



PhD Write Club

Productive PhD writing in balance with the rest of life

Online Coaching Programme : May - September 2020

- Set writing goals that are meaningful, balanced, possible and satisfying
- Build confidence, motivation and awareness of what gets in the way and how to overcome it
 - Establish strategies for productive writing practices in balance with the rest of life
 - Ongoing peer-support and learning from the collective wisdom of the group
 - Ongoing accountability and insight with regular group coaching and 1-1 support
 - Create a sustainable writing practice beyond the programme

PhD Write Club is for post-graduate researchers at any stage of their career who want to create a successful period of writing and establish a more effective, balanced writing experience.

Starts Monday 18th May 2020 with an online live coaching writing retreat – with option of attending face-to-face – followed programme of group coaching, peer and 1-1 support for 3 months

Costs: £450 (Personal rate) or £600 (Institutional rate). Concessions also available

For further details or to book a place please email Will and Laura - hello@writeclubcoaching.com

PhD WriteClub will be led by Will Medd and Laura Premack. Both are former lecturers with international reputations who became coaches after successful academic careers. They bring an intimate understanding of the experience of academic life, and they share a commitment to coaching with professionalism, emotional sensitivity, and humour.

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- “I really appreciate for your help and inputs, and your motivation to us. This programme has helped me a lot, especially in getting my mood back. I don't know how I did it, but I can say that my draft was only about 20% on the first day of our workshop and in less than 3 months I've now written the whole chapters. Well, time pressure might be one factor, but without taking this programme I don't think I could start writing in the first place. (PhD Researcher, Lecturer, Lancaster University, 2016)
 - “If you hadn't helped me realise how much of factor fear was in holding me back - I'm not sure the thesis would be in the state it is right now, which is just about good enough to motivate me to keep going! So thanks, I won't forget that 'dare' you made us - it's much appreciated :)” (PhD researcher, Lancaster University, 2015)
 - “The most useful has been Will's experience and skills as a coach. He can tune in to each individual and is so versatile in his methods. He is amazing and has truly helped each one of us, and has kept us motivated and focused.” (Lancaster University PhD Researcher, 2016)

PhD Write Club

Writing is integral to PhD life and yet, even when there is empty space ahead, it can be hard to get going, let alone sustain momentum. Perhaps you come up with all sorts of distractions. Convince yourself you need to read more or analyse the data further. Maybe hold back through fear wasting time going down the wrong track. Or worry you're not doing justice to the complexity of the ideas you're grappling with. It can all get so heavy, and so much is at stake. How difficult it can be to feel satisfied with your writing, like you've done a good day's work!

Whatever stage you are at in your PhD, Write Club will help you create a balanced, productive and satisfying approach to writing. Too often is time lost through realising you have too much to do, that you've set unrealistic goals, you've not the space you thought you had, you've lost confidence in what you're trying to do, or you're just too tired! It doesn't have to be this way.

Write Club involves a combination of group coaching, peer-working and individual support that creates encouragement, challenge and accountability in ways that help you get your writing done and develop effective writing practices you can sustain in balance with the rest of life. Paying particular attention to how you prepare to write, the habit of writing, the goals you set and what holds you back, Write Club aims for you to end the programme with a sense of satisfaction, balance and confidence in what you've achieved, and with a clear sense of how you will take the lessons into the future.

Running from the end of January to the end of April, we begin with a day retreat to establish some core principles, which can be attended face-to-face or virtually, and follow with a three-month programme of support that includes group coaching, peer-support and one-to-one communications.

Who is Write Club for?

PhD Write Club is for post-graduate researchers at any stage of their career who want to create a successful period of writing and establish a more effective, balanced writing experience. The Write Club programme in the past has been attended by researchers, lecturers, professors and PhD students, sometimes at the same time. It has benefitted people from all disciplines – from physicists to creative writers, sociologists to mathematicians.

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- I became more confident in writing up my idea or my piece of work. Before taking this programme I never had thought that my work was worth to do. (Lancaster University PhD Researcher, 2016)
 - I definitely want more of it. I just wish I had joined this programme sooner, so maybe I could've submitted sooner as well. But well, hey I submitted on time and that itself is a big achievement for me as well! (Lancaster University PhD Researcher, 2016)
 - "Will challenged me to give myself the permission to do my own thing, and plough ahead with what I really want to say, in the terms I want to say it in. I haven't mastered the technique yet, but I am approaching my work in a fundamentally different way than before I began working with Will. (Lancaster University PhD Researcher, 2016)

What's involved?

The Write Club is designed to be adaptive to the needs of participants. It begins with a day retreat to establish some core principles – this can be attended face-to-face or virtually (including following a recording) – and is followed by a programme of support that includes group coaching, peer-support and one-to-one review.

Stage One: WriteHere, RightNow Day Retreat (attended virtually or in person).

The day's agenda includes:

- **Setting up:** Introducing a coaching approach and the relationship between performance, potential and interference; sharing current experience of writing and how participants would like it to be; setting intentions.
- **Engagement:** Developing an agreement amongst the group for the time together and establishing principles for writing, including: when it's writing time, write; separate preparing, drafting and crafting; be curious with a beginner's mind; warm up & warm down.
- **Live coaching experiments:** Focused writing time paired with reflective exercises that lead to insights about process, challenges, successes, and self. Themes include: setting intentions; realigning vision and purpose; managing fear; being present; seeing mood as perspective; writing with joy, confidence, creativity, focus and rhythm.
- **Developing strategies and commitment:** Applying the principles; incorporating new insights; setting the conditions; developing writing habits that sustain momentum; establishing individual goals for the writing period; creating peer-support systems for sharing progress.

Stage Two: Fortnightly Group Coaching, Weekly Peer Support and One-to-One Coaching

Following the retreat, participants will put into practice their writing strategies and will regularly come together to reflect on learning through the following:

- **Weekly review:** Each week participants will complete a short review of progress on their goals and questions and receive email support from coaches as needed.
- **Group coaching:** A fortnightly group coaching session offers regular opportunity to reflect on progress. The topics are adaptive to the themes that participants bring up in the reviews – examples have included staying motivated; pacing oneself; maintaining focus; setting reasonable goals; working with co-authors; managing guilt, anxiety and lethargy.
- **Peer-support:** Participants will support and learn from each other in small groups. Each group's members will determine how they want to support each other. Options might include: weekly check-in; regular shared writing time (face-to-face or virtual); a system of reward and challenge.
- **One-to-one coaching:** Throughout the programme participants will have the opportunity to receive focused attention from the coaches, with 2*20 min sessions plus ad hoc support if needed. This can be at any stage of the programme.
- **Concluding group call:** A final group call at the end of the programme will create space for reflecting on key lessons learned and how to take those forward into everyday practice.

PHD Summer Write Club 2020 –Outline of Programme

Note - it is expected that participants will miss some parts of the programme – indeed we hope they are getting the balance right and taking a break at some point!

Week	One Day Live Coaching Retreat (Virtual or Face to Face)	1 Hour Group Coaching Session (online)	Peer Support (in groups of 3)	Weekly Email Review	One-to-One support
1	Monday 18 th May 2020				
2 - 25 th May			Weekly connect with peer-group Determined by the group and may include agreed 'writing times' to check in with each other.	Each Friday submit a brief review of progress to and plans for next week	2*20 minute individual focused coaching conversation (plus ad hoc support if needed)
3 - 1 st June		Call 1 Monday 1 st June (pm)			
4 - 8 th June					
5 - 15 th June		Call 2 Monday 15 th June (pm)			
6 - 22 nd June					
7 - 29 th June		Call 3 Monday 29 th June (pm)			
8 - 6 th July					
9 - 13 th July		Call 4 Monday 13 th July (pm)			
10 - 20 th July					
11- 27 th July		Call 5 Monday July 27 th (pm)			
Weeks 10 – 14 3 rd -31 st of August)		(No calls during August)			
15 – 7 th Sept		Call 6 Monday 7 th Sept (pm)			
Follow up Whole Group Session call (2 hours) approximately 6 weeks after the programme.					

Location of the Day Retreat

The live coaching day retreat can be attended in person or via Zoom.

Zoom details will be provided after registration

The location will be Halton Mill, a community events, office, and studio space, located about three miles north of Lancaster – www.haltonmill.org.uk.

If looking for accommodation for the nights before or after the one-day retreat, options include: two hotels about 30 minutes walk (Holiday Inn Lancaster or Premier Inn Lancaster), local AirBnB, and plentiful accommodation in Lancaster itself.

Details of how to get from Lancaster to Halton Mill (including cycling, bus and car) are on the Halton Mill website above – a taxi from Lancaster train station will cost under £10 and take about 15 mins.

Booking and Cost

For further details or to book a place please email us by emailing hello@writeclubcoaching.com

Cost for the programme –

Personal rate - £450

Institution rate - £600

Concessions are available, please contact us.

Arrangements to invoice Universities is possible, as well as to pay monthly.

Who are the coaches?

PhD Write Club will be led by Will Medd and Laura Premack. Both are former lecturers with international reputations who became coaches after successful academic careers. They bring an intimate understanding of the experience of academic life, and they share a commitment to coaching with professionalism, emotional sensitivity, and humour.

About Will Medd

Will Medd, a professional certified coach, developed the one-day, live coaching writing retreat (WriteHere, Right Now) which sets the foundation for Write Club. He regularly delivers this programme around the country, inviting people to find what works for them and supporting them in developing effective, regular and balanced writing practices. He is passionate about enabling people to be at their best while balancing academic work with the rest of life.

Will is a highly qualified coach and combines this skill set uniquely with robust experience in scholarly writing. As PhD student (1995-2000), contract researcher (2000-2006) and lecturer (2006-2013), Will was an REF active researcher, well versed in the challenges of interdisciplinary and cross-institutional research. He started coaching in 2009 and has been full-time since 2013, running coaching programmes including workshops, 1-1 coaching, coach supervision, 'train the trainer' and team coaching. He has co-written coaching training material for VITAE and two coaching books, *Your PhD Coach* (2013) and *Get Sorted!* (2015), as well as a resource 'FailuretoLearn' (www.failuretolearn.com).

Will is deeply committed to developing conditions of challenge and support which are conducive to all participants engaging and learning. His sessions are regularly scored as 'excellent' and comments have included: "respectful, sensitive to needs of the group", "fantastic, created a really safe atmosphere to expose the issues raised", "excellent, very patient when dealing with quite a few of us, kept us on track", and "exceptional – humane, forgiving, thoughtful and able to bring out the best in a diverse group."

You can find out more about will at www.willmedd.com and www.academiclives.com

About Laura Premack

Laura Premack is a coach and writer who spent nearly fifteen years in academia before changing course in 2019. Her longtime passions are writing and teaching — she did her PhD largely to have something to write about — and she has participated in and led writing groups across the United States.

Laura earned graduate degrees at Harvard University (EdM '02) and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (PhD '13, MA '07), and has held academic appointments in both the US and the UK, as a postdoctoral fellow, assistant professor (tenure-track), and permanent lecturer. While trained as an historian, she embraced an interdisciplinary approach to her scholarship, along with a focus on making her work accessible to the broader public. Her publications include peer-reviewed articles and book chapters as well as essays for literary journals and blogs. She is currently writing creative nonfiction.

Laura brings an extensive background in education to her work as a coach. She has taught at Lancaster University, Bowdoin College, Keene State College, and UNC-Chapel Hill, where she received consistently outstanding evaluations. Her students describe her as "engaging," "inspiring," "enthusiastic," "passionate," "fair," and "funny." A head of department noted her talent for guiding "lively, informed, engaging, and, at times, truly inspired," discussion. Her work at the university level is informed by the years she spent as a schoolteacher before entering academia and her training at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and as a Teach For America corps member (Phoenix '98).

To learn more about Laura, you can visit her website at www.laurapremack.com.