

ACADEMIC WRITING RETREAT 'BOOTCAMP'
THURSDAY 5 AND FRIDAY 6 JULY 2018
EVALUATION FORM
FACILITATORS: SANDY SPARKS AND GEORGE
TTOOULI

1. What did you find useful and how will you implement your learning?

- This was a very helpful end of term event. I needed the time to focus and plan a journal submission to work on for the weeks ahead, which I did. I also took the opportunity to talk George about a draft book proposal; this was really helpful in identifying the weaknesses and rethinking some parts of it. It will now only take few days to edit the proposal ready for submission.
- I found it really useful talking to George about prioritisation and time-management – it has already changed how I structure my day and how I approach new tasks.
- The time to focus fully on writing at a location somewhat removed from main campus - I will undertake greater efforts to set aside designated writing time.
- The space and time to just concentrate on writing – we may well explore providing this for the Department's in Millburn House next year.
- I found the loose structure, supportive environment, and access to George's academic writing consulting support very useful. I found the academic writing consulting particularly helpful to work through ideas and structures of my work in progress, from a perspective outside of my discipline. This pushed me to think more deeply about my project, from multiple angles, and I am grateful for this. I will take some of general writing points and tips forward in thinking about writing/research in the future, and I will also try to protect more time for writing in my everyday working life.

2. What else do you feel should have been included?

- Nothing. For me it was exactly what I needed: space, support, and free flowing food.
- I don't think anything else was necessary – it was better to just let us get on with our own writing projects.
- The session on its own was optimal in how it was organised and structured. I would find more of these sorts of events very helpful – and perhaps one or two half days during term time (for the sake of continuity, like a writing Thursday or Friday for example).
- Perhaps a more inspiring space – somewhere off campus?
- I can't think of anything else that should have been included; only that it could be useful to have longer writing boot camps (more than 2 days), or offer these more regularly, as I think these are really valuable for academics at every level.

3 What other learning and developing opportunities / courses do you need?

- When I have the draft of a proposal ready, I will take the opportunity to have a one to one with a writing developer. I will also attend next term one of the improving quality of journal sessions; I wanted to go this year but couldn't due to it clashing it other sessions.
- Support for returning carers, i.e. about the particular challenges of managing workload/writing projects with a young baby, possibly linked to a wider support network (I haven't yet investigated the carers network).
- I have recently applied for the Warwick leadership programme.

4 Additional Comments

- I really enjoyed this course and found it incredibly helpful and productive to my career development – I was able to write 3,000 the first week after returning from maternity leave and, given that I didn't feel ready to write the chapter at all when I returned to work, think this is a really great achievement. I am now considering setting up a termly writing retreat for returning carers, or members of staff with significant caring responsibilities.
- This was a really great session – and perfectly timed at the beginning of summer. I wrote about 1500 words in two days and am on track to finish the chapter I was working on – REF hooray! Many thanks to Sandy and George for facilitating this session!
- “The dedicated time and space for academic writing provided by bootcamp has been invaluable to me in making progress on both journal articles and research grant applications. I have recently been awarded an EPSRC New Investigator Award which I worked on at bootcamp in July 2017, using much of the time to completely rework my initial experimental plan to ensure it was approaching my topic in an innovative way. Without the protected environment provided by bootcamp, which somehow allows me to feel able to turn off email for a long stretch of time and focus on a single project, I would have struggled to find uninterrupted time to focus on this. Attending bootcamp was definitely a contributor to the success of my application.”
- Thank you once again – thanks to the bootcamp experience I completed the revisions on a significant REF item and nearly finished an analysis of data from a recent REF impact case study.

- Feeling stumped with knowing where to start I took George's advice and just wrote. 13,000 words later and I can now see strands for a number of publications; I know it's not all about volume of words but, boy, that felt good to hit such a big target! When I left on Friday, I left with a spring in my step and a new found enthusiasm for my research.
- Thank you Sandy and George for a great boot camp!