



Help Students Avoid Procrastinating and Binge-Writing

How can I motivate students to work on their papers throughout the semester instead of waiting until the night before it is due?

Procrastination & Binge-writing	
Problem	Possible Solutions
Students may believe they need a large, uninterrupted block of time to write	<p>Distribute accountability throughout the semester:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Take 3 minutes at the beginning (or end) of class and have students write what they have accomplished in their paper so far & what concerns they have. *Require drafts.
Students stop & edit every few minutes	<p>Help students recognize premature editing:</p> <p>Too many students edit as they draft. However, when they edit, the half of their brains that looks at global issues shuts down. When students are first drafting their papers, consider having class in a computer class room. Inform students that they should not stop and think about what to write; instead, write to see what they think. Then, instruct students to turn off the monitors so they cannot see the screen.</p> <p>Type 5 minutes. Turn on monitor to look for any good ideas or to pair ideas, etc. Continue this pattern for 2-3 more periods of 5 minutes.</p> <p>Goodson, P. (2017). <i>Becoming an academic writer: 50 exercises for paced, productive, and powerful writing</i>. Los Angeles: Sage.</p>
Students may produce papers in a frenzy right before the paper is due	<p>Counteract this belief:</p> <p>It takes about 10,000 hours to master a skill. Good writing requires deliberate practice, similar to learning a sport or playing an instrument. For example, college students can typically do about 20 push-ups in a row. After deliberate practice and training, adults have exceeded 26,000 push-ups in 24 hours (one push-up for every 3 seconds).</p> <p>Ericsson, K. A., Nandagopal, K., & Roring, R. W. (2009). Toward science of exceptional achievement: Attaining superior performance through deliberate practice. <i>Longevity, Regeneration, and Optimal Health</i>, 1172, 199-217.</p> <p>Students may believe they write better under pressure. (Illusion of confidence)</p>
Students may believe they spend more time writing than they actually do	<p>Consider requiring a Writing Log:</p> <p>Boice compared the output of new faculty who wrote and logged their time with those who did not log their time: “By writing daily and keeping records the second group was able to outperform the first group [who did not keep a log] by a factor of four” (Gray, 2005, pp. 19-20).</p> <p>Faculty who wrote, logged their writing time regularly, and shared their logs with others were nine times more productive than faculty who did not share their logs (Goodson, 2017).</p>

<p>Students may believe that bingeing with few breaks is “highly euphoric and essential to their best, most brilliant writing”</p>	<p>Invite a guest faculty (or other) to share examples of his or her own writing: Boice studied 16 new faculty across disciplines and campuses: One group of eight wrote “the way they always did, in binges with few breaks and with a hurried pace—a gait that they reported . . . as highly euphoric and essential to their best, most brilliant writing.” The other eight faculty wrote regularly at least three times each week (Boice, 1997).</p> <p>Results: “Binge writers (a) Accomplished far less writing over-all (b) Got fewer editorial acceptances (c) Scored higher on the Beck Depression Inventory (d) Listed fewer creative ideas for writing” (Goodson, 2017, p. 60).</p>
<p>Students’ binge-writing habits may be difficult to break</p>	<p>Use appropriate strategies to reduce procrastination: * Provide social support – use a buddy system * Instruction & feedback – assign students to submit drafts, etc. Remember, not all assignments require feedback; “intermittent feedback . . . has the benefit of enhancing long-term retention of the skill” (p. 261) Kellogg, R. T., & Whiteford, A. P. (2009). Training advanced writing skills: The case for deliberate practice. <i>Educational Psychologist</i>, 44(4), 250-266. * Require students to come to the FHSS Writing Lab with a draft</p>
<p>Students may believe they are being “inspired” when ideas begin to flow and may resist editing</p>	<p>Inform students of documented effects of binge-writing: Binge-writing can “severely deplete attention producing the state of dysphoria and lack of concentration characteristic of writer's block” (Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009, p. 257).</p> <p>Those who binge often experience accompanying feelings of stress, blocked thinking, and depression [Boice, B. (1997). Which is more productive, writing in binge patterns of creative illness or in moderation? <i>Written Communication</i>, 14(4), 435-459.]</p>

FHSS Writing Lab

1175 JFSB 801-422-4454 fhss-writinglab@byu.edu

<https://fhsswriting.byu.edu/Pages/Home.aspx>

Faculty Supervisor: Joyce Adams (422-8168) * **Student Lab Manager:** Spencer (422-4454)