



## Writer's Block

A familiar companion of postgraduate students

# Postgraduate School

## Newsletter 04/July 2013

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## From Office of the Director

Congratulations to the candidates who submitted their theses and dissertations for examination at the beginning of July. We are looking forward to favourable examiner reports for all of you.

We have many exciting plans for the second semester. In August we host a presentation by Prof Max Bergman, a well-known research methodologist – currently living in Switzerland – and expert in Mixed Methods Research. He will present a workshop on different Mixed Method Research Designs. We have negotiated with a number of international presentations to present workshops on research methodology, writing for high impact journals, choosing suitable designs and effective research supervision. Consult our website for regular updates.

As part of our strategy to help postgraduate candidates develop marketable skills we will also present three project management courses. Everybody who completes this course will receive a certificate.

In October (specific date) we will be hosting a Research- and Careers Day where we will be hosting workshops on CV writing, preparing for a job interview and getting ready for entry into the 21<sup>st</sup> century career market. We are negotiating with private recruitment consultants to present these workshops. In addition we will also host a number of potential employers who will do recruitment for their companies. The following day we will have our first Post Research day. Our vice-Rector Academic will start the day with a presentation on research supervision, followed by the 3 Minute Thesis Competition. On these two days, students from all faculties will have the opportunity to display / exhibit their research through posters and exhibitions.

We are exploring ways to provide better support to our part-time and off-campus students. Some of the options are to schedule weekend workshops. We also aim to develop a resource centre with video recordings and power point presentations of all our workshops and to use social media to exchange information and ideas with our students. Let us know how we can best support you on your postgraduate journey. Send your suggestions and comments to [devaldone@ufs.ac.za](mailto:devaldone@ufs.ac.za)

Wishing you the best for this new semester.

Warm regards

Henriette

## Some views on writing:

- Writing is one continuous mistake
- Writing is never perfect
- Writing is a process that stops in an interesting place
- Writing is simple, but it isn't easy
- Writing is the art at which nobody ever becomes the master

## Writer's block: Help me, I'm stuck!

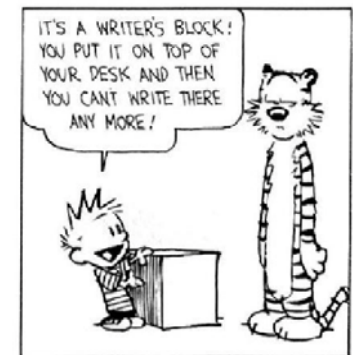
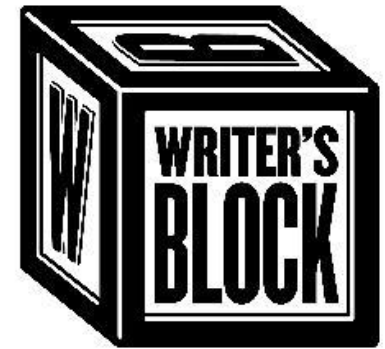
- If you can't write the first sentence, start with the second! Don't get stuck with the first sentence. Just start with any sentence.
- Writing is an iterative process. You write, you refine, you write, you refine.
- Understand the process: Writing is a messy process. We see other's final products, not their drafts!
- Free yourself from perfection. You don't have to show others your first draft.
- Draw a picture of map your ideas.
- Do some free writing to get your thoughts going: take a pen and paper and write whatever comes to you, and keep writing without stopping or editing. This works well, especially before you want to do some serious writing.
- Remember: writing is not editing, proofreading or referencing. Just write. Edit later.
- If the sentences don't flow, start with bulleting ideas. Get your ideas on paper in any form.
- The imposter syndrome: "the imposter syndrome is the belief that you are one mistake

away from being exposed as a complete and utter fraud". The good news is that the imposter syndrome is that you are not alone. In fact, 90% of researchers develop imposter syndrome (Gardiner & Kearns *Turbocharge your writing*).

- Understand your writing process – what works best for you. Some of us prefer oral presentation – if that is your strength talk to another person about your work and then write down what you have said.
- Find out your most productive writing time and protect it jealously

## A few quotes:

- **Neil Gaiman:** *This is how you do it: you just sit down at the keyboard and you put one word after another until it's done. It's that easy and that hard;*
- **Pat Francis:** *The best way of learning about writing is by engaging in writing.*
- **Nathaniel Hawthorne :** *Easy reading is damn hard writing;*
- **Joseph Heller:** *Every writer I know has trouble writing;*
- **John Hunt:** *Fear is a lousy motivator for fresh thinking;*
- **Julia Cameron:** *By resigning as the self-conscious author, I wrote freely*
- **John Hunt:** *Waiting for everything to be perfect before joining the game will take an eternity*



## UPCOMING SCHOLARSHIP CALLS:

- National Research Foundation: Freestanding Master's and Doctoral Scholarship  
Closing date 17 September
- The Department of Science & Technology (DST) Renewable & Sustainable Energy Scholarships Programme (RSES). Closing date 10 August 2013
- DAAD-NRF In-Country Scholarship Call for 2014. Closing date 09 August 2013
- The Rhodes Scholarships to Oxford for Southern Africa. Closing date 15 August 2013
- The South African Square Kilometre Array Project. Closing date 02 September 2013

See our website for more detail.

## Who are we?

- **Director:** Henriette van den Berg (x3451), [vdberghs@ufs.ac.za](mailto:vdberghs@ufs.ac.za)
- **Postgraduate funding:** Joy Nogabe (x2045), [Nogabesi@ufs.ac.za](mailto:Nogabesi@ufs.ac.za)
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## Introducing Ms Alet Olivier – Lecturer focusing on Academic writing & Plagiarism

Alet is currently busy with her PhD. Herewith some of her thoughts:



### **WHAT I HAVE LEARNT SO FAR ON MY PHD JOURNEY.**

*More than ever before, I have come to understand through my doctoral studies that writing is a PROCESS, something I always teach the students. Even with apparently small writing tasks, there is not "quick fix". Writing is thinking. Thinking asks for more thinking. Fragile thoughts have to take root or germinate and gradually grow into ideas. Ideas have to be contextualised, verified, organised, evaluated and written down in an appropriate style. By accepting the process in writing, I have come to learn the following truths I share with you:*

**P – Passion** for you topic and writing task will keep you going

**R – Read**, read, read. Read as much as possible content knowledge as well as for writing style

**O – We need Others:** friends, family, colleagues to support, encourage you and who are willing to listen

**C – Check** and be **critical** towards your own writing – do not leave this to your supervisor

**E – Every** writer has trouble writing – good reading can only be attained through hard work. And remember, we only see others' final products, not their drafts.

**S – Start;** do not procrastinate, even if you do not feel like it.

**S – Strategise:** plan, scaffold, mind-map your ideas until you are **satisfied** that your writing makes **sense**.

## News from the Postgraduate Student Council

### 3-MIN THESIS COMPETITION

The 3 Minute Thesis Competition for Qwa-qwa Campus was held on 19 June. The purpose is for postgraduate students to share their research experience, methodology and it helps them connect and network. The winners were:

#### PhD Category

1. Mokhena Teboho
2. Thabang Mokhothu
3. Tshele Moloi

#### MSc Category

1. Tshepiso Molaba
2. Nthatisi Molefe
3. Moeti Taioe

#### Honours Category

1. Mmono Motsiri
2. Fikile Makhubu
3. Ungula Jatani

The competition will be repeated on Bloemfontein Campus during October.

### POSTGRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL

The aim of the Postgraduate Student Council on campus is to ensure that the academic and social needs of postgraduate students are met.

#### Activities : Community service and social activities

1. The **Nelson Mandela Day Project** for 2013 focused on distributing stationery to two township schools in the Motheo District Bloemfontein. This year's project was sponsored by the School of Nursing (UFS) who contributed R13 000 to the project.

2. **Canned food day** (non-perishable food donations from the University community) will take place in September and will be distributed to an Old Age Home and an Orphanage. Contact Ms Biyo for more information.

## Programme for August & September

Date	Time	Topic	Presenter
27 – 29 Aug	09h00 – 16h30	Project Management	Francois Minnaar
28 Aug	12h00 – 13h00	The importance of technology transfer at the UFS	Christle de Beer
30 Aug	08h30 – 12h30	Proposal Writing	Prof Rita Nieman
02 Sept	09h00 – 16h00	Introduction to Social Innovation Research	Prof Jeremy Millard
5 – 6 Sept	5 <sup>th</sup> 09h00 – 16h00 6 <sup>th</sup> 08h30 – 14h30	Research Supervision	Prof Gina Wisker Brighton University
9 – 10 Sept	08h30 – 16h30	Action Research	Dr Ruth Albertyn
9 – 10 Sept	09h00 – 16h30	Scientific Writing Skills for Theses & Dissertations	Selene Delpont, US
10 Sept	16h00 – 18h00	Generic Academic Writing course for Honours students	Alet Olivier
11 – 13 Sept	09h00 – 16h30	Project Management	Dr Francois Minnaar
12 Sept	16h00 – 18h00	Generiese skryfkursus vir Honneursstudente	Alet Olivier
16 – 17 Sept	09h00 – 17h00	Planning a research article (Selected participants from Natural & Health Sciences only)	Prof Graham Baker
17 Sept	16h00 – 18h00	Generic Academic Writing course for Honours students	Alet Olivier
18 – 20 Sept	08h30 – 16h30	Overview of Research Design	Prof Rene Pelisier
19 Sept	16h00 – 18h00	Generiese Skryfkursus vir Honneursstudente	Alet Olivier

As space is limited, it is compulsory to register for all the courses. Enquiries can be sent to [postgraduatersvp@ufs.ac.za](mailto:postgraduatersvp@ufs.ac.za)