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# STUDENT-STAFF COLLABORATIVE RESOURCES

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## COLLABORATIVE WRITING

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**OVERVIEW**

**ACTIVITY**



## OVERVIEW & PURPOSE

With student-staff collaboration and partnership being of increasing focus in HE, a greater understanding of how to support and facilitate the student-staff co-writing process would be beneficial. Co-writing can be a rewarding and beneficial experience but also has its challenges. It is a process which requires clear, regular communication to ensure everyone has realistic expectations and harmonious working relationships. However, time for co-writing and publishing is often pressured in peoples' workloads, and the process itself can be laden with insider knowledge and academic social etiquette which is not always made explicit or demystified for new colleagues and students.

The aim of this resource is for staff to download set of templates to use as a prompt when co-writing with students and/or colleagues. This resource enables various dimensions of the co-writing process to be made transparent, so as to be inclusive of people of all levels of experience, and to clarify clear roles, responsibilities and a united approach to co-writing that will facilitate effective collaborative writing.

The resources are intended to be used at the stage after some form of collaborative research has taken place, data has been gathered and you are in the position of beginning the co-writing process. This is most likely to be for publication in a journal, but the resource could be adapted for co-writing project reports or funding bids.

We would like to acknowledge and credit two resources that have been very informative for the development of this resource, including the McMaster Co-writing template and the Research Whisper's (2012) blog article discussing co-writing approaches.

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## ACTIVITY

**Step 1:** Co-writing team meet with all members present – share your ideas concerning the various elements of the template. Through discussion reach decisions, complete the template and project lead send round a final version to the team

**Step 2:** During team meeting, use the co-writing approach cards to decide how you will approach the process collaboratively and decide on roles and responsibilities.

**Step 3:** Use the reflective questions resource to facilitate ongoing discussions to review the co-writing process, identify emerging findings, clarify the key arguments and keep on track with writing deadlines

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**Step 1:** Template to complete collectively through discussion as a team; project lead to send completed version round after meeting

## BEGINNING THE CO-WRITING PROCESS

1. THE PUBLICATION/ RESEARCH PROJECT	
Project/publication title	What is the working title for the publication?
Journals	Which journals could you aim for this paper to be published in?
Peer review	Or who could you ask to be peer reviewers of your paper before submitting to a journal?
Context	What is the bigger picture challenge, problem or issue that your study addresses?
Contribution	What is the anticipated contribution to knowledge your study will make?
Literature/ Conceptual Framework	What body of literature will you draw on? What conceptual framework, models or theories will be used?
Research Questions	What questions are guiding your research that your study or writing will answer?
Methods	What methodological approaches and ethical considerations have been taken to generate data for this study?
Findings	What approach will be taken to reporting the findings from the data? Will this approach be shared between contributors and if so how?
Discussion and Conclusion	How will findings be critically analysed and conclusions be made?

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## 2. THE CO-WRITING TEAM

Project and publication lead	Who will be leading the publication overall?
Project team members	Who is part of the authorship team? Is there anyone else that should be invited?
Authorship	What is the criteria for determining the order of authorship in your discipline? In what order will the writers be credited on the paper?
Paper contributors – experience and knowledge	What previous experience or knowledge do you/ team members bring to this co-writing? How are these factors drawn upon in your context to inform decisions of authorship?
Paper contributors – personal goals and professional development	What personal development and professional skills/research skills do you anticipate developing as a result of co-writing this paper?
Paper contributors – roles and responsibilities	What are the contributions and responsibilities each writer will make to the publication?

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### 3. DEADLINES

<b>Deadlines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- When is the deadline for getting a first draft of the paper?</li><li>- When is the deadline for submitting to journal for peer review?</li><li>- Dates for next few meetings to move work along?</li></ul>
<b>How often will we meet face to face and/or virtually to touch base on out writing?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- How often will we meet as a team about our study/writing?</li><li>- Which places on campus are best to meet, (bearing in mind student-owned and staff-owned spaces)? What environments will ensure all team members feel comfortable? Will certain spaces be useful for different stages of the writing?</li><li>- Can we identify dates for our next 2 meetings?</li></ul>
<b>What technology shall we use to share documentation?</b>	University shared drive? Google docs? Dropbox? Track changes on Microsoft Word doc? Other? Email one version between contributors?

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#### 4. ACADEMIC CO-WRITING APPROACH

<p>RE. Step 2 - Using the cards, Do any of the research whisperer's 3 approaches seem useful in deciding how you will approach the writing process together?</p>	<p>Layering approach? Bricolage approach? Lego approach? Or a different approach?</p> <p>How will your chosen approach impact who has and shares version control of the paper?</p>
<p>Learning styles and differences in academic writing?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Are there any needs amongst you as a team that should be factored in to consideration when planning out who will do what?</li><li>- Are there any aspects of academic writing that anyone would like some guidance, support or development in during this process?</li></ul>
<p>Useful resources for developing academic writing?</p>	<p>What resources does your institution have to support academic writing?</p> <p>Do you have any tips you can share with one another for developing your academic writing further?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <a href="http://about.brighton.ac.uk/ask/undergraduates/essays-and-assignments/academic-writing-style/">http://about.brighton.ac.uk/ask/undergraduates/essays-and-assignments/academic-writing-style/</a></li><li>- <a href="http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/writing-for-university/academic-writing/">http://www.learnhigher.ac.uk/writing-for-university/academic-writing/</a></li></ul>

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## Step 2: Research Whisperer's Co-writing Approaches (2012) Activity

Print and cut out the following cards and have some discussion concerning the relevant questions to section 4 'Academic Co-writing Approach' in the template

### LAYERING APPROACH

"One person does a whole first draft after an initial, loose meeting with the team about content and overall direction. This person sends it around to the other authors (serially); they edit and add to it.

**PROS:** This should be a very organic process, with the team's critical ideas meshing in the text and each writer building on their co-authors' work. When done well, this kind of article reads more smoothly because there's less jarring between people's writing styles. It should present a beautiful synthesis of the great minds behind the publication. Naturally, the person who puts together the first draft (if they do it properly) takes on a significant load for the writing project – choose this person well!

**MUST HAVE:** Strong organiser and draft schedule to keep momentum of work going. Every author should know when the next person is expecting the draft, and the entire paper must have a deadline (self-set or otherwise). It's too easy to lose the thread of the paper development in the middle of other academic commitments."

What are the cons to this approach?

Would this approach work for you?

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### BRICOLAGE APPROACH

"The research team meets and discusses the general content and structure of the work. Major themes and sections are sketched out. The sections are then allocated to various members of the team, who go away, write their bit, then return the text to the publication leader. The leader stitches the sections together, smoothing connections if necessary, and sends it around the team (serially) for final 'massage' of content and style.

**PROS:** This can be a faster way to get something written, with people writing to their strengths or covering the specific section of the project they carried out. For this approach, the whole team doesn't necessarily have to be au fait with every step of the research; as with the process of the actual project, researchers can dip in, be the 'expert', then take on the 'informed lay-reader' review role when the whole thing is complete (that is, read for general integrity of structure and flow of argument).

**MUST HAVE:** Again, must have strong organiser/leader for the publication project to keep everyone on schedule and to make the call on structure and direction in the preliminary and final stages."

What are the cons to this approach?

Would this approach work for you?

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### LEGO APPROACH

“For this one, the research team meets (maybe multiple times) and nuts out all the content for the paper, right down to the required paragraphs, maybe even their topic sentences. Paragraphs are allocated to various team members, they write them up, then send them back. Leader stitches the sections together, smoothing connections if necessary, and sends it around the team (serially) to ‘massage’ content and style.

**PROS:** This approach requires a much longer preparation and discussion time, but the actual writing of the publication can be extremely fast. It’s a bit like an academic ‘paint by numbers’ template. It allows you to complete the bulk of the writing very quickly.

**MUST HAVE:** Consensus about whole-of-publication content and direction, and a co-authoring team that can work well together (even when thrashing things out on the nitty-gritty paragraph levels).”

What are the cons to this approach?

Would this approach work for you?

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**STEP 3:** Reflective questions to use during further team meetings to prompt discussion and facilitate productive meetings, whether virtual or face to face. It might be particularly useful for students to use in advance of meetings to gather their thoughts for the meeting.

Co-writing Updates – Questions for discussion	
Are there any questions, points for clarification or challenges you've encountered during your writing recently?	
Have you identified any key points to contribute to the overarching key argument of the paper in your writing recently?	
What are the next steps for each member of the co-writing team to take before our next meeting or deadline?	

\* <https://theresearchwhisperer.wordpress.com/2012/02/21/co-writing/>

\* <http://www.apastyle.org/manual/related/fine-1993.pdf>

\* <https://patthomson.net/2013/05/13/should-you-could-you-would-you-co-write-with-your-supervisor/>

\* <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/Research/Staff-Students-Examiners/ResearchDegreesAndStudents/Documents/PDF/GuidelinesSupervisionCo-authorship.pdf>