

Inspiring Graduate Student Authors: A Collaborative Community Approach

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Montclair State University

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Introductions



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Presentation Outline

Welcome!

Graduate Student Journal Article Writing Group



- Icebreaker
- Literature Review
- The Graduate Student Journal Article Writing Group at Montclair State University
 - How it Runs
 - Who Runs it
 - Program Assessment
- Evolution of the Group- Adding Alumni
- Conclusion

Icebreaker



Turning towards someone near you,
please discuss:

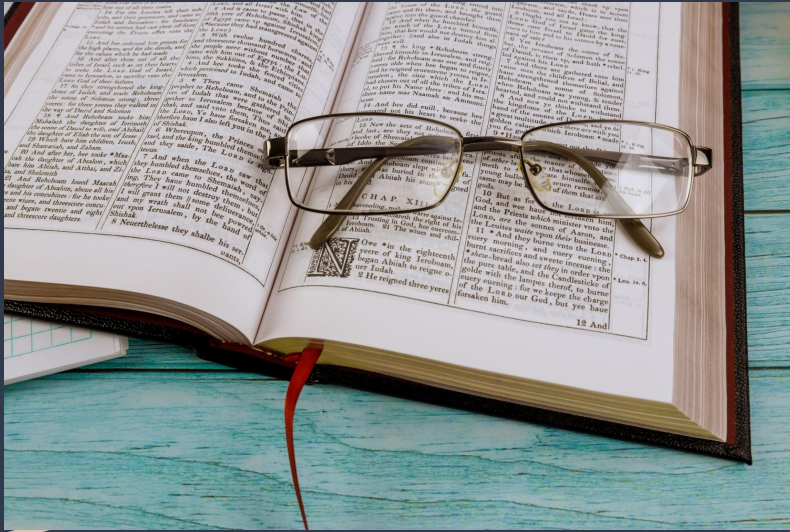
- What initiatives/programming does your library currently have for graduate students?

and/or

- What are initiatives or programs do you see a need for and would like to start?

We will share out in 2-3 minutes!

Literature Review



“Along for the journey: Graduate student perceptions of research” - Droog et al. (2024)

- Lack of support from their supervisors could “make or break” their experience as a graduate student.
- Felt more confident when they had a strong community of people supporting and guiding them through the research process.

“Learning about teaching and scholarly communication: Findings from graduate students and mentors” - Hurrell et al. (2024)

- Students who felt they had more support while drafting struggled less compared to students who did not have support.
- Learned about the scholarly process/research methods too early in their graduate careers.
- Authors recommend library-writing center collaborations as a solution.

Literature Review



“Graduate students as academic writers: Writing anxiety, self-efficacy and emotional intelligence” Huerta et al. (2017)

- ESL students reported higher levels of writing anxiety and lower self-efficacy.
- POWER initiative (Promoting Outstanding Writing for Excellence in Research)- crash course on writing services for graduate students.

“Writing the literature review: Graduate student experiences” Walter & Stouck (2020)

- Focus groups mentioned a need from support from the library, supervisors, and writing centers.
- Authors recommend increased institutional collaboration to better support graduate student research and writing.

The Graduate Student Journal Article Writing Group

- The Graduate Student Journal Article Writing Group is a writing community dedicated to helping graduate student publish in scholarly journals.
- Members attend weekly virtual writing sessions and have access to materials based on Wendy Laura Belcher book *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks* via a Canvas community.
- The group is comprised of 20-30 participants from multiple disciplines.



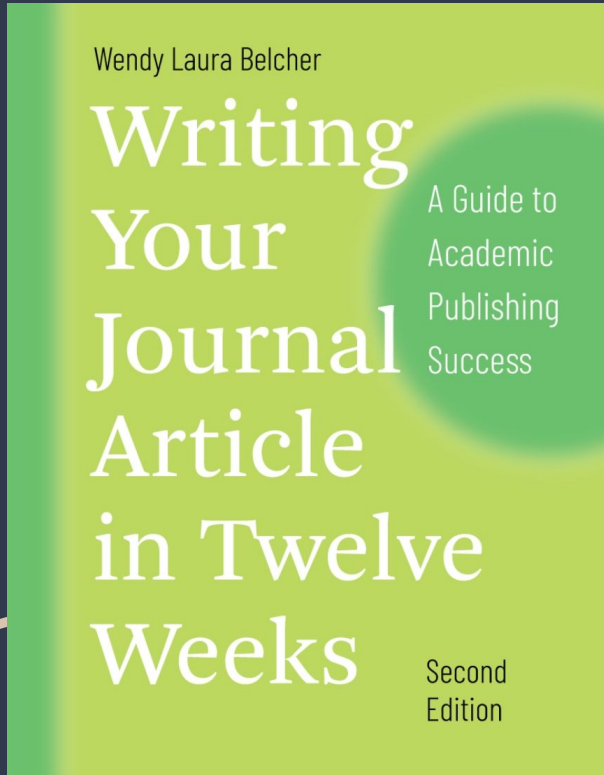
Who is the group for?

Graduate students must meet the following requirements to join the group:

- Have a completed article draft
- Can dedicate a minimum of two hours per week to writing and developing their article
- Interest in learning about the research, writing, and publication process



Weekly Topics



- **Week 1:** Designing Your Plan For writing
- **Week 2:** Advancing Your Argument
- **Week 3:** Abstracting Your Article
- **Week 4:** Selecting a Journal
- **Week 5:** Refining Your Works Cited
- **Week 6:** Crafting Your Claim for Significance
- **Week 7:** Analyzing Your Evidence
- **Week 8:** Presenting Your Evidence
- **Week 9:** Strengthening Your Structure
- **Week 10:** Opening and Concluding Your Article
- **Week 11:** Editing Your Sentences
- **Week 12:** Sending Your Article

Requirements to Join the Group

Can you commit to attending one Zoom meeting per week (multiple times will be offered depending on the collective response to the previous question)? The meeting will begin with a few minutes of discussion followed by 30-40 minutes of independent writing time (a quiet Zoom room). *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please upload your working journal article draft. **A piece of writing is required for admission to the writing group.** We will not be evaluating this piece of writing, it is just to confirm that you have an article draft to work on. *

Upload 1 supported file. Max 100 MB.

 Add file

Do you have any questions or comments about the group?

Your answer

- Participants must fill out a Google registration form with their contact information and identify times they are available to meet during the spring.
- They must upload a **complete** draft of their article to the form.
 - This ensures they have a solid starting point for when the group starts in the spring.

Fall Promotion



Are you a current **graduate student** working on a journal article, or hoping to turn your **graduate** research into one? There's still time to join the **Graduate Student Journal Article Writing Group**, but space is limited.

Students accepted into the program will gain a **supportive writing community**, a **structured routine** that keeps you on track, built-in **accountability from peers**, **insider publishing strategies**, weekly **expert-guided topic modules**, and meaningful **progress toward submitting your work**.

Join an Information Session

Attend a brief Zoom information session to learn how the group works, what the time commitment looks like, and whether it's a good fit for you. We recommend attending, but it's not required to join.

- **Wednesday, November 19 at 7:30 p.m.**
- **Tuesday, November 25 at 3:00 p.m.**
- **Thursday, December 4 at 4:00 p.m.**
- **Tuesday, December 9 at 9:30 a.m.**
- **Thursday, December 11 at 12:00 p.m.**
- **Wednesday, December 17 at 10:00 a.m.**

- Several advertising initiatives are used to promote the writing group in the **fall semester**:
 - Emails to Graduate Program Coordinators and Doctoral Program Coordinators
 - Social Media Posts
 - News Story on the University Libraries Homepage
 - Emails on the Graduate Student Listserv
 - Advertisements on Campus Screens
- Information sessions are offered multiple times during the semester to introduce students to the group and address questions.

Canvas Course Preparation

Welcome!

Graduate Student Journal Article Writing Group



Modules



Harry A. Sprague Library



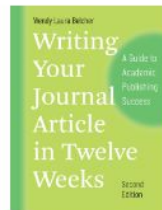
Center for Writing Excellence

Introduction

Thank you for joining the Graduate Student Journal Article Writing Group!






We are so excited to work together over the next 12 weeks and build our community. This group will provide structure and support to help you achieve your research and writing goals.

We will use Wendy Laura Belcher's *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks* to guide the discussions and work. If you would like to access the book, there are [copies on reserve](#) at Sprague Library that you can get. Graduate students will need their MSU ID card to check this item out. Feel free to pick up the book at the front desk of the library. Additionally, the library has scanners if you would like scan select pages. There is also an additional copy of Belcher's book at the Center for Writing Excellence (CWE).



How it Runs in the Spring

- The GA adds participants to the Canvas community mid-January so they can learn how to go through the different modules.
- Participants complete one module a week, which consists of a brief video, activity, and optional assignment.
- As activities and optional assignments are completed, the GA records the information in our Engagement and Attendance tracker and Center for Writing Excellence GAs review submissions for feedback.

| | | | |
|---|---|-------------------|---|
| ▼ Week 1: Designing Your Plan For Writing | | Complete One Item | ✓ |
|  | Welcome to Week 1 | | |
|  | Video Lecture and Google Slides for Week 1 | | |
|  | Letter of Commitment | | |
|  | Find, Read, and Study One Strong Article (Optional) | | |
| | Feb 2, 2026 0 pts | | |
|  | Week 1 Additional Resources | | |

Weekly Writing Sessions

- In addition to completing the weekly activities in Canvas, students are required to attend at least one virtual writing session per week.
- The virtual writing sessions have helped keep participants accountable for progressing their writing and reaching their publication goals.



Certificate of Completion



- For this upcoming iteration, we have promoted the certificate more and introduced the following requirements
 - Attend a minimum of 9 (of 12) weekly writing sessions
 - Complete a minimum of 10 (of 20) activities and/or optional assignments
- Even participants who **do not** submit an article during the duration of the program also receive a certificate of completion.

The Role of the Graduate Assistant



The graduate assistant takes on different tasks before, during, and after the group runs in the spring.

- Before
 - Designing writing group promotional materials
 - Managing the registration process
 - Facilitating the information sessions
 - Addressing email communications for perspective participants
 - Creating the Spring writing session schedule
 - Edits and drafts Canvas content for the group
- During
 - Manages the Canvas Community
 - Hosts weekly writing sessions
 - Sends weekly communication to participants
 - Updates the Engagement and Activity Tracker
 - Oversees the completion of check-in surveys
- After
 - Compiles the results of the check-in surveys
 - Prepares an “End-of-Year” report
 - Proposes new content to enhance the group

Question Break

Partnering with the Writing Center



CWE at Montclair

- Mission: lifelong writing skills beyond single assignments
- Open year round to the entire university
- Writing as process vs error correction

Reasons to connect with the writing center

- Collaboration helps both the library and writing center beyond the classroom
- Natural fit between research & writing
- Shared resources/mutually beneficial partnership

Current Climate: Writing Centers on University Campuses

- Outreach/encouraging graduate students to use the writing center
- Why graduate students seek support with their writing
- Trends in the CWE
- The impact of AI

Impact of the Program



- Increased confidence in skills such as citation management, supporting arguments with evidence, and structuring articles
- Publication of articles while still in graduate school
- Significant progress on article drafts
- Community/networking/accountability

Program Assessment



Beginning Check-In

It is helpful to get a better understanding of how we are feeling before we dive into writing our journal articles. This will then help us reflect upon our journeys after the article is completed.

Please be honest in your responses. There are no right or wrong answers. This simply tells us where you could use the most help.

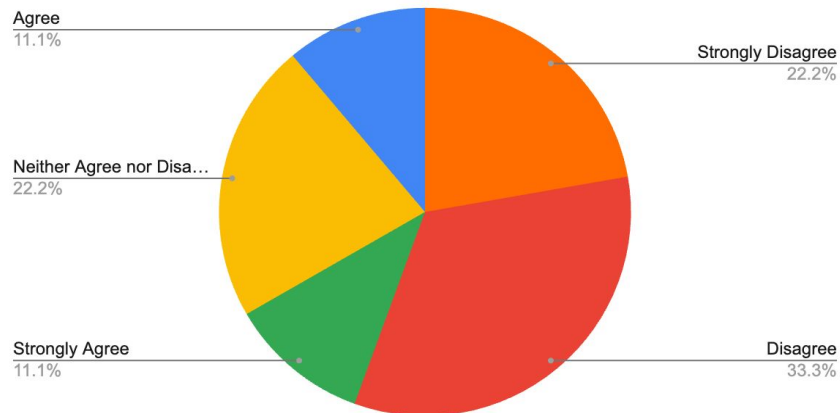
* Indicates required question

Participants complete three Google Form surveys during the program.

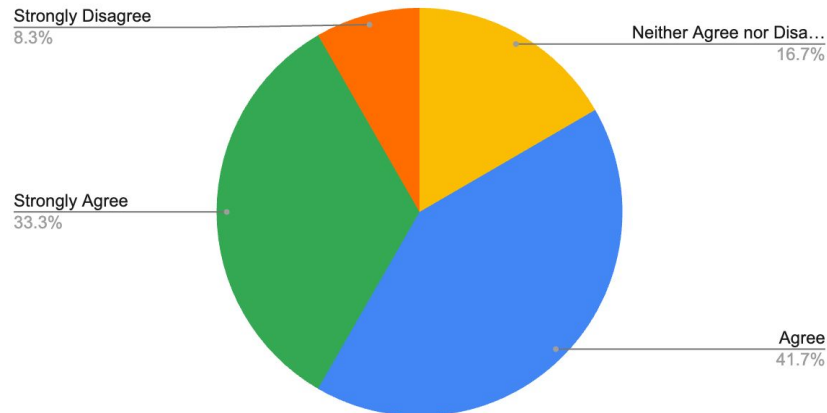
- **Beginning Check-In:** assesses confidence in skills before the program begins
- **Mid-point Check-In:** assesses how participants feel halfway through the program and allows facilitators to make adjustments
- **Final Check-In:** assesses confidence in skills after completing the program; collects information about usefulness; requests specific feedback

Example: Beginning vs Final Check-In

Beginning Check-In: I know how to select a journal publisher that is the best fit for my article.

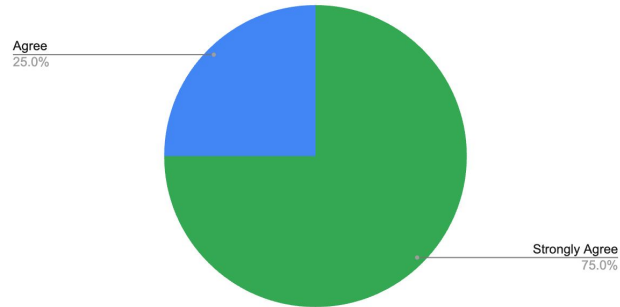


Final Check-In: I know how to select a journal publisher that is the best fit for my article.

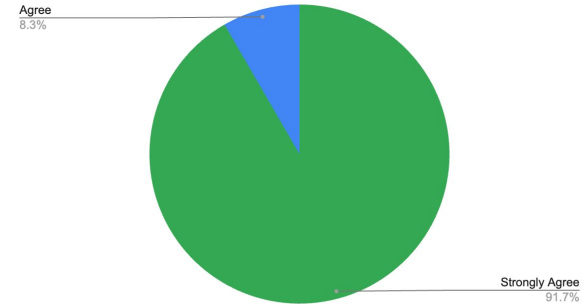


Final Feedback from Participants

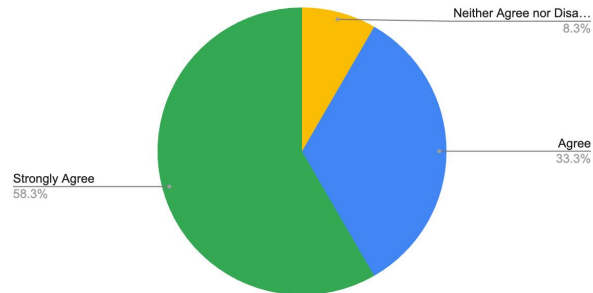
Final Check-In: The weekly Zoom meeting helped me move my writing forward.



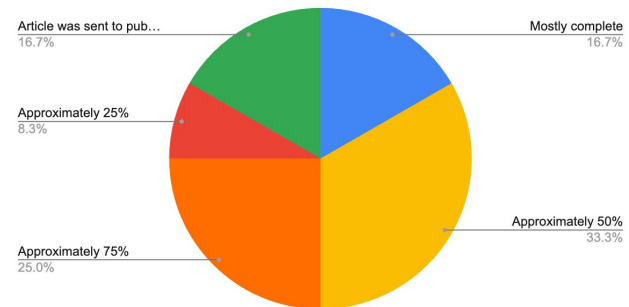
Final Check-In: I felt like I was supported through this process.



Final Check-In: The tasks and discussion boards were valuable to my research and writing process.



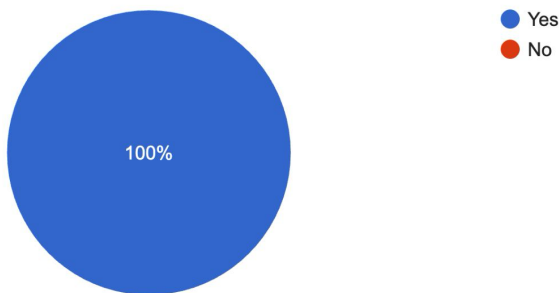
Final Check-In: Approximately what percent of your article/writing project have you completed?



Additional Feedback from Participants

Would you recommend this program to a friend or colleague?

12 responses



- Some participants expressed interest in a workshop for revising and submitting their work:
 - *"A session on how to respond to a revise and resubmit request would be very helpful (I just received one for an article I submitted a couple months ago)"*
- Others wanted to hear from students who published:
 - *"Maybe adding brief experiences from students who already published journal [sic] so we can see how their overall experience was."*
- Most participants were grateful for the help:
 - *"THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR ALL OF YOUR SUPPORT! I really really appreciate your help throughout this semester."*

Evolution of the Program – Adding Alumni



- Due to the popularity of the writing group, we expanded our efforts to alumni of The Graduate School.
- We reached out to Montclair State University's Office of Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement to get the program approved and promoted to former graduate students.
- The alumni group will run for the first time this upcoming spring semester.

How will the Alumni Group Run?



Grad Student (Alumni) J... ▾

4 people

Type ▾

People ▾

Modified ▾

Source ▾

Name ↑



Let's Get Started (General Information)



Weekly Content

- The alumni will attend the same writing sessions as current graduate students.
- Instead of using Canvas, alumni will have access to a shared Google Drive, which will contain the same information as the traditional Canvas page.
- Alumni will be subjected to the same attendance requirements as current graduate students.

The Future of the Graduate Student Journal Article Writing Group



- The group will run this upcoming spring semester from January 26, 2026 to April 24, 2026.
- Students from several different disciplines have signed up to be a part of the group, with alumni joining us for the first time.
- The group will run using a similar format as previous years, but will continue to be developed as needed.
- Success of program depends on the integrative work of both units.

Acknowledgements

Gabrielle Brehne, Graduate Assistant
2022 - 2023

Emily Cepin, Graduate Assistant
2024 - 2026

References

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