

A Writer Development Group for Master's Students: Procedures and Benefits

Sarah Haas
University of Gent, Belgium

Abstract

This paper outlines the procedures used in, and evaluates the success of, a pilot writers' group for MA-level academic writers. After some background on writers' groups is provided, the activities used in a pilot Writer Development (WD) Workshop, along with the rationale behind the activities, will be described. The usefulness of the activities will then be evaluated from the viewpoint of the student-writers. Results indicate that along with social and affective benefits, the members perceived academic merit in being involved in the group. Most members experienced, at the very least, a heightened awareness of individual writing processes, and of feedback practices and preferences. The activities in the workshops seemed to help the members develop themselves as writers, and an improvement in the quality of written product was perceived by the writers themselves.

Introduction

This article is an account of a first attempt at running weekly Writer Development (WD) Workshops for a small group of MA-level academic writers in the English Academic Subject Group in a small UK university. The WD group met face-to-face, during term time, for two-hour workshops for two academic terms, from October 2007 through May 2008. From June to September 2008, when members had returned to their own countries to undertake their dissertation research, fortnightly meetings were conducted via Skype. The six writers in the group were all international students; the academic writing projects undertaken were four, 4,000 word Action Research assignments – two assignments required for each term, and MA dissertations. The facilitator of the group was a member of staff who was exploring writer development as a part of her PhD studies.

At the time this research was being planned, the university had no writing centre, nor any organisation-wide writing programmes. As such, any writing instruction was left up to individual departments or lecturers. The English group offered no formalised writing instruction for its MA students, yet there was a perceived need, from lecturers and students alike, for writing support. This project was a pilot study, undertaken with a small group, to explore writers' groups as a possibility for this support.

The activities done in the group were taken, by the facilitator, from the literature on writers' groups, and offered to the WD members in a non-directive way. The aim of this article is to evaluate these activities from the perspective of the WD group members. The data for this evaluation were collected using a variety of methods: an open-ended questionnaire, follow-up interviews, group discussions, participants' journals, and audio-recordings of WD workshops. Signed consent for using the data was obtained up-front, with members understanding that they could withdraw from the research project at any time. Due to the small size of the group, the data were analysed qualitatively (content analysis). Before the results of the analysis are discussed, a description of the activities used in the group will follow a brief background on writers' groups.

Background: Writers' Groups for Academic Writers

Although writing support – in the form of writing centres, Writing Across the Curriculum, Writing in the Disciplines, and Academic Literacies initiatives – is becoming more ubiquitous, at the postgraduate level, specified writing classes are less common (Girgensohn 2005 and Mullen 2001). This lack of explicit writing courses for postgraduate students was the situation at the university where this study took place. In the English group, where the WD members were enrolled, postgraduate students are required to write academic research papers, and though they are given the opportunity to consult with their supervisors when they need to, most are given no explicit writing instruction, and are left to do their writing more or less on their own.

It seems reasonable to assume that by the time writers have worked their way through years of formal education, to the postgraduate level, they have already developed into fairly sophisticated writers who know how to 'do' academic writing (Morss and Murray 2001: 36). It may also seem reasonable to assume that, as writing continues to be seen as essentially a solitary activity (Aitchison 2003), academic writers at these advanced levels can just get on with it (Mullen 2001 and Lee and Boud 2003).

Both these assumptions are on shaky ground, however. Mullen (2001) discusses the problematic lack of writing skill development in postgraduate writers (particularly master's degree candidates), and calls for the absolute necessity of writing instruction at the postgraduate level. Morss and Murray (2001) demonstrate that, even for seasoned professional academic writers, structured writing support facilitates writer development and writing output in a way that solitude cannot.

It seems, then, that postgraduate writers might not best be served by being left alone to get on with their writing projects. This may be particularly true for international students, who are writing in second or third languages, where academic writing may have different conventions than writing in their first language (Aitchison 2003).

Traditional writing classes, however, might not be necessary. Elbow (1998) proposes a 'teacherless writing class' in which writers regularly meet to bolster each other in the writing process. Called 'writers' groups' or 'peer support groups' by other authors (e.g. Gere 1987, Luth *et al.* 2001 and Reeves 2002), these groups of writers gathering together to offer mutual support and feedback on writing have been found to be beneficial for the development of writers, and their writing (Reeves 2002).

More specialised writers' groups, i.e. groups where the members are concentrating on producing *academic* writing, have been found successful for both professionals (Lee and Boud 2003, Morss and Murray 2001, Murray and MacKay 1998, Murray and Newton 2008 and Washburn 2008), and at the PhD level (Aitchison 2003, Aitchison and Lee 2006, Chihota 2008 and Grant 2006). If such groups have had such success for other academic writers, it stands to reason that they may benefit less-experienced master's level writers as well.

While there is ample literature on groups for writers in general, and while recently in the UK and Australia, more literature is emerging on writers' groups focusing on academic writing, a search for a 'how-to' article on running one of these groups for academic writers at the less-experienced MA level, proved fruitless. This is not surprising, given that there is a variety of activities that can go on in writers' groups; what 'works' is most likely dependent on the context and members of individual groups. The procedures used in the WD workshops under discussion in this article, therefore, were an amalgamation of what was suggested for such groups at other levels, in other situations. The next section looks at the group and its procedures in more detail.

The Writer Development Workshop: Members, Goals and Procedures

To see if a writers' group might offer a partial solution to some of the writing problems our MA students faced, a pilot study was undertaken with one small group, over one year. As it was a pilot study, the members were involved on a volunteer basis; attendance was non-compulsory, and members were neither graded, nor given academic credits for the workshops. The purpose of the

workshops was for writers 'to initiate, to support, and to share writing processes' (Girgensohn 2005: 1). The over-riding goals in forming the workshops were to: 1) make the *process* of academic writing more pleasant (than the isolated, no-formal-support experience) for the writer; and to 2) make the *product* of academic writing of a higher quality than that which the lecturers had been perceiving, and thus more pleasant for the reader.

This article focuses on the first goal – the writers' experiences. What follows is a description of that WD group, and the procedures and activities undertaken in the WD workshops.

Participants in the workshop

There were seven regular members of the WD group: one workshop organizer/facilitator, and six MA students who were working towards degrees in either *TESOL Studies* (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), or *TESOL & Translation Studies*. The student participants were an international, mixed-gender group. The group consisted of five women and one man; there were four students from Germany, one Greek Cypriot, and one Taiwanese student. Although it is evident (Aitchison and Lee 2006 and Murray 2006) that a writers' group leader need not have subject-area expertise in order to be an effective group facilitator, the novice organizer of this group perceived that she would be more comfortable working within her own subject area, and thus chose to work with MA students who were studying TESOL in some capacity.

The leadership role in academic writers' groups varies. At the professional academic level, writers' groups have claimed success when organized by a group of peers, with leadership of the group being rotated among the members (Reeves 2002), or when groups were led by slightly more experienced writers – but not authority figures – whose role was not only to facilitate the group, but also to participate as a fellow writer, developing his/her own writing skills and writing projects while leading the group (Lee and Boud 2003). For PhD writers, groups have been successfully peer-formed, and peer-led (Grant 2006), but have also been productive when facilitated by an 'independent language specialist' (Aitchison and Lee 2006: 270).

Because the workshop organizer had had positive personal experience with a peer-led writers' group, and because it was perceived to be ideal that any future writers' groups be student-led rather than tutor-led, the organiser decided to lean more toward the 'teacherless writing class' model (Elbow 1998), where there is no authority figure. She aimed more for a 'near-peer role-model' (Murphy, 2001) position in the group, emphasizing her own status as postgraduate student (albeit PhD, not MA) rather than that of a tutor or member of staff. Thus, the workshop procedures that follow were treated as suggestions from the organizer to the student participants, rather than requirements.

Writer Development Workshop procedures

Although the activities for the workshops were based on the organiser's reading of literature about writers' groups, the procedures did remain flexible in order to facilitate a peer-run group rather than a tutor-run group.

Early on, members negotiated a time-schedule, deciding that the workshops would be weekly, lasting one to three hours depending on participants' needs, and on the proximity of the assignment submission deadline. In all, there were 28 workshops. They were held weekly for two, ten-week academic terms; during the three months that members were writing their dissertations, the group met fortnightly on Skype. With the permission of the members, the meetings were audio-recorded, yielding around 65 hours of recorded data.

What went on in the actual workshop time varied according to the students' needs and requests. Below is a description of the various activities that members undertook, in varying degrees, both in and out of the workshop.

Writing activities

Although the actual drafting of assignments was done outside the workshops, most of the workshops involved all members (facilitator included) doing some writing.

The first type of writing undertaken was *freewriting*, a technique developed by Elbow (1998), which is simply writing for several minutes, in full sentences, without stopping. As the purpose is to simply

write down everything one is thinking, no careful structuring is necessary. Any topic is fine; changing topics is not problematic. There is no audience for freewriting – it is completely private, 'unmonitored, low-stakes' (Elbow 2008) writing. Freewriting has been found to help writers write more fluently, and to synthesise ideas (Murray 2006).

The second kind of low-stakes writing done in workshops was *generative writing*, which differs from freewriting in that 1) instead of moving freely from topic to topic, writers will generally stick to one topic, and 2) writers will show their writing to a colleague. Even though generative writing is meant to be shared, the emphasis is still on the generation of text, and not on careful structuring (Boice 1987 and Murray 2006: 99). In the WD workshops, the generative writing was normally done at the end of the sessions, and the writing topic was set by the group organiser, chosen as it was pertinent to the discussions of the day. An example of a generative writing topic was group members' thoughts on the meaning of 'feedback'. A sample of this (five minute write) is shown below:

Feedback is really useful in my opinion. It helps improve and reflect on things' you've done written or otherwise produced. I especially like peer feedback since my peers are in the same situation as me and also have good ideas on what went well or what didn't. However, tutor feedback of course is also important, as tutors tend to have more experience and see things my peers might not see. I don't care if the feedback is in written form or orally, as long as it's polite and constructive. Feedback should never be impolite.

A third type of this unmonitored 'unloading' (Haas 2009: 26) kind of writing, is 'writing to prompts' (Murray 2006). When writing to prompts, writers are giving the beginnings of sentences (prompts) with which to start unloading the thought that are in their heads. Some examples of the prompts used in the workshops were done in preparation for the presentations members were to give on their proposed dissertations topics. Members wrote to the following prompts, without stopping, for 15 minutes, dotting back and forth between different prompts, as new thoughts and ideas arose:

The reason I chose this topic is...
What I want to find out about this topic is (my research questions)...
How I am thinking of finding answer to my questions is...
The data I plan to collect are...
What I already know about this topic is...
What I need to learn more about is...

Along with free-writing, generative writing, and writing to prompts, the workshops also involved some feedback activities. These will be discussed next.

Feedback activities

As it is feedback 'that pushes the writer through the writing process on to the eventual end-product' (Keh 1990: 294), a goal in setting up the group was to have a body of consistent feedback-givers available for the student-writers.

Although feedback is an important part of writing, it has been found that training and practice are needed for feedback – particularly peer-to-peer feedback – to be effective (Zhu 1995 and Nilson 2003b). To this end, the facilitator presented different kinds of feedback techniques for the members to learn and practice. The working definition of 'feedback' that was used was an adapted version of Elbow's (2000: 29) 'Map of Writing in Terms of Audience and Response'. Elbow's map is a grid including four points along a Y-axis, and three points along an X-axis. The four Y-axis points show the possibilities for audience type:

- 1) 'Audience of authority', which could include 'teachers, editors, supervisors, employers', for example
- 2) 'Audience of peers'
- 3) 'Audience of allies' which Elbow defines as 'readers who particularly care for the writer' and his/her writing
- 4) 'Audience of self'

The x-axis shows three response types:

- 1) 'No response'

- 2) Response that gives 'no criticism or evaluation'
- 3) Response that includes 'criticism or evaluation' of the writing (Elbow 2000: 29).

The adaptation made to this grid was to include 'confirmatory or corrective' (Kurtoglu-Hooton 2004) as possibilities for criticism or evaluation.

As all the feedback was given within the context of the group, the audience could be considered as one of peers and/or allies. Within these general response categories of 1) sharing writing with no response, 2) sharing, and response without criticism or evaluation, and 3) response with criticism or evaluation, different techniques were practiced. Writers could subsequently choose the type of feedback they preferred in different feedback situations.

The feedback technique repertoire included: Elbow and Belanoff's *Sharing and Responding* (1989), a list of 11 different types of feedback techniques (including evaluative and non-evaluative); 'Analytic Discourse', a framework for asking non-evaluative clarifying questions, from Altrichter, Posch and Somekh (1993); and a very surface practice of Edge's non-evaluative Cooperative Development framework (1992, 2002). Other evaluative techniques used were the suggestions from (Nilson 2003a and 2003b).

Schneider (2003) suggests it is counter-productive to require members to share their writing before they feel ready. Furthermore, Elbow and Belanoff (2000) suggest that response is optimised if writers request their preferred type of feedback. Thus, members were actively encouraged, but never forced, to bring their writing to the group meetings for feedback, and writers were asked to be explicit about the type of feedback they wanted. Below are some examples from writers on the type of feedback they chose, and how useful it was for them:

Sample 1:

Why I chose feedback type I did. 'Believing and Doubting'. I chose it bc it was something I had never done before and it seemed interesting so I wanted to try it out. And believe it or not it was helpful. It helped me focus on [my] assignment and on what else I might take into consideration when doing it.

Sample 2:

I chose reply bc this dissertation topic is so new and fragile that I just wanted to know what others think about it. I am unsure about the topic and didn't know if it is interesting at all. Moreover, I like evaluative feedback, bc it helps me to find m own way through all this mess like a dissertation topic in the beginning. I thought it was useful and at a later point I'd like to try out more feedback methods.

Sample 3:

I chose the 'no response' feedback because I don't need a response at this point. When I have a clear idea and have started my research and/or writing then of course I'd like to have feedback.

When asking for feedback, if the piece of writing was longer than a page or two, the members would send it around beforehand. For shorter passages, members brought their work with them, and it was read and feedback given in the workshop. If no one brought any writing for feedback, the feedback techniques were practiced using the generative writing produced in the workshops.

There was only one instance where a member requested help with a full-length assignment. She gave copies of her work in one workshop, and it was discussed in the workshop the following week.

Feedback was given not only on the academic prose, but on other aspects of members' research writing (for example, on questionnaires members had designed for their research) and on general or specific questions to do with university policy, or conventions of academic writing in the TESOL discipline.

In the following example (a Skype text conversation), one member, Alvin, had written a questionnaire to give to the teachers in his research group, and asked the WD group to make suggestions for revising the questions:

Theodore: aaahahahahahaa I have just read the first question and I am still laughing I LOVE YOU ALVIN!

Alvin: Thank you my dearest fans for pimping my questionnaire

Theodore: I think the first question is a bit too aggressive ?

Dave: we all told her the same thing... we told her to flatter the teacher first

Theodore: yes i agree... and perhaps rephrase the q.

Alvin: how would you phrase

Theodore: like Do you feel your students were too silent when the [guests]...Why? Why not?

Alvin: yes my dear friend I am gonna rephrase it

Theodore: question 3 should be question 2 and 2 number 3 IN MY HUMBLE OPINION

Alvin: I see...okay. Yeah.

Along with feedback activities, members kept reflective journals, which will be discussed next.

Reflective journals

As a meta-conscious awareness of writing and feedback processes is seen to be beneficial in developing writers, members were given notebooks and asked to keep reflective journals, recording, as often as possible, their writing activities, their meta-thoughts about writing and feedback, and any perceived feedback needs. Writers were given prompts from which to start journal entries if they so chose, but the requirements for the journals were left very loose. Some members used the journals more for reflection on the process of writing, and framed it as a conversation with the organiser:

Hello.

Interesting development – I cant' write if I don't have at least a slight plan. So I made an outline (a draft of an outline more likely) anyway, and now I can write again. Didn't get as far as I wanted, thought. That'w why I'm keeping it short this time – I need to get back to work ☺ I just wanted to let you know.

Other writers saw the journal more as a log of writing activities, for example:

- 1) go to library and find books on error correction...
 - scanning
 - choose the relevant ones and return the others
 - think of a possible plan
 - then read through some papers to find some useful things/references
 - try to start with some writing
 - too lazy to do the reading →writing (anything)
 - spending a few days on writing

The reflective journals were considered private, and thus done outside the workshops, and not discussed in the workshops (permission was obtained to use excerpts). A public activity that took place in the workshops was the setting of goals.

Goal setting

Research has shown that goal setting is indispensable for taking control of one's writing (Murray *et al.* 2008). The model for setting specific short-, mid-, and long-term goals from Murray's *How to Write a Thesis* (2006) was used as a concept. In the following example, a member writes his goals for the ensuing three weeks. Normally, however, goal-setting focused on what to achieve before the next workshop.

- Start by reading books, journal articles etc like, NOW
- Make the appendices visible enough for markers (hi hi)
- Try to have the essay written (bound 2 days before deadline)
- not write the assignment in the German way of writing
- Buy Britney Spears' new single

--Try to come up with a plan before the writing process. Not that I think it's particularly useful but the others say it is

Having discussed and given examples of the activities undertaken in the WD workshops, I will turn next to the evaluation of these activities, from the perspectives of the six MA writers.

Evaluation

After a year of WD meetings, the organiser wanted to take stock and evaluate the workshops, looking at what might have been successful for the students, and finding what improvements might be made for the future. The evaluation that follows is from the perspective of the student-writers.

Data collection and analysis

The data used to evaluate the WD workshops was collected over the course of the year using audio-recordings of the workshops, participant journals, participant in-workshop writing, an open-ended questionnaire, and group discussion.

As the number of informants in this study was so small, the data was analysed by first culling, from all of the data sources, any text relevant to each of the workshop activities, and then collating the information – organizing it firstly into positive and negative comments about each activity, and then into any themes that emerged about individual activities. The summary of this analysis will be discussed below.

Evaluation of workshop activities from the student writers' perspectives

The point of departure for this evaluation was the open-ended questionnaire, which was then supplemented and cross-checked with information from the other data sources (journals, recordings, discussions).

Writing activities

The freewriting/generative writing activities got mixed reviews. Two of the students did not find these writing exercises so useful:

Well, I think I am not the free-writing type. I found it stressful to write everything that came into my mind. Apart from this I could not see how it should help my writing progress.

This writer was more pleased with the writing to prompts, however:

I liked the free writing we did about our presentations, though. I didn't realise how much I already had in my head about my topic, and it felt really good to just get it all down on paper.

One writer was skeptical about freewriting at first, but later found it useful:

[freewriting was] great, first I was so sceptical about it because I was more of the type of writer who needs clear structures. But after having tried it, I found that I got my thoughts sorted out and once they were on paper I felt better.

Other members quite liked the unloading writing activities:

I *heart* free-writing, and those finishing the sentence things. I like the fact that you can express your ideas, share your comments without actually thinking about the structure of the sentences, writing style etc. Plus, ideas/comments/thoughts that are expressed immediately on paper without having the time to go over them again in your head are always better, more useful, and give a clearer picture of something.

Feedback activities

The feedback activities were found to be useful. Members seemed to enjoy exploring the different types of feedback: '[learning different kinds of feedback] was great because I didn't know that there are so many different types'. Although as one writer pointed out, 'The many kinds of feedback which

were presented were interesting, but in the end, we only used the "standard" types most of the time'. The recorded data supports this statement. While some other types of feedback were employed, the group often fell into the default mode of giving advice, or opinions. Some members preferred the default, evaluative, feedback:

To my mind, giving feedback is clearly expressing your opinion saying what you liked or did not about something so the person receiving it get a picture of what the others think.

Other members, on the other hand, did not:

Before we got the sheet with different kinds of feedback I always thought that feedback means criticism (good/bad). And I did not like this way of feedback, because for me this is not very constructive. At different stages one needs different kind of feedback.

Reflective journals

The reflective journals had mixed reviews as well. From a rather non-committal 'it could be helpful' to a more enthusiastic:

It is good for many things: you can let off steam, you can write down interesting ideas, goals, feedback for your peers, feedback you received from peers and you can monitor your writing process [...] It helps you getting an overview of what you did, where you are and so on. Often at the end of the day I am thinking, hell, what did I do? Was I lazy again, or did I get something done. It may not look much when you look at your [writing] and count the number of words, but when you make a list of what you did, even tiny things, you'll see that you actually achieved something.

Goal setting

The goal setting was generally well-received:

The goal setting is a really clever idea. It makes you want to work more,. It gives you some pressure [and] it makes you proud and happy when you can tick off your goals one after another and see the list of goals becoming smaller and smaller. Moreover, it is a kind of competition and makes you productive [...] Writing the goals down was even more effective. You feel that you have to stick to it as you said so to the others in the workshop.

although one writer admitted that it only works if you stick to the goals:

If it's working it's a good thing. In my case (I'm a lazy bone, I know), it often didn't work, so maybe I should focus a little bit more on that.

This would perhaps indicate the necessity of the goals being specific and achievable (Murray 2006).

Other activities (the social element)

It seems, however, that the 'academic' activities were not the main benefits from the student viewpoint: affective benefits were much more valued. When asked what was the best thing about the workshops, 'friendship' was the overriding theme in the answers:

[the best part was] the atmosphere, the laughter, the team spirit, that we became friends. Besides having a positive effect on our assignments we had so much fun and became friends...Some of the most important friends during my time at [this] University came to the workshop regularly. We did not only work on our assignments but also talked about other stuff, made jokes, talked nonsense, it was like hanging out with friends. The other aspect was of course that this group feeling helped me with my problems with writing assignments. We could learn from each other and it helped me a lot. We are all friends and when it comes worse to worse we are there for each other.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In general, the students perceived the WD workshops as beneficial, and as such, were successful. There are, however, some improvements that might be made. This section will look at what went well, what could be done differently next time round, and finally at some further research possibilities.

Aspects that went well

The predominantly positive aspects of the WD workshops were the enjoyment that all members (organiser and student-writers alike) took from them, and the sense of community and support among the members. It seemed that the goal of *making the process of academic writing more pleasant for the writer* was unequivocally achieved.

Along with the social and affective benefits, there seemed to be some academic merit as well. Most members experienced, at the very least, a heightened awareness of individual writing processes, and feedback practices and preferences. The activities in the workshops seemed to help the members develop themselves as writers, and some of the members themselves perceived an improvement in their own writing.

Suggestions for improvement next time

That the overriding objectives of the WD workshop were more or less reached is not to say that improvements could not be made.

The first step in improving future workshops might be to be more active, earlier on, in establishing a common language for talking about writing and feedback. The recorded data revealed very little of the meta-talk about writing and feedback, which is seen to be beneficial for writer development (Aitchison 2003). It might be recommended to present writing process and feedback models, and to do so fairly soon after the workshops commence, in order to facilitate more discussion.

Secondly, although a peer-led, non-directive group still seems desirable, it might not hurt for the organiser to be a bit more directive, particularly if the balance of workshop time is tipping too far toward the frivolous, which the audio-recorded data revealed to be a possible problem. One member suggested that having a 'task' for each workshop would improve the workshop, though he did not elaborate or offer an example of a task. However, having a organiser-designed task (writing, or reading, or feedback tasks) might indeed help keep the workshops focused, yet still leave room for the beneficial socialising.

Finally, added to the list of workshop activities would be some more extended writing time. The freewriting usually only lasted a few minutes, and it has been found to be beneficial for writers to sit together and write for longer periods of time (Murray 2006). Drawing from Murray and Newton's (2009) structured retreat framework, thirty minutes to one hour of workshop time could be used for each member to work individually, in some capacity, on his/her writing project. This would be particularly useful if the writers' groups were entirely student-led, and students could make use of the time to get some of their writing done.

All in all, while improvements could be made in future groups, the members of the WD group agreed that the workshops were worthwhile and 'helped them get through this ordeal' of completing the course work on a master's degree. Writers' groups may be a way forward in supporting master's-level academic writers.

References

- Aitchison, C. (2003) 'Thesis Writing Circles'. *Hong Kong Journal of Applied Linguistics* 8 (2), 97–115
- Aitchison, C. and Lee, A. (2006) 'Research Writing: Problems and Pedagogies'. *Teaching in Higher Education* 11 (3), 265–278
- Altrichter, H., Posch, P., and Somekh, B. (1993) *Teachers Investigate their Work*. London and New York: Routledge
- Badley, G. (2008) 'Developing Authentic Academic Writers'. *Quality Assurance in Education* 16 (4) 363–374
- Boice, R. (1987) 'A Program for Facilitating Scholarly Writing'. *Higher Education Research & Development* 6 (1), 9–20
- Chihota, M. C. (2008) 'The Games People Play: Taking on Postgraduate Identities in the Context of Writer Circles'. *Journal of Applied Linguistics* 4 (1), 131–136
- Crisp, B. R. (2007) 'Is it Worth the Effort? How Feedback Influences Students' Subsequent Submission of Assessable Work'. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education* 32 (5), 571–581
- Cuthbert, D. and Spark, C. (2008) 'Getting a GRiP: Examining the Outcomes of a Pilot Program to Support Graduate Research Students in Writing for Publication'. *Studies in Higher Education* 33 (1), 77–88
- de Bono, E. (1994) *De Bono's Thinking Course: Revised Edition*. New York: Facts on File
- Edge, J. (1992) *Cooperative Development: Professional Self-Development Through Cooperation with Colleagues*. Harlow: Longman
- Edge, J. (2002) *Continuing Cooperative Development: A Discourse Framework for Individuals as Colleagues*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press
- Elbow, P. (1998). *Writing Without Teachers*. New York: OUP
- Elbow, P. (2000) *Everyone Can Write*. New York: OUP
- Elbow, P. (2008) 'Keynote address'. *Writing Development in Higher Education*. held 25–27 June 2008, University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland
- Elbow, P. and Belanoff, P. (1989) *Sharing and Responding*. New York: Random House
- Elbow, P. and Belanoff, P. (2000) *A Community of Writers: A workshop Course in Writing*. 3rd edn. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education
- Emig, J. (1977) 'Writing as a mode of learning'. *College Composition and Communication* 28, 122–128
- Flower, L. and Hayes, J. (1981) 'A Cognitive Process Theory of Writing'. *College Composition and Communication* 32 (4), 365–387
- Furneaux, C. (1998) 'Process Writing'. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 257–260
- Gere, A. R. (1987) *Writing Groups: History, Theory, and Implications*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

- Gere, A. R. and Abbott, R. D. (1985) 'Talking about Writing: The Language of Writing Groups'. *Research in the Teaching of English* 19 (4), 362–385
- Girgensohn, K. (2005) 'How to make a virtue of necessities: Teacherless writing group work at the European University Viadrina/Germany'. *3rd Biennial Conference of the European Association for the Teaching of Academic Writing: Teaching Writing On Line and Face to Face*. held 22-24 June 2005 at Hellenic American University, Athens, Greece
- Grant, B.M. (2006) 'Writing in the Company of Other Women: Exceeding the Boundaries'. *Studies in Higher Education* 31 (4), 483–495
- Haas, S. (2009) 'Writers' Groups for MA ESOL Students: Collaboratively Constructing a Model of the Writing Process'. *ELTED Journal* 12, 23–30
- Harris, M. (1995) 'Talking in the Middle: Why Writers Need Writing Tutors'. *College English* 57 (1), 27–42
- Hyland, K. and Hyland, F. (2006) 'Feedback on Second Language Students' Writing'. *Language Teaching* 39, 83–101
- Keh, C. (1990) 'Feedback in the Writing Process: A Model and Methods for Implementation'. *ELT Journal* 44 (4), 294–304
- Kennedy, E. (2007) 'The Academic Writing of Teacher Candidates'. *Educational Studies in Language and Literature* 7 (2), 141–72
- Kurtoglu-Hooton, N. (2004) 'Post-Observation Feedback as an Instigator of Teacher Learning and Change'. *The IATEFL TTED SIG E-Newsletter* July 2004
- Lee, A. and Boud, D. (2003) 'Writing Groups, Change and Academic Identity: Research Development as Local Practice'. *Studies in Higher Education* 28 (2), 187–200
- Luth, W. and Obermeier, A. (2000) 'Celebrating Collaboration: The Writer's Peer Support Group'. *The Language Teacher* 24 (12), 28
- Luth, W., Barfield, A., Gardner, S. and Field, M. (2001) 'The Language Teacher's Peer Support Group: Motivated by Writers Wanting to Develop Their Writing'. *The Language Teacher* 25 (12), 12
- Moore, S. (2003) 'Writers' Retreats for Academics: exploring and increasing the motivation to write'. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 27 (3), 333–342
- Morss, K. and Murray, R. (2001) 'Researching Academic Writing within a Structured Programme: insights and outcomes'. *Studies in Higher Education* 26 (1), 35–52
- Mullen, C. (2001) 'The Need for a Curricula Writing Model for Graduate Students'. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 25 (1), 117–126
- Murphey, T. (2001) 'Reported Belief Changes through Near Peer Role Modeling'. *TESL-EJ* 5 (3), 1–15
- Murray, R. E. G. (2001) 'Integrating Teaching and Research Through Writing Development for Students and Staff'. *Active Learning in Higher Education* 2 (1), 31–45
- Murray, R. E. G. (2006) *How to Write a Thesis*. 2nd edn. Maidenhead: Open University
- Murray, R. and Newton, M. (2009) 'Writing Retreat as Structured Intervention: Margin or Mainstream?' *Higher Education Research and Development* 28 (5), 541–553

- Murray, R. and MacKay, G. (1998) 'Supporting Academic Development in Public Output: Reflections and Propositions'. *International Journal for Academic Development*. 3 (1), 54–63
- Murray, R. and Moore, S. (2006) *The Handbook of Academic Writing: A Fresh Approach*. Maidenhead: Open University
- Murray, R. and Newton, M. (2008) 'Facilitating Writing for Publication'. *Physiotherapy* 94, 29–34
- Murray, R., Thow, M., Moore, S., and Murphy, M. (2008) 'The Writing Consultation: Developing Academic Writing Practices'. *Journal of Further and Higher Education* 32 (2), 119–128
- Nilson, L. (2003a) 'Improving Student Peer Feedback'. *College Teaching* 51 (1), 34–38
- Nilson, L. (2003b) 'Helping Students Help Each Other: Making Peer Feedback More Valuable'. *Essays on Teaching Excellence* 14, 8
- Reeves, J. (2002) *Writing Alone, Writing Together: A Guide for Writers and Writing Groups*. Novato, CA: New World Library
- Rohman, D. G. (1965) 'Pre-Writing: The Stage of Discovery in the Writing Process'. *College Composition and Communication* 16 (2), 106–112
- Schneider, P. (2003) *Writing Alone, and with Others*. New York: OUP
- Thompson, J. C. (1999) 'Beyond Fixing Today's Paper: Promoting Metacognition and Writing Development in the Tutorial Through Self-Questioning'. *The Writing Lab Newsletter*. 23 (6), 1–6
- Washburn, A. (2008) 'Writing Circle Feedback: Creating a Vibrant Community of Scholars'. *Journal of Faculty Development* 22 1, 32–39
- Zhu, W. (1995) 'Effects of Training for Peer Response on Students' Comments and Interaction'. *Written Communication* 12 (4), 492–528