

# Thesis Writing Group

by: Jasmin Bischof

## Introduction

I want to look at how a writing group may enhance students' writing process in the semester of the thesis writing. My hypotheses is that sharing knowledge, feedback and advice may improve our work. And that regular meetings are helpful to structure the workload throughout the semester. That is why

I created a writing group for our last semester of the master programme, trying to get support from each other in the thesis writing process.

The concept of thesis writing is an individual learning process and thus entails some obstacles students may encounter throughout the process such as losing track, being unconsciously biased and missing other relevant perspectives. I experienced difficulties in self-studying in the second semester, where we merely read and wrote papers and studied on our own with very little contact with others throughout the six months. Even then, I realised that other students also like to express, share and get response in their thinking process and so we regularly met in coffee places and studied together. Another hint was given by Professor Jeffrey Verhey, who taught a course called 'academic research writing' at Humboldt University, which I attended in spring semester 2016. He highly recommended a writing group to enhance our writing process. I remember him saying that academia is a „competitive world” and steers us to become egoistic fighters. Sharing knowledge and ideas about our papers in progress can be counteractive and enhance solidarity and collaboration.

On the one hand, being in a writing group can be perceived as losing control over our own field of research and our ideas. It makes us vulnerable insofar as others may take over our ideas and use it for their purposes. On the other hand, sharing knowledge with other field experts may enhance the process and enrich our work and generate more extensive knowledge. To discuss own findings in a peer group may give guidance and function as a controlling instance.

The challenges I faced throughout the master programme and the advice of the professor convinced me. My plan was set, I wanted to organise a writing group. The writing group should be a tool for discussion and a place where we can share and get feedback during the fourth semester, which should enhance our theses writing process. By launching such a writing group I did not intend to neglect or diminish the support by our supervisors. On the contrary the writing group was meant to be an addition to the supervisor's guidance.