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## **Developing a Culture of Publication: a joint enterprise writing retreat**

### **Abstract**

*Purpose:* Many students irrespective of level of study produce excellent course work which, if given support and encouragement could clearly be of a publishable standard. Academic staff are expected to produce quality publications meeting peer review standards although they may be relatively novice authors. All are engaged in some aspects of academic writing practices but not as frequently involved in co-production of publications emanating from student work. This activity is still at the margins of much of the student experience.

*Design/methodology:* Mindful of these issues, we designed and offered a writing programme including a writing retreat. This brought together undergraduate and postgraduate students from a range of applied disciplines (health and art, design and architecture) and their supervisors with the aim of co-producing publications and participating in a community of scholarly practice. The project was delivered over nine months. It involved four days 'compulsory' attendance and included a preparatory workshop, a two day off campus writing retreat and a dissemination event. Student and supervisors applied to participate as a team. Kirkpatrick's (2006) four-stage classic model: reaction, learning, changes in behaviour and real world results was used as a framework for the educational evaluation. Key findings organised thematically were: Supervisor-supervisee relationships; space and time; building confidence enabling successful writing and publication. *Originality/Value:* This paper will provide an overview of the design, content and approaches used for successful delivery of this innovative project. It will draw on examples that illustrate the different types of joint enterprise that emerged, illuminate experiences of co-production and co-authorship along with recommendations for future ventures.

### **Keywords:**

- Publication
- Writing retreat
- Writing skills
- Co-Authorship
- Co-production
- Evaluation
- Kirkpatrick four levels

**Article Classification:** Case Study

## Introduction

Modern universities are part of the broader learning economy and are in the business of knowledge production. The most effective aspect of knowledge production is academic publication. Funding councils offering postgraduate awards are increasingly expecting indicators of potential, to differentiate between the growing numbers of excellent applications. Peer reviewed outputs are one such indicator.

Many students at all levels of study produce excellent course work which given support and encouragement would be of a publishable standard. Students are expected to gain a number of skills through their educational endeavours; these are articulated in the form of standards for undergraduate/postgraduate awards (Quality Assurance Agency (Q.A.A.), 2011). Whilst students are expected to produce independent work of a high academic standard within their respective disciplines, academic staff are also expected to disseminate knowledge through peer reviewed publication. Both students and staff may engage in academic writing practices but the activity of co-production is still at the margins of certain disciplines. In addition there is a paucity of opportunities for co-publication between students and academic staff in higher education, given the focus on individual student endeavour.

Mindful of these issues we designed a writing retreat model to bring students from a range of applied disciplines (healthcare, art, design and architecture) and their supervisors together with the aim of co-producing publications and participating in a community of scholarly practice. This paper details this novel initiative to engender and develop collaborative writing for publication between academics and post-graduate students. The University of Huddersfield is a medium sized university in the north of England of around 23,000 students and more than 800 academic staff spread across seven Schools. The innovation is centred on the utility of a designed structure and environment, which we hope will begin to nurture a culture of scholarly writing activity between these two parties. The initiative was funded by the Teaching and Learning Institute of the University and involved two Schools – Art, Design and Architecture and Human and Health Sciences. The structure is detailed in the methods section of this paper, and the environment refers to a writing retreat workshop, preceded by preparatory meetings and evaluated via post-presentation events.

## Background/Literature review

Several local strategies to foster a writing culture in publication naïve staff have been used, including encouraging initial pieces of writing (e.g. short editorial and reviews) and supporting the conversion of conference presentations into journal outputs, both with some success. Current literature suggests that writing workshops, retreats, and training programmes which facilitate scholarly journal publication are valued and perceived to be beneficial, however, the empirical justification for their use is less established (Galipeau *et al.* 2013). The contention that universities are the environment to facilitate writing for publication, and as such exist as a community of scholarly practice is often challenged, most notably by the periodic assessments of research outputs (e.g. Research Assessment Exercise (R.A.E.), 2008 and the recent Research Excellence Framework (R.E.F.), 2014), but also by commentary and some individual evaluations (Pololi *et al.*, 2004, Clughen and Connell, 2011). Indeed, environmental and cultural factors within a university, for example, time constraints and teaching excellence focussed curricula are often cited as barriers rather than facilitators to improving scholarly publication outputs (Clughen and Connell, 2011). The transition into an academic role has been identified as challenging even for experienced

scholars, with individuals doubting their credibility and competence (Boyd and Harris, 2010). This experience has been echoed by writers who fear being exposed as 'frauds', with feelings of perfectionism and shame towards their writing (Grant and Knowles, 2000) many academics and research students experience writing-related struggles (Caffarella and Barnett, 2000; Cameron *et al.*, 2009) with reported concerns of having their inadequacies exposed in their published writing. These anxieties are often compounded in applied disciplines where individuals are accomplished exponents of their craft but often less confident about their academic scholarship. Arguably if challenges exist for academics to engage in scholarly output, then those challenges will be even greater for students. Writing skills are of course, a core and integral part of any undergraduate or postgraduate curriculum, albeit often directed toward essay or dissertation writing, rather than journal publication (Clughen and Connell 2011; Kucan, 2011). Boyer's influential work, *Scholarship Reconsidered* (Boyer, 1990) called for an end to the "tired old teaching verses research debate" and to move to a broader concept of scholarship. One such way is to close the research cycle by publication, particularly for undergraduate research (Walkington and Jenkins 2008; Spronken-Smith *et al.*, 2013).

Process-driven approaches to writing for publication regularly identify writing retreats and their benefits, including the creation of communities of practice that can be fostered in a retreat setting, and how these facilitate the developmental phases of the writing process (Wenger, 1998; Moore, 2003; Murray and Newton, 2009). The essential sociality of writing is a fundamental concept inherent within groups (Grant and Knowles, 2000; Moore, 2003). Writing workshops or retreats are generally conceived as a collaborative venture in order to mitigate some of the challenges faced by novice academic writers (Cameron *et al.*, 2009). Increased confidence is a commonly cited outcome of writing interventions as they encourage feelings of greater capability and growing identity as a writer. Cameron *et al.* (2009), Grant (2006) and Moore (2003) all refer to growth in participants' self-belief as writers. Writing therefore, may become less daunting and the mystery surrounding writing for publication diminished, via a collaborative, 'enclosed' facilitative event (Aitchison and Lee, 2006). This however, assumes that potential authors want to access group rather than individual support. Writing groups may challenge the dominant culture of writing as an individual or solitary process (Belcher, 2009), it is argued however, that this form of peer collaboration takes time and space to develop and mature. A second assumption is that the type of support activities provided within writing groups are those most needed. Although the potential advantages associated with writing groups are numerous, there is little research evidence within the literature to indicate whether writing groups are of real benefit as there has been only a small amount of systematic research or evaluation of the effectiveness of writing groups as a method of supporting scholarly activity (Keen, 2007).

Jalbert (2008) discusses the ways in which undergraduate research can be fostered through educational programmes that seek to bring staff and students together through the experience of generating co-authored journal publications. To be effective, writing groups often call on and develop particular know-how or expertise that advances learning. They lend themselves to multiple formulations of expertise depending on the type of group and the needs of members, and can help individuals develop a sense of being part of a community of writers (Grant, 2006; Murray and Newton 2009). Existing models of research publication cultures at undergraduate level through educational programmes include Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Emory University and the California Institute of Technology. These

institutions have engaged directors of undergraduate research across a range of disciplines - science, engineering and art and design - in order to embed practices in curricula that facilitate writing for publication. Moreover, research collaborations at institutions like Harvard University are reflected in the increasing number of co-publication outputs. Writing groups have been theorised in terms of 'strategic learning' and 'knowledge management' targeted towards addressing a perceived 'performance gap' within the policy environment (Galligan *et al.*, 2003).

The outcome-driven approach to writing on retreat facilitates staff and student co-authorship (Jackson, 2008) can generate a different way of thinking about writing communities as communities of peer learning in higher education. For example, writing groups may address pedagogical principles such as 'mutuality', 'identity and desire' and 'normal business' as a way of building community (Lee and Boud, 2003). This notion of community, it is argued, is essential to the writing group approach with significant elements such as identification, membership, stability and commitment. Learning can be viewed as socio-culturally specific and situated, as exemplified by the ideas of 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1998). The notion of community here is not simply about location for learning but is rather best conceptualized as both a condition and a dynamic of learning. The 'horizontalising' pedagogy of peer review is one in which student/peers work together and with more experienced researchers and writing specialists to develop expertise in different aspects of research writing, and explicitly provides entry into a network of peer relations as becoming researchers. This dual notion of both being- and becoming-peer is what perhaps best characterises this pedagogy in the research education context and moves the notion of peer review out of a student expert 'vertical' binary relationship into a more dispersed and community-based pedagogy (Boud and Lee, 2005), with peer validation and recognition important in the development of academic identities (Henkel, 2000).

Formal writing groups however, may have a high level of managerial support and this could potentially compromise the qualities inherent within group support, i.e. the need for trust. Mutuality has been discussed at some length elsewhere (Lee and Boud, 2003), particularly taking into account the delicate dynamics of power and difference; it operates at all levels of the group functioning: from the initial negotiation of group norms through to the micro-dynamics of turn-taking within specific group interactions. Using Lave and Wenger's (1991) model, writing retreats could be seen as a 'legitimately peripheral' (p. 36) activity, in the sense that they can be used to move academics from a position of 'peripherality' into a community of writers. In one of the few empirical studies evaluating writing retreats, Casey *et al.* (2013) report that the "immediacy and visibility" of writing within a structure such as a 'retreat, allows individuals to understand the issues of writing; whereas the protected nature of the event; creates feelings of support engendered by the physical, social and/or psychological aspects of the writing retreat.

The multi-production of publications in higher education is a feature familiar to the pure and social sciences. It is a commonly accepted practice within scientific research teams to collaborate on projects and to produce multiple publication outputs, each sharing the authorship of the research itself (Newman, 2004, Shrum *et al.*, 2007). This tradition is not as embedded within the practices of art and design and is a relatively recent feature of the applied non-medical sciences such as nursing, where often, preconceived ideas about the creative or real-world processes of the practitioner overrides the idea of research teams

contributing to a common directive or problem. Or indeed the practitioner is perceived more as a service occupation within the research team not necessarily contributing to the intellectual property of the endeavour. This is not to imply that subject-specific practices within these disciplinary fields do not have the elements of collaborative focus to their methodologies. For example, industrial product design or textile design technology, when paired with engineering or commercial business may generate collaborative research with an external focus. The specific contexts and circumstances out of which a research problem or question arises require that *all* disciplines consider the role and function of different teams of expertise. Yet, the traditions of each have their own epistemological formations about notions of authorship and more specifically about publishing outputs derived from particular practices.

What was consistent across the disciplines is that publication, whether co-written or singularly authored, is often reserved for postgraduate level research scholarship. In this respect, the idea of co-production or multi-production at degree level is dependent on the existence of co-publication cultures at institutional level, and whether these practices are common to undergraduate student experiences. According to Gazni and Didegah's study of the types of research collaboration and citation impact at Harvard, the statistics of multi-author outputs compared to single authored outputs, revealed that researchers are more collaborative friendly than not. In 2009, 88% of publications were multi-authored, whereas only 12% were single-authored publications (Gazni and Didegah, 2011). The study looked at 22 different disciplinary fields within the sciences. Whilst art and design and human and health sciences did not feature as subjects, the findings indicate at the very least that collaboration has the potential to foster multiple publication outputs within a team of researchers.

The environment of higher education has been characterised as 'supercomplexity' (Barnett 1999) and strategic dissonance (Winter *et al.*, 2000). The demands on academics might be explicit, but they can also be contradictory (Carnell *et al.* 2008) with pressure and anxiety to manage demands and meet targets for different strands of work and also different audiences for their writing (Acker and Armenti, 2004; Ball, 2003; Hey, 2001). The pressures of time and teaching responsibilities often mean that research activities and, more particularly, writing became less of a priority (McGrail *et al.*, 2006) compounded by engaging in anti-task behaviours such as procrastination or using distractions. How academics and others conceptualise this 'performative' context, and how they learn to negotiate and balance different demands has not yet been established (Clegg, 2008). The construction of a tripartite – e.g. teaching, research and economic contribution functions – structure of the higher education sector has also been explored (Ainley 2003; Jones and Thomas, 2005). Inability to make adequate time and space for writing can elicit feelings of guilt and dread towards uncompleted writing projects. These anxieties, stoked by external forces, can result in feelings of pressure, stress and panic (Moore 2003).

### **Project Approach**

The 'developing a culture of publication' project aimed to test a "writing retreat" workshop model with the overall aim to convert high quality student projects into co-produced publications and establish a community of scholarly practice. Fundamentally, the project aimed to create a collaborative and peer-supportive environment that fostered co-production to transform quality student work into publishable outputs. The project was linked to the

University's strategic goals to increase the volume and quality of outputs and student employability. The overall outcome being to increase research and scholarship capacity whilst establishing a community of scholarly practice where co-production and review is normalised in applied practice-based disciplines.

The project team included staff from two academic Schools namely, Human and Health Sciences (HHS) and Art, Design and Architecture (ADA) with additional support from Computing and Library Services (CLS). All team members offered different levels of project experience and publication expertise. The project was delivered over a nine month period including four days mandatory attendance. Student and supervisors applied and attended as pairs, a preparatory pre-workshop event, a two-day writing retreat and a dissemination event.

Student and supervisor pairs applied jointly to participate in the project. Involvement was on the understanding that it was in addition to course or workload requirements. Each pair were allocated a personal 'coach' from the project team to encourage commitment to 'keeping to task'. Mentoring and support was embedded in project delivery. The project was designed to provide structure, expert support, writing guidance and where appropriate constructive criticism to aid manuscript preparation and ultimately successful publication.

Students and their supervisors from the two target schools completing a substantive piece of work or close to completion were targeted for recruitment via a poster and email campaign. Potential participants were invited to submit applications indicating the contribution their proposed publication might make, and why it might be of interest to a publisher. Selection criteria were developed, and used to judge applications based on quality of application and contribution, and, or novelty of the work. A pre-requisite was all applicants were required to attend all four 'mandatory' days as well as give a commitment to publish. If, due to extenuating circumstances one of the partners could not attend part of the programme, or had to withdraw, it was agreed one of the project team would provide additional support to assist completion.

A one-day preparation event was held to begin to build a community of writing practice and initiate planning in preparation for attendance at the writing retreat. This included advice on identifying target journal(s) and readership, understanding authorship and responsibilities, familiarity with author's guidance and preparation of work plans. The two day retreat was held in an off campus facility. The location was chosen because of its rural location, availability of wifi and value. The programme included blocked periods for writing and social activities. Most activity took place in an open plan space. Each pair had a worktable and laptop computer, break out rooms were available if quiet space was needed. The retreat programme included a panel discussed with guest journal editors and a social event with an audience with an expert in public engagement. The emphasis and the majority of the time was unapologetically focused on writing.

A key part of the strategy to promote post retreat momentum was the dissemination event, held six months after the retreat, whereby students and supervisors met to feedback their progress and continue the scholarly activity relationship.

## *Evaluation*

Kirkpatrick's (1959, 2006) four-stage model was used as the framework for the evaluation. This integrates four levels of evaluation: reaction (to the programme), learning, changes in behaviour and real world results. The model has been in use for over 50 years and its longevity may be related to its practicality and simplicity (Griffin, 2014), shifted and emphasis from single measure evaluation (Bates, 2004) and use as a framework for evaluating interventions (Smidt *et al.*, 2009; Yardley and Dornan 2012). It has unsurprisingly received criticism mainly on the grounds of assumed relationships between the four levels (Bates 2004). For example immediate reaction to, or satisfaction with training may in all probability not be linked to learning, changes in behaviour or indeed results. This assumption is compounded by a perception that the four levels constitute a hierarchy of evidence of proof of benefit (Anderson & Thorpe, 2014; Yardley and Dornan, 2012). Despite limitations the model was chosen for this evaluation for its inherent usability, comprehensiveness (Carpenter *et al.*, 2006) and focus on outcomes (Smidt *et al.*, 2009).

Approval for the evaluation was obtained from the institutional research ethics panel to undertake the evaluation; each participant was allocated a unique identifier which was used for all data handling.

Prior to attending the pre-workshop event participants, students and supervisors, were sent an information sheet outlining the evaluation and expectations of participants, a consent form and pre-workshop questionnaire. The questionnaire contained a number of open items inviting informants to summarise their expectations, any concerns and, or needs, and anticipated benefits. At the end of the pre-workshop event participating pairs were asked to identify three personal actions points. These were annotated on postcards and returned three weeks prior to the retreat as a reminder of commitment. The action points were recorded as part of evaluation data. Participants attending the retreat were asked to record comments categorised as expectations, concerns and/or needs, learning, 'take home' messages using adhesive notes. These notes allowed *reaction* and *learning* data to be captured.

At the end of the retreat a focus group interview was held to gain feedback and explore progress and next steps. This took a semi-structured approach and was guided in part by the analysis of data from earlier stages of the evaluation. This was audio recorded with consent, subsequently transcribed and names and/or other identifiable information removed. Each participating pair produced and were invited to share their action plan and individuals completed a questionnaire. This package of data captured dimensions of *reaction*, *learning* and accounts of *behaviour change*. A second focus group interview was undertaken at the post retreat review day. As previously this was audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) method of thematic analysis.

Lastly in order to capture real world results all participants were regularly contacted to obtain information about progress, articles submitted, accepted, feedback, and other outputs submitted and accepted.

## **Findings**

### *Recruitment*



Fifteen student and supervisor pairs originally applied to be involved in the project. Ultimately following attrition, eleven teams participated in the project. The original intention was to recruit both undergraduate and post graduate taught students. The final teams consisted of eight postgraduate research (PGR), one taught Masters and only two undergraduate students, along with their supervisors. This diverse student group included international and home students undertaking full-time courses and registered health care practitioners who were following part time routes. The PGR students were undertaking Masters by Research (MRES), Professional Doctorate (PrD) or Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programmes. The focus of this report is on the process and outcomes from the project and as such details of demographics were of less interest at this point. However following further workshops it may be possible to analyse trends, e.g. demographic categories, as the overall sample size increases.

Selection as a participant engendered feelings of being “...*honoured and valued*” and generated expectations such as access to structured, expert support and guidance on the craft of writing for publication. Further comments related to motivation and drive to develop and complete papers for publication and opportunity afforded by support and protected time.

### *Requirements*

The common theme that emerged was that students wished to develop writing skills. They requested support and wanted “constructive feedback” from the team. They wanted to comprehend the politics of publishing in order to disseminate their academic work to a range and sometimes different audiences. Supervisors and students perceived peer support would be a valuable aspect of the retreat and the student participants expected to gain “*inspiration from like-minded people*” as well as “...*opportunity to showcase [their] work*”.

Publication support was also seen as beneficial to some of the supervisors participating in the project. It became evident that the students and some staff applied as they valued the developmental opportunity offered particularly enhancing their understanding of publishing processes. Several comments were received such as “...*insight into the ‘how’ of the publication process ... as I am a new academic*”.

### *Time-Out*

A significant issue was the perceived value of protected time away from every day obligations and distractions from writing. This was one of the most valuable aspects of the project and was as if participation provided some sort of institutional permission to preference writing for publication in contrast to thesis, coursework or other teaching responsibilities.

### *Environment*

The retreat was held in a scenic rural setting and refreshments were available throughout the day. These features assisted in promoting an environment conducive to productive work. An initial concern, although unfounded, was that the open plan space might prove distracting. In practice this proved to act as a motivator for participants and supported the creation of “*a new writing community*”. The combination of work stations in a large room with available break out rooms when quiet time was required. This environment created flexibility allowing participants’ to take breaks when they felt appropriate, rather than at prescribed times. As one participant described the ability to control work and rest maximising

productivity when ‘*in the zone*’. The participants’ also reported that the communal space allowed them to “*feel the buzz*” and this felt “...*a bit like working in a classroom again, you sort of feel obliged to keep working because everyone else is*” and “*nobody else is procrastinating, so it feels like you have got to carry on*”. Another reported “*Time goes quicker ... I feel like I have the energy to just continue writing*” whilst another “*Funnily enough it wasn’t long enough. You know, I haven’t run out of battery ... we could have probably kept going.*” From these accounts it seems that an aspect of creation of a community can be attributed to physical proximity.

### *Productivity*

The two day retreat was reported as overwhelmingly positive in terms of creativity, quality and quantity of output. The following comments capture response to the experience: ...*just amazing what I’ve managed to get done*” and another “*I thought it was fantastic ... I had the opportunity to look at it again, with a different line ... and then talk about it, you know TALK! It has been absolutely amazing*” and “*We made big strides today*” and finally “...*it has been a brilliant opportunity to really knuckle down and produce some work. I hope and aim to be published but am proud of what has been achieved regardless!*”.

### *Relationships*

Participants also described “*relationships changed*” between supervisor and supervisee. This seemed to contribute to effective co-production. Through joint working it seemed trust and peer support developed and the activity was mutually rewarding. The active engagement in co-authorship with academic staff working with students as partners enabled a non-hierarchical relationship to emerge.

Extended time with supervisors was particularly valued by the student participants: “*it has been different because in supervision you have an hour or so ... it has been like a day to escalate what you’ve done, so it’s just given me a new perspective of the work*” and “*time ...[with your supervisor] ... with instant response*”. Another student reported that the opportunity to spend increased time with their supervisor allowed them both to “...*view the research through different lens*” not purely from the academic outcomes but from wider publication arena.

The programme included support from experts in the project team and involved senior academic staff and the guest editors’ panel, in addition to this the peer support available from other participants and this was also valued. The participant group set up their own social network group and held a coffee morning after the retreat to maintain momentum and support after the event. The “*cross- fertilisation*” gained from involving participants from different disciplines was identified as an asset and encouraged networking and generated discussion that sowed ideas and comparisons. This also highlighted the nuances of different disciplinary understandings, discourses, dialogues and debates all contributing to building the intellectual capital of the writing community.

### *Outputs*

At the dissemination event (six months after the writing retreat) participants were asked to present their progress and reflect on their experiences and engagement in the project. At this point, four papers had been submitted (two from one pair); and one had been accepted subject to completion of reviewers’ recommended amendments. A further three papers were planned for imminent submission including two different articles by the same pair, one in

English and the other in Mandarin to separate journals. Three pairs had made significant progress on their publications but were not yet ready to submit. Three pairs had made little progress since the writing retreat. The reason given by two related to the demands of final year PhD studies and the third student had gained employment and could not commit the time necessary to complete a publication.

The project was likened to a developmental journey for several participants. They reported initial feelings of being “*overwhelmed*” and feeling “*out of their depth*”. This then developed into a fascinating, supportive and challenging process that generated increased confidence to develop a personal writing style and greater publication awareness. Several discussed the “*massive learning curve*” involved but the project afforded the opportunity to keep focused on the task whereas other priorities would normally take precedence. All students and supervisors reported value in the process and that they felt they had made significant progress. Two highlighted that they lost momentum, particularly after the retreat but the dissemination event refocused this and provided the incentive to finish their paper. Finally the participants reinforced the value of the underpinning premise that those ‘novice’ to academic production need opportunities to foster publication. A recommendation from the participants was that academic assignments should incorporate more publication friendly approaches.

## **Discussion**

The project and evaluation has highlighted that the writing retreat approach and the support provided throughout the whole process has benefits irrespective of level of study. Indeed this also applied to some of the supervisors who took part. One indicator of success is undoubtedly the ten papers that have significantly progressed. Regardless of the number of papers that will finally be submitted to journals and ultimately be published, the comments received from participants indicate that they found the experience positively contributed to developing a culture that embeds publication as an outcome from undergraduate and or postgraduate taught programmes in applied practice-based disciplines. Although the project was originally targeted at undergraduate and taught postgraduate students, a surprise was the number of applications from PGR students and their supervisors. The assumption that PGR students in these disciplines would be confident in writing for publication and would have experienced the process through their post-graduate studies was perhaps erroneous therefore it could be that this model of engendering scholarship is extended to encompass other groups of postgraduate students thereby widening opportunities to participate in this type of model. The finding requiring reconsideration relates to recruitment. A number of PGR students applied but in some cases were challenged to achieve publication due to other demands. Timing seemed to be significant especially for PGR students in the final stages of their studies where completion of thesis or portfolio and preparation for viva voce examination takes priority.

Bringing two Schools together from across the University was a condition of funding. At the time of planning it was not known whether the two disciplines would have the same priorities and requirements, however, from the evaluation it is clear that there were common cross-disciplinary issues and that collaborative interdisciplinary practice proved successful at a number of levels. As a consequence of the success of this project further funding for a second year has been secured. Feedback from participants was extremely positive, and irrespective of individual productivity all appeared to have developed through engagement

with the initiative. As a further outcome of this evaluation, refinements have been made to the frequency and intensity of follow up events after the retreat, in order to increase the maintenance of the writing relationship.

The outcome of this evaluation appears to agree with the literature (Cameron *et al.*, 2009; Grant, 2006; Moore, 2003) that writing retreats do support self-belief and increased confidence in participants. This was particularly evident in the findings from the final dissemination event.

## **Conclusion**

This model could easily be used in fields where writing for publication is not as developed as some 'academic' disciplines. This project has acted as a catalyst for the production of ten papers for publication, a critical success factor, especially as they may never have been written without the support and resources provided. The overall project design incorporated strategies for providing support for scholarship, development of writing for publication skills of students and staff, and establishing a community of scholarly practice where co-production and review is normalised. For many higher education institutions strategies that evidence synergies between research, scholarship and learning and teaching can only bring advantages. Approaches such as this are enabling to students and staff and produce tangible outputs and impacts and therefore undoubtedly beneficial. Publications may serve as one indicator to differentiate between candidates seeking competitive postgraduate opportunities or employment and this approach may be a useful device to support capability. The retreat approach to progressing publications is therefore recommended as a worthwhile and rewarding experience for the participants and the planning team.

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