break down the coming month into the following parts:

1. I want to accomplish the following goal(s):
2. I am committed to working on my goals \_\_\_\_ times per week for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (duration)
3. I may have the following possible obstacles or challenges:
   1. I plan to deal with them by doing:
4. I have put my goal(s) into my calendar.
5. I will chart my progress as I go along. *(See the different examples available below.)*

**For example:** For the month of June, I want to work on writing chapter two of my dissertation (the literature review). The first week I will collect information and read. The second week I will create an outline and start writing. The third week I will continue writing. The fourth week I will finish up the draft and check-in with my advisor. I will write 300 words, for 60 minutes each day, at 6am, 5 out of 7 days of my writing-focused weeks, while everybody else is still asleep in my house. I will use a timer. I will chart my progress as I go along.

***Example: Month of June Thesis/Dissertation Goal: Complete First Draft of Literature Review Chapter***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Goal** | **Status** |
| Week One | Read through and annotate scholarship for lit. review |  |
| Week Two | Start assembling outline/writing first draft of lit. review |  |
| Week Three | Continue drafting lit. review |  |
| Week Four | Complete first draft & check-in with advisor |  |

***Example: Month of June Thesis/Dissertation Writing Week 3 Schedule***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **Time** | **Topic** | **Goal** | **Status** |
| Monday | 6:00AM-7:00AM | Literature Review: compare and contrast theorists | Write 300 words |  |
| Tuesday | 6:00AM-7:00AM | Literature Review: compare and contrast theorists | Write 300 words |  |
| Wednesday | Day Off | Day Off | Day Off | Day Off |
| Thursday | 6:00AM-7:00AM | Literature Review: compare and contrast theorists | Write 300 words |  |
| Friday | 6:00AM-7:00AM | Literature Review: insert how I enter the conversation | Write 300 words |  |
| Saturday | 6:00AM-7:00AM | Literature Review: insert how I enter the conversation | Write 300 words |  |
| Sunday | Day Off | Day Off | Day Off | Day Off |

Also see [Dr. Jan Allen’s Progress Chart](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1j2eR2vzkYbU7JkFUCQA6WO6kBoCgz7dS/view?usp=drive_link) as an example.

**Maintaining Momentum Writing Workshop:**

**Day Two, End-of-Day Reflection**

1. How did I do in meeting my goals today?
2. What challenges did I face, if any?
3. What can I do to overcome those challenges?
4. What was helpful to me about setting today’s goals? What do I want to do differently looking forward as I consider my writing goals over the next month?
5. What have I learned about my writing process?