Miller Writing Center: Accountability Groups

Academia can pull you in many directions; having a supportive community of writers around you can help you be more productive as a writer and scholar. Traditional writing groups are great, but can be difficult to maintain. Kerry Ann Rockquemore has developed an alternative that she calls "accountability groups."

Accountability groups are different from traditional writing groups in that you're not reading and responding to each other's work—you're focused on the *process* of writing. Group members help each other by identifying issues that are keeping their colleagues from achieving their goals, offering suggestions to overcome those obstacles, and celebrating each other's successes.

This limited scope and simpler structure can make these groups more sustainable and productive. You don't have to be familiar with each other's scholarship—all you have to do is set your own writing goals, reflect on your writing process, and commit to a one-hour hour weekly meeting to discuss each other's goals.

A Simple Set of Suggested Rules:
- Each group consists of about four people (if you've got a different number, adjust your rules accordingly).
- All members commit to meeting once a week (face-to-face or via conference call)
- Each meeting lasts only one hour.
- Each person gets 15 minutes to discuss their goals based on these prompts:

   o **My writing goals for last week were _____**

   o **I met my goals: ☐ Yes ☐ No**

   o **If I didn't meet them, it's because of _____**

   o **My writing goals for next week are _____**

Group Roles:
Each group member takes on a specific role to keep the group on-task. These roles can stay set, or you can swap, change, or rotate roles as you go forward. That's up to the group. Here are some suggested roles:

1. **"The Scheduler:"** Determines the best time to meet and revises as needed. Doodle Polls and other scheduling systems are useful if you're the Scheduler. May also be responsible for the tech for conference calls.
2. **"The Historian:"** Keeps track of everyone's goals—this can be done in shared documents or just on scrap paper.
3. **"The Time-manager:"** Keeps track of the time during the meetings to ensure each person gets their full 15 minutes.
4. **"The Accountability Czar:"** Ensures the group meets regularly and everyone fulfills their roles appropriately.

You can share roles (or invent new ones) depending on the size of your group.

Follow these simple guidelines and set up your own accountability group! You can also contact the Miller Writing Center (writctr@auburn.edu) and we can try to connect you with other like-minded writers**.**