



**Professors as Writers: A Self-Help Guide to
Productive Writing (The New Forums Press
Scholarly Writing and Research Series Book 1)**

Robert Boice

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Here is a proven book to help scholars master writing as a productive, enjoyable, and successful experience -

- Author, Robert Boice, prepared this self-help manual for professors who want to write more productively, painlessly, and successfully. It reflects the author's two decades of experiences and research with professors as writers -- by compressing a lot of experience into a brief, programmatic framework. Like the actual sessions and workshops in which the author works with writers, this book admonishes and reassures. In the innovative book lies the path for sustained, highly productive scholarly writing!

Professors as Writers: A Self-Help Guide to Productive Writing (The New Forums Press Scholarly Writing and Research Series Book 1) Details

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Charlie says

I found this somewhat helpful in understanding the reasons why it's oftentimes difficult to write. Boice also offers very practical steps to overcome writers' block. I gave it a somewhat low score because I found the advice a little repetitive why was a little tiresome after half the book e.g. even if one is not a perfectionist writer, one would have to read through advice to that group or at least skim read in every chapter.

One aspect that the book does really well is provide the reader with further resources if they wish to use them. Boice is clearly very knowledgeable in this area, so respect where it's due.

Laura says

To be fair, I read this book but did not do the plan or the exercises that went along. It focused on overcoming writer's block and other psychological impediments to writing, like fear of failure, perfectionism, etc. I hoped for more pragmatic advice on time management and organization, versus motivation, just because that is what I feel I'm lacking. The book had some suggestions to rearrange one's writing environment and writing habits but those were not the innovative parts. So I did not find it very useful personally; I've learned more from books on writing by fiction writers like Anne Lamott and Stephen King. But Boice will undoubtedly strike a chord with others whose challenges are different from mine.

Silvia Tavares says

"Teachers or writers who await mood and inspiration before beginning court trouble. Conversely, writers and teachers who create mood and inspiration by performing on demand tend to prosper." (Kindle Locations 1181-1183)

No wonder this book from 1990 is still so widely cited. A great guide with useful and well-fundamented advice which generates a four step self-assessment and action-oriented approach to unblock writing while developing a sustainable writing practice. I wish I had read this a long time ago!

Emily says

I have actually read this before, and feel stupefied by his psychobabble and his bizarre numbering of forms rather than labeling them. I think it is a trait of the social sciences.

However, the 4 or 5 pages in which he describes step by step how to rework/revise your article is really good.

The suggestions for making yourself write every day are also solid but not different from everyone else's

advice.

Where he does differ is in the emphasis on self-care and being kind to yourself -- advice not often heard in academia.

So I can't really say that I LIKE this book, but it survives every purge of my bookshelves and I skim through it again every few years.

Tom Britz says

This book on unblocking writers deals mainly (almost exclusively) with scholarly writing. However, the framework should work just as well for any writer that is blocked.

Robert Boice does have a framework laid out in these pages. I plan on applying them in my own life.

Elizabeth says

Overall this book was helpful. Boice has helped unblock professors with writing difficulties for years and has really done his research on the subject of writing difficulties. The book mirrors his real-life program in which problem writers seek his assistance to get back on track. Boice includes some interesting interludes in which he examines the history and scholarship on issues such as spontaneous writing and negative self-talk. It's interesting to find out that any anxieties you have about writing are probably normal, and to hear anecdotes about academics who find writing to be truly agonizing. There is a little too much about feelings in here for my tastes, but it's all worth a read.

The core point of the book, though, is that writing is best done daily or almost-daily, and when it is scheduled in blocks of time from 30 min to 2 hours. At the point where productivity begins to diminish, you stop before you wipe yourself out or fall prey to decreasing returns. Binge writing is heavily discouraged. The people who have the most ideas for writing and who get the most pleasure out of the process are the same ones who write according to a schedule and for fairly short spans of time. Also interesting was the suggestion that academics work on 2 or 3 projects at a time to help break up monotony when writing.

Not only does Boice have solid writing advice for academics who want to be more productive, but he has the research and experience to back it up.

Jeremy says

Dr. Tom Hanks highly recommends this book.

Miguel Panão says

Worth reading if writing is daunting for you

Scientific writing is, well, writing! And as scientists we do not have the luxury to avoid writing. This book contains several interesting methods to begin overcoming that fear.

Clare says

This is a marvellous practical book on how to get going with academic writing. Lots of really useful tips about how to organise oneself and how to overcome academic writer's block.

Alysa says

The book focuses on developing good writing habits to become a productive writer. The tips are general and good for all "stuck" writers, but I often felt as though much of the focus was a bit more on writers in humanities and some social sciences. There was a lot of discussion about creativity and getting a lot of words out, but not so much about the other parts that go into writing a science paper (data collection, analysis, etc.). In any case, the tests for determining what is causing someone to get stuck in their writing process, and the subsequent discussions on how to work with those stuck points, are useful for all writers.

Babs says

Don't be off-put by the title of this work. Any writer (or artist) can benefit from this readable, highly researched book that will help you develop as a writer or artist. The first section of the book is a rehash of common techniques used to prevent writers block. For me, the real value in this book lies in the second section that deals with spontaneous and generative writing, and clustering and logical ordering (write first, outline second). Despite the redundant first section, anyone who wants to improve his or her practice of writing would benefit from this book. For the person who enjoys writing and wants to elevate their practice to a craft, this book is a must-read.

Scott says

This book acts as a therapy session on writing blockages. In fact Boice uses narratives of real therapy sessions he conducted with faculty members throughout the book to illustrate the practical response and some objections to the programs outlined in the book. This book, therefore, is most meaningful for those people who feel they have trouble writing in a professional setting.

It works from outlining why professors don't write, to the phenomenology of writing blockages, advising the reader to fill out an extremely helpful questionnaire in the back appendices. From there it breaks down into two main sections: strategies for the short run (results first writing), and strategies for the long run (cognition based habit-forming techniques and standards from the field). The latter of the sections can really be applied to any part of ones life, with due caution. This last part is the driver of the last chapter, which signs off by recommending mastery of the form, in order to keep it from burning a writer out, or letting it consume ones life.

The book was drawn from extensive research and experience. Evidence was given in a conversational tone, and explained masterfully. It was fantastic to read as an aspiring productive writer.

Margot Note says

Read this because of a post at Publishing in the Archives Profession here:
<https://archivespublishing.wordpress....>

"Despite its problems, writing brings more professional rewards than anything else a professor can do. Writing for publication weighs heavily in decisions about hiring, promotion, and tenure in academic and other professional settings. It brings rewards of visibility and portability. And, writing offers a unique kind of self-education" (7).

"Avoid writing in binges. Abandon the notion that writing is best done in large, uninterrupted blocks of time. Waiting for such times does more than reinforce procrastination; it demands excessive warm-up times and it encourages you to write until you are fatigued" (79).

"Write in small, regular amounts. If you're writing regularly, 30-minute session may be adequately productive. Resist the temptation to extend normal sessions into binges that leave you feeling burned out on writing" (79-80).

"Writing also brings enormous rewards such as public recognition. Why should it be different from any other complex and worthwhile challenge? (125).

Victor Barger says

Based on his research on scholarly writing and his experience counseling authors, Robert Boice devised a four-stage approach to writing consistently and productively: (1) establish momentum, (2) develop external controls, (3) foster intrinsic motivation, and (4) leverage sociality. In this book, Boice introduces techniques for mastering each of these stages and offers insightful advice to keep the words flowing. Whether you're currently experiencing a block or are simply looking for preventive measures, this book is a worthwhile read.

Matt McCullough says

This was a great book with very practical advice for writers. Especially academic writers. Initially, I resisted the exercises but they proved to be helpful in getting over my own roadblocks. I highly recommend this book and the methods described.
