

# **Advancing the Retreat: Continuing Your Momentum After *WriteOut!* Is Over**

## **What's a Writing Accountability Group?**

Writing Accountability Groups are peer support groups that meet weekly to set writing goals, document progress, identify obstacles, and devise strategies for overcoming them. Research shows that writers are more productive when they set concrete goals, monitor their work, and discuss their progress with another person. By providing a supportive, non-judgmental form of external accountability, Writing Accountability Groups help improve a writer's confidence and productivity.

## **How is the group structured?**

All groups work differently, but we have found that four-person groups are the most effective and efficient. Keeping the groups to four members allows them sufficient time to explore each member's progress, but keeps meetings from dragging on and feeling burdensome. In addition, this structure allows everyone to participate in the discussion, which is crucial for building trust among group members.

The group is non-hierarchical: decisions about meeting time, location, and attendance requirements are arrived at collectively. Groups include four roles:

- **Convener:** invite/assemble group for the initial meeting
- **Recorder:** document everyone's weekly writing goals
- **Time-keeper:** keep each individual's discussion time to 15 minutes
- **Goal-Tracker:** document whether members meet their goals.

## **What happens during meetings?**

Four-person Writing Accountability Groups meet weekly for one hour (each additional person = 15 additional minutes of meeting time). During the first meeting, group members identify their writing goal for the semester and commit to a regular writing habit (e.g., writing 2 hours a day, 2 pages on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, etc). They also break down their larger writing goal into smaller, weekly goals, and identify their writing goal for the subsequent week.

At every subsequent meeting, group members report on their progress on the previous week's goal. Each member discusses their progress for 15 minutes, noting their successes as well as their barriers, and brainstorming with group members about possible solutions and next steps. At the end of their time, they identify goals for the following week.

The final group meeting is spent reviewing the group's accomplishments, identifying its strengths and weaknesses, and deciding whether the group will continue and in what form.