Craft a local context to sustain your writing

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What’s a writing collaborative?

• A group of like-minded colleagues willing to write and review each other’s written drafts.
• Requires the courage to trot out very early drafts for others to see in the glare of day.
• Requires willingness to be a critical reader. (“Your best friend will be the most pointed. Your adversary will say it’s perfect.”)
• It requires your most precious resource – time – so it has to be worthwhile.
A Checklist for developing the collaborative

1. Most likely to succeed if one individual (you?) assumes overall responsibility.
2. Invite colleagues to write and to share written products.
   – Agree to time and place
   – 90 minutes of uninterrupted privacy
3. Adopt ongoing peer review as the principal improvement method.
4. Develop an evolving list of topics that addresses the science of improvement, scholarly literature and editorial expectations. Suggestion: start with SQUIRE 2.0.

5. Rotate task of facilitator for each session.
   – Picks the topic
   – Does the grunt work
   – Distributes any relevant references, etc.
6. Consider inviting external “consultants.”
   – IRB Chair
   – QI Skeptic
   – An underrepresented discipline
   – Poach visiting luminaries
7. Track writing productivity.
8. Remember to celebrate success.
Typical session agenda

• Review session topic and process (<5 min.)
• Brief Check-in (<10 min.)
  – What are people writing?
  – Submissions/Successes
  – Rejections/Road blocks
• Focus on writing (60+ min.)
  – One person presents one section of his/her paper for group discussion OR
  – Divide into pairs and alternate author/reviewer OR
  – Focus on a recent exemplary or game-changing paper (rarely)
• Brief review of recent notable literature (<10 min.)

Simple Rules

• Start on time and get straight to work.
• Anyone is welcome (you only need two).
• Avoid gossip or chatter until the session’s over.
• Easy to initiate a collaborative. Harder to keep it going. Recognize signs of flagging momentum.
• Keep senior leadership aware.
• Develop creative financial support. Ask.
Now... Take a moment to craft your take-home writing strategy.

- Journaling
- A formal place and time for your writing
- Develop a local writing community
- Other
Thank you.