

LMU WRITING STUDIO: SUSTAINING WRITERLY PRACTICE WITHIN ACADEMIC CULTURES

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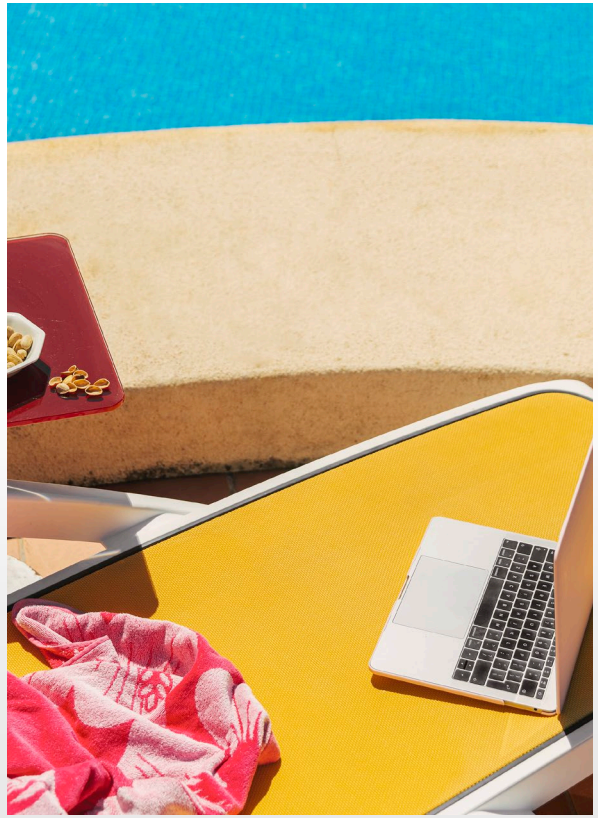
HEAD OF STUDENT EXPERIENCE AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE, ART AND DESIGN

LONDON METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

If you had all the time in the world to write, how would you use it?

How would you share it with others?





2019-2020

- University Teaching Fellow funding
- Writing retreats
- Structured Writing Group Facilitation training
- Global pandemic!

UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE OF WRITING



- ‘Students are scared of being wrong’
- Avoidance, binge writing, outsourcing to keep up with demand
- Blame attributed to the individual, not the culture or context
- Minimal developmental support (students don’t want to ‘not’ write)

WRITING SOCIAL 2020-21

- Monthly online writing space open to all students within a creative arts department
- Collaboration with Library Services
- Emphasis upon social interaction during lockdowns
- Positive impact on confidence about writing abilities



My role

Hold the time for space to write

Encourage trial and error

Preventing drift from timings

Create space for reflections



Writing goals

Quantify the task - numbers
e.g. 250 words, 4 paragraphs, 2 pages

Describe the task - verbs
e.g. Summarise what I know about this topic; describe my chosen object

Define the quality of the task - stages
e.g. Write a rough draft of the introduction; Revise the conclusion based on feedback

and…Experiment
Try something different! Write what you don't want to say or write something that you know is bad!

REFLECTIONS

What did you achieve? (e.g. number of words/pages; layer of writing…)

Might you adapt your goal in some way?

What will your next goal be?

IDENTIFYING WITH WRITING PRACTICES (2022)

- Sense of community where experiences are shared
- Making writing explicit through practice
- Learning to ‘be’ an academic writer



WE ARE THE CULTURE…

	Making it explicit	Sense of community	Learning to be an academic writer
2022	Core L4 module teaching; L6 dissertation writing group	Cross departmental writing retreats	Wrote an article
2023	Writing with students	Bi-monthly writing retreats	Co-wrote two chapters with colleagues and students
2024	Postgraduate focused writing group	Writing retreats for staff across the university	Co-wrote an article with my team of academic mentors

LMU WRITING STUDIO 2024-

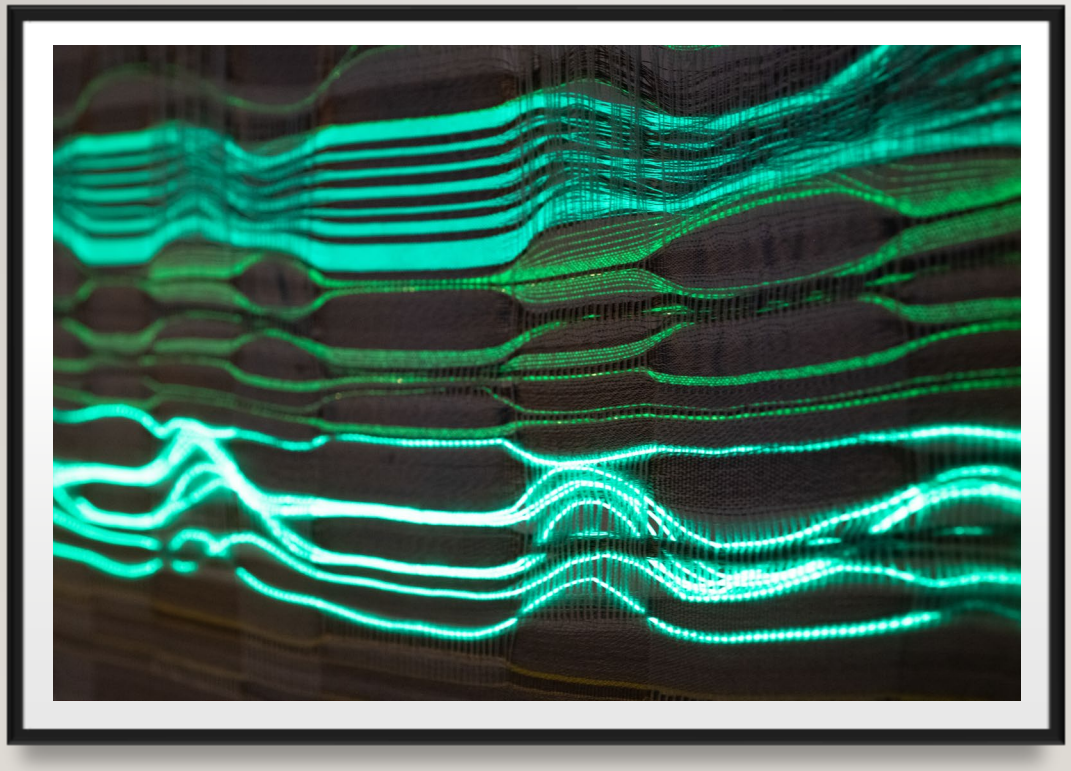
- Open access – just register your interest
- Term time only (approx 30 weeks Sept – June)
- Volunteer facilitators
- Approx 50 registrations by end of year 1 and 130 by midway of year 2
- Adaptive timings for writing blocks
- Consistent structure – goals, writing, reflections
- Publicised through existing internal channels
- Formal feedback for year 1

STRENGTHS…

- Feel more confident about writing
- Adapting the approach beyond – in the classroom and/or research practice
- Emerging community of practice?
- Facilitated immersion (*being in the mood doesn't get writing done!*)



CHALLENGES…



- Very few undergraduate students
- Higher education landscape – economic factors
- Exclusive vs open community
- Time: frequency and duration

Discussion

We *are* the academic culture so we can affect change in academic writing practices and perspectives (learning through doing)

Time is crucial but it's how we use it, not how much we need (containment)

Space, visibility and community (contextual immersion)

WHAT'S NEXT?

Workshops where people can explore, design and reflect upon academic writerly cultures in good company!

- Midlands Conference for Critical Thought, University of Warwick, 21-22 May
- Improving University Teaching, University of Glasgow, 15-17 July