

REVISED REPORT

BAME Coaching and Mentoring Networkⁱ : Convenor report: Prof. Divya P. Tolia-Kellyⁱⁱ Tuesday 27th February 2024 (period from July 2022 to Feb 2024)

COACHING AND MENTORING Network: Current members include Divya P. Tolia-Kelly; Fae Dussart; Ceri Oeppen; Tahir Zaman; Lyndsay McLean, Louiza Odysseos; Grace Carswell; Anna Laing; Pamela Kea; Divya Sharma (SPRU); Shahaduz Zaman (Medical School); Francesco Ventrella (Art History). Several trained members have left employment at GS Sussex.

During the period July 2022 to Feb 2024 the Network supported 18 people through coaching and mentoring sessions.

In terms of C&M Hours conducted in this period excluding training sessions:

Convenor DPTK (x12) – has 3 Sussex University staff external to the school (36 hours); 5 internal to the school (60 hours) and four one-off sessions outside SU (8 hours).

Network Members: Anna Laing (awaiting allocation term 2);

Fae Dussart (1 person 2hrs x 6 meetings:12 hours); Tahir (Away on Research Leave); Ceri (1x6@2hrs=12 hours); Louiza (DOSE role); Lyndsay (1 x 6@2hrs=12 hours); Grace (3-5 and several unrecorded as DS HoD); Francesco (1 x 6@2hr sessions =12 hours).

Two mentees are awaiting allocation.

Social Space of Inclusion

A series of 18 monthly Coaching and Mentoring Network Socials have been held in Dhaba café / Veg Bowl since July 2022 (convened by Ceri in my absence for 4 months in 2023) to create and maintain an informal space of support for those experiencing exclusion, racism, prejudicial practices within the institution. From these social gatherings applications for receiving Coaching and Mentoring have been generated as well as applications for training to be Coach / Mentor for the Network.

School Writing Culture: Writing Retreats.

More widely, the value and impact of the Network has been contribution to Research Culture through the structured writing sessions and retreats. This is valued in the next REF as 25% of research income per School. The contribution of writing culture is highlighted in the academic literature on academic writing (see, for example, Grant 2006, Moore 2003, Murray and Heard 2009, Murray, Steckley and MacLeod, 2011). As a result of the writing retreat training from September 2021 there has been a daily collective writing session in the School of GS held in the GSRC as a hybrid session convened regularly by Tahir Zaman, Gert De Neve, Luiza Odysseus, Lyndsay McLean, Linda Tabar, and others.

In addition, a total of 4 writing retreats have been run in this period with an attendance of 72. These have been convened by various colleagues in the school coordinated and convened by Lyndsay McLean.

27-29 June 2022	7-9 September 2022	10-12 Jan 2023	12-14 September 2023
22	21	17	12

Objectives of the 'Collective Writing Retreat'

- To provide a structured collective writing space with 12 hours of writing time over 3-days
- To provide collective and individual support to share writing strategies, set goals, help people to overcome writing blocks etc.
- To discuss and model how to run a structured writing retreat and sessions, to build a cadre of people willing and able to set up and facilitate sessions and keep them going over the long-term.
- To contribute to a material cultural shift in the school of supported professional development for individuals which in turn promulgates an environment of confident research dissemination and outputs beyond a culture of individual self-reliance.
- To build supportive collegial relationships and a sense of solidarity for individuals especially in a post-covid HE environment

Qualitative Feedback is below demonstrating the value to research culture and writing confidence amongst colleagues.

I have been part of the writing space on zoom, and it has helped me carve time out daily to write. To treat writing like an exercise I return to every day. This disciplining has helped me achieve my goals towards submitting my chapter. (3rd year PGR student, Anthropology, June 2022)

The space that the writing retreat created was a very conducive environment to get a significant amount of focused writing and thinking done. It was brilliant being in person and provided a sense of accountability and community of working together which I have missed a lot over the past 2 years... The structure was clear and conducive to writing with breaks for food, coffee and exercise. Even though it was on campus it felt like a writing retreat - it was very well organised, and I would love to attend more of these types of events in future.
(Lecturer in Geography, Jun 2022)

Having a retreat in the school is a great way to clear my calendar of meetings and other obligations so that I can do three days of dedicated writing. It is important for the school to support this, as colleagues and PhD researchers know that I cannot meet during those days. It was tremendously useful to share the process with colleagues and PhDs, to build community and share tips and ideas for writing. Also, as a PhD supervisor it was great to be able to encourage my PhDs to come along and to participate with them (Reader in Anthropology, June 2022).

It provided me with an amazing opportunity to have the feeling of a collective work but working on my own thesis. I felt much more supported than when alone, which encouraged me to write more, I think. It also allowed me to be "carefree" as there it was everything I

needed (delicious food and drinks, etc.) (3rd year PGR student, ID, June 2022)

It's been really helpful to hear what others are working on, to hear other people's writing process and their inspirations/stumbling blocks. It's been supportive to be in the same physical space as other participants: this has facilitated a 'staying with' the process where if I was writing at home, I would probably be more inclined to walk away from the desk. I have really enjoyed the conversations with other participants in the break/lunchtimes - which have given a feeling of solidarity and camaraderie. It has also felt good to be in a space with both other PhD students at different stages and with faculty, which I feel has helped to break down some of the barriers which can often be there between PhD researchers and tenured academics. Also the shared lunch and food has been amazing in that (not only was it delicious) but it has meant I haven't had to think about or consider food for the day - and taken that element of labour out of those 3 days, freeing up time for writing/processing and thinking (2nd year PGR student, ID, June 2022)

The collective in-person space has been most important. Hearing the woes and troubles of more established academics and gaining support directly from them has been heartwarming and confidence building. Having a clearly structured day has really helped. Having clear start and end points to writing and the sense that others around are working has helped me maintain discipline and focus (Postdoctoral fellow, Anthropology, September 2022).

The space held us together for three days providing us with food for thought, food for the soul and tool and techniques to work through writing- bodily and emotionally. The conversations and sharing put the process of writing in much perspective (year 3 PGR student, Anthropology, September 2022).

I finished the article and completed in three days what it would have taken me two weeks to complete (Reader in Anthropology, September 2022).

It has provided me with the space to write and accountability of my colleagues as well as providing support for dealing with obstacles when writing and provided very useful tips as to how I can improve my daily writing practices (Geography senior lecturer, September 2022).

the structure of the event, particularly with the mindfulness exercises, goal setting, and timekeeping of the work with regular breaks and socialising built into the workday really helps me concentrate and get writing done (year 2 PGR student, IR, Jan 2023)

This writing retreat was extremely helpful for building a revision plan for the final 8-10 weeks of thesis writing. The writing retreat is a great space to build community, and to exchange advice on approaches to writing and editing (year 3 PGR student, ID, January 2023)

As I have such a big to do list at this time of year, what with teaching preparation, Canvas sites, marking (undergrad and Masters), referred marking, backlog of emails (from xmas), it can be very difficult to find the head space for research and writing. Having this dedicated space/time where there is the expectation that you are ONLY doing research and writing has allowed me the mental capacity to concentrate and consequently complete a journal article

revision that were well overdue. (Geography senior lecturer, January 2023)

These spaces provide a unique opportunity to focus on writing only and avoid other distractions or responsibilities (cooking for example). Equally as it is guided, I think it also work for one to be very productive but don't end up exhausted...I loved how each day, each person in charged offered useful resources and tools to improve our writing, and most importantly the conversations we had as a group about issues when writing or best practices. (year 3 PGR student, ID, Jan 2023)

I really enjoy writing with other people. It is easier to stay motivated and there is this collective energy/good vibe in the air which makes things just so much easier (Year 3 PGR student, IR, Sept 2023).

Having a dedicated and supportive space helped me overcome hurdles around focus, concentration and lack of confidence.... The friendly and welcoming environment, the space for reflection and sharing, and the diverse projects being worked on made for a wonderful writing space. I also appreciated the structured nature of the retreat (i.e. very clear timetable, established and communicated clearly at the start of the day). (Lecturer Anthropology, September 2023)

Writing Retreats Beyond Global Studies: The Writing Retreat Model has been taken up by the School of LPS and DPTK ran a 'How to Run a Writing Retreat Training for 18 faculty at Tilton House, Firle in Jun 27-29, 2022. The school has successfully developed a daily 'writing lab' an a 'hub' of staff leading support on a new writing/ collective writing culture.

SOAS Writing master classes for BAME and International students: I have been commissioned by SOAS Pro-Director (Research & Enterprise), and the SOAS Widening Participation Team to design, convene and run Writing Master Classes for their BAME and Global Students in 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years. Totalling 7 workshops.

University of Bonn (Cultural Studies): I was commissioned by the University of Bonn to set up and convene a Structured Writing Retreat from 11th to 13th September 2023. I delivered a Writing Retreat, including in-person chairing of the workshops and structured writing sessions. I also enabled future self-organised writing retreat structure now embedded in their daily research culture. There has been a successful creating of a reproductive writing culture in the institution.

University of Amsterdam (Cultural Studies): I have been invited by the University of Amsterdam set up and convene a Structured Writing Retreat and subsequent writing workshops from September 2024 for Postgraduates.

BAME and Women's Coaching and Mentoring Training workshops

I have facilitated independent workshops under the aegis of the network responding to calls by colleagues requesting focus on issues that are 'live'.

- (1) **October 2022 De/Distressing e-mail (with Ceri Oeppen):** This was run successfully to address the fear, anxiety and worry that email can cause. Especially as a mental health problem obstructing research focus.
- (2) **Decolonising the Classroom:** These are a set of workshops and discussion spaces requested by the members of the network on ways to share experiences, strategies and tools to negotiate the multifaceted politics of teaching 'radical' content that is anti-racist, or anti-hegemonic (1) June 7th, 2022, 12-3pm, Global Studies Resource Centre: "**Decolonizing Teaching in praxis: "Reactions/ary atmospheres in the classroom"**". Workshop I
- (3) December 3rd, 2022, 9.30-1PM "**Decolonizing Teaching in praxis: "Reactions/ary atmospheres in the classroom"**". Workshop II

Extending the Network Training: The BAME and Women's C&M Network held a university-led training course with Sam Bates in the morning of 15/1/24 10-1pm. Attended by:

1. Dom Kniveton
2. JoAnn McGregor
3. Sindi Gordon
4. Francesco Ventrella
5. Andrew Hook
6. Gavin Mensah Coker
7. Karis Petty

In the afternoon we held a refresher training course with Eleanor Loughlin on the 15th of Jan 2024 with Lyndsay McLean, Anna Laing, Ceri Oeppen and Francesco Ventrella.

In September 2024 there is planned training (16th-18th), for the next cohort of the BAME and Women's Coaching and Mentoring Network training to include:

1. JoAnn McGregor
2. Olivia Taylor
3. Ushe Kafakurinani
4. Priya Deshingkar
5. Faiz Sheikh
6. Ali Ali
7. Melissa Lazenby
8. Alice Wilson
9. Caroline Bennett
10. Melissa Gatter
11. Alice Corble
12. Karis Petty
13. Nile Davies
14. Smita Yadav
15. Pedram Rowhani
16. Gavin Mensah Coker
17. Jae Hyun-Park
18. Paul Boyce
19. Demet Dinler
20. Andrew Hook

ⁱ The Coaching and Mentoring Network held an official 'launch' on May 24th, 2021. A Q&A Session was held between 10-11am on the 24th of May 2021 on zoom.

ⁱⁱ DPTK was off for 6 months in this report period on extended sick leave and as such the figures reflect some inactivity in this period January-June 2023.