Strategies for Supporting Graduate Student Writers

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The problem...

- Grad students are encountering new/unfamiliar genres
  - Many of these genres are “occluded” (Swales, 1996, 2004)
- Accessing & enacting disciplinary membership through writing/communication (Casanave & Li, 2008; Dressen-Hammouda, 2008; Paré, Starke-Meyerring, & McAlpine, 2011; Curry, 2016)
- The need for communication skills post-graduation
Additional considerations

- Attrition during the dissertation/thesis phase (Golde, 2005; Bell, 2011; Sowell, Allum, & Okahana, 2015)
- Retention/completion for underrepresented students (Bell, 2011; NCES, 2012; Sowell, Allum, & Okahana, 2015)
- URM Statistics suggest a systemic/structural issue (Madden, 2016)
- Parallel forms of oppression are reported by faculty (see e.g. Gutierrez y Muhs et al, 2012; Matthew, 2016; Grollman, n.d.)
No one’s first language is academic writing.

“Academic discourse is a ‘second’ language to everyone, full of terminology (necessary), jargon (needless and pretentious), formal turns of phrases, and unfamiliar research methods, theories, and philosophical stances” (Casanave, 2014, p. 23).
Reflective writing...

FACULTY & ADMINISTRATORS:

● In your view, what are the biggest challenges that graduate students face in their writing?

● What else can be done to support graduate student writers at URI?

GRADUATE STUDENTS:

● What are the biggest challenges you face in writing for your graduate program/dissertation/thesis?

● What else can be done to support graduate student writers at URI?

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Discussion

GRADUATE STUDENTS:

● What are the biggest challenges you face in writing for your graduate program/ dissertation/ thesis?

FACULTY & ADMINISTRATORS:

● In your view, what are the biggest challenges that graduate students face with their writing?
What else can be done to support graduate student writers at URI?
Supporting Graduate Writers
(Adapted from Madden & Stinnett, 2016)

- Expect nonlinear growth and the need for recursive/sustained support.
- Model genre conventions and discuss with students what writing in your discipline looks like.
- Build writing process into your graduate courses.
- Craft assignments that make clear the criteria you will use to assess students’ writing, and link those criteria to disciplinary expectations.
- Create frequent opportunities for students to experiment with multiple genres and to give and receive feedback on their writing.
- Don’t wait for students to ask for help with their writing.


*Consortium on Graduate Communication* (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://gradconsortium.wordpress.com](https://gradconsortium.wordpress.com)


National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://wwwfacultydiversity.org](https://wwwfacultydiversity.org)