NOVICE ACADEMIC ROLES: THE VALUE OF COLLEGIATE, ATTENDEE-DRIVEN WRITING NETWORKS

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	This particular study aims to contribute to the recent scholarly inquiry of doctoral student identity work within collegiate, attendee-driven writing networks. The study closely explores the implementation and impact of supportive measures in academia for novice researchers in the form of writing events. This paper draws on two case studies of doctoral students reflecting on the impact of their participation in social, academic literacy networks. The project also explores how these individuals were able to think about and mediate their own identities as they developed their reputations as experts in their field.
Background	Completing a doctoral degree is a rich, rewarding endeavour; however, it is also a challenging process. Novice academics are vulnerable to psychosocial and emotional stresses associated with being an academic within the highly competitive environment, such as isolation and burnout. More recently, scholarly interest has emerged regarding the academy's pressures upon novice researchers, such as those entering full-time academic roles after completing their doctoral studies.
Methodology	A qualitative research design was implemented where data collection for this project involved in-depth semi-structured interviewing. The nature of the semi-structured interviews enabled professional dialogue with each participant. The semi-structured nature of the interviews enabled flexibility where follow-up questions and probes allowed for richer data gathering. Data analysis occurred within a sociocultural framework.
Contribution	Explicitly focusing on doctoral students, we build upon existing knowledge and understanding of how novice academic writers negotiate, interpret, and understand the impact of their research dissemination and roles. While exploring how

	these individuals think about and mediate their identities during the initial period of asserting their reputations as experts in the field, this study looks at how collegiate, attendee-driven writing networks can support novice academics to meet the demands for quality research dissemination and strive to meet the metrics expected of them.
Findings	This research has found that novice researchers who thrive on social interaction may often find collegiality lacking in their professional lives. Furthermore, those who can find a support network that fosters positive self-belief and provides a means for sharing successes benefit from countless opportunities for empowerment as novice researchers work through their doctorates.
Recommendations for Practitioners	This research confirms and provides details around how a collegiate atmosphere for novice academics helps mitigate feelings of isolation, vulnerability, and a lack of self-confidence in their scholastic ability. Overcoming such feelings occurs through learning from peers, overcoming isolation and learning self-managing techniques. Therefore, establishing spaces for collegiate, attendee-driven writing events within doctoral settings is encouraged.
Recommendations for Researchers	Further research into the benefits of collegiate, attendee-driven writing events and supporting the process of academic writing and dissemination can focus on transdisciplinary writing groups, as this particular study was centred within a specific faculty.
Impact on Society	Within the neoliberal context of higher education, novice academics can benefit from attendee-driven writing events intended to empower them and provide growth opportunities. Through participation in collegiate, attendee driven writing networks, which are social and peer-based, we show that novice academics can learn how to combat unsettling feelings of perfectionism, isolation, fear of inadequacy, and failure. The social element is central to understanding how writers can increase their productivity and dissemination by writing alongside peers.
Future Research	Novice researchers also represent early career researchers; thus, exploring collegiate, attendee-driven writing events for practicing academics is also encouraged. As noted above, exploring the potential of transdisciplinary writing networks would also be of value.
Keywords	academic writing, collegiate writing groups, social network, research training, professional identity

INTRODUCTION

Completing a higher research degree is a richly, rewarding endeavour. However, the challenging process of completing a doctorate is known to be frustrating, isolative, and can be detrimental to a candidate's mental well-being (Pretorius et al., 2019; S. Wilson & Cutri, 2019). Novice academics are vulnerable to psychosocial and emotional stresses, such as isolation and burnout, associated with being an academic within this highly competitive environment (van Rooij et al., 2019). For this article, 'novice academics' are defined as doctoral students or early career researchers embarking upon an academic career. More recently, scholarly interest has emerged regarding academia's pressures upon novice researchers (Baker & Pifer, 2011; Coryell et al., 2013; Habibie & Hyland, 2018; Hyland, 2020; Kamler & Thomson, 2014; Murray et al., 2008). Academic identity and reputation are consequently forged through frequent dissemination of high-quality research. While the intention may be to encourage academics to disseminate their work, the push for frequency is often detrimental (Price et al.,

2015). This pressure for academics to publish has been well-documented over the past 30 years (Blaxter et al., 1998; Cameron et al., 2009; Cloutier, 2016; Ivanič 1998; Nygaard, 2017; Paré, 2010).

The purpose of the study discussed within this article is to add to this recent scholarly inquiry by exploring, at a very intimate level, the implementation and impact of supportive measures in academia for novice researchers. We focus on novice researchers' writing development and their ability to disseminate within the very narrow Discourse (Gee, 1990, 2000) to which they aim to contribute. The neoliberal academic setting represents the cultural context in which doctoral students must navigate and negotiate their identities as novice academics. Therefore, this study explores the logistics of the writing process and the capacity for collegiate, attendee-driven writing networks to support participants to meet the demands for quality research dissemination and strive to meet the metrics expected of them. The project also investigates how these individuals think about and mediate their own identities as they develop their reputations as experts in their field. We seek to expand this body of existing knowledge and understanding around how novice academic writers negotiate, interpret and understand the impact of their research dissemination while adapting to the academic cultural context.

This study draws upon two doctoral candidates' experiences, Elnaz and Helen, in relation to their participation within a collegiate, attendee-driven writing network. We also look at how the writing events associated supported their academic identity development through learning to navigate the academic landscape. Sue initiated the collegiate, attendee-driven writing events in order to overcome her own feelings of isolation and adequacy as a doctoral student. Given this was a doctoral student initiative, as opposed to an organised faculty event, Sue initially organised the writing event through word of mouth, posters and the creation of a social media platform, inviting doctoral peers within her faculty to meet collegially and write together. The group's attendee-driven aspect helped shape the writing event's dynamics, enabling attendees the flexibility to prioritise their own tasks and develop their own sense of self-accountability. As the attendees became more familiar with the writing event structure, several doctoral students developed the confidence to chair sessions which enabled Sue to step back from always being the moderator. As the writing sessions continued, the group's format would sometimes be informal, such as working at an attendee's home, which helped with socialisation. Nevertheless, the sessions remained productive due to the professionalism and personalised writing goals set by the attendees, and the attendee-driven nature of the groups where celebration of achievements/progress was encouraged, and the environment always remained judgement free.

CONCEPTS FOR EXPLORING 'NOVICE WRITERS' IN ACADEMIA

IDENTITY

A novice academic constructs their identity and ideological views of their research through the process of writing to evoke "their voice, authority, and writer positioning" (Tyndall et al., 2019, p. 15). Upon entering academia, novice researchers encounter many presumptions regarding their scholastic ability. A level of expectation is held by supervisors about their students' research and academic writing abilities. Therefore, learning discipline-specific ways of communicating their work within their specialisation's Discourse community (Gee, 1990, 2002) is a common struggle for novice academics. As with early career researchers, doctoral students may also experience pressure from their faculty about disseminating their research. In the case of doctoral students, there is an assumption that novice researchers already possess the writing skills to begin publishing, and that they will follow a linear learning trajectory where writing into various genres is a by-product of the PhD process (Tyndall et al., 2019). However, such a high standard is not easily achieved. Instead, it is experienced through a relatively haphazard learning process. Thus, the neoliberal higher education landscape beyond Australia impacts on novice academic identity development (Cutri & Pretorius, 2019; Davis et al., 2020; Perdomo-Ortiz et al., 2020). Although the present findings within this particular study reflect the

Australian higher education context, we can attribute these findings to the literature on metrics impact, which is pertinent in many tertiary contexts worldwide (Delgado, 2021; Vican et al., 2020; Wang & Jones, 2020).

Higher education's neoliberal landscape places great pressure upon academics to achieve and maintain high-ranking metrics (Martin-Sardesai et al., 2020; Pretorius & Macaulay, 2021). Meeting the scholarly demand for research dissemination is already complicated by proficiency expectations around writing skills and high-level discipline-specific knowledge. This is daunting for doctoral students as academic writing skills are not explicitly taught during doctoral candidature. Kamler (2008, p. 390) argues that scholarly writing requires "tremendous effort and struggle". Academic writing challenges evoke a range of emotions, from the desire for success, to anxiety, a fear of failure, and imposter syndrome (Sverdlik et al., 2020). Cloutier highlights how "our identities and reputations as academics are … formed by what and how we write" (2016, p. 1). Through this tangled web of emotions, the novice academic often envisages a question-mark surrounding their academic identity. Therefore, we argue that the neoliberal atmosphere sculpts a complex academic cultural context that influences and is influenced by higher education. Wong (2020) identifies a correlation between neoliberal universities' competitive nature and the isolative existence associated. Consequently, to thrive in a competitive environment, novice academics must learn how to adapt and learn the necessary writing process to establish themselves firmly within their research fields.

SUSTAINABLE WRITING PROCESSES

Novice academics must cope with the various demands within the academic role, over and above their continued professional development in terms of their writing practice. To cultivate an academic career, newly practicing scholars must adapt to academia's shifting conditions as a workplace, as opposed to it being their place of study (Price et al., 2015). The higher education workload for an early career researcher involves a combination of teaching, academic service and, most significantly, research dissemination. These responsibilities come with high expectations, particularly within research-focused universities. Several studies have identified that these competing workplace demands impinge upon a novice academic's time for independent research and writing (Simmons & Singh, 2019; E. Wilson, 2019).

The expectation is for academics to publish frequently in high ranking journals, thus improving their university's visibility, metrics, and in turn, profile, as well as their own. Therefore, to fit within this high-pressure academic culture, novice academics must enhance their writing repertoire to thrive. However, academic writing often occurs in a vacuum. Doctoral students occasionally meet with their supervisors, not to engage in the writing process, rather, to discuss the writing product's content and the merit of their ideas. Furthermore, it is common that novice researchers are required to take on extra academic tasks, such as teaching and research assistant work within their faculty. As a result, productive writing practice occurs in a disjointed and often ad-hoc manner. Writing frequently occurs outside of regular academic work hours (Murray, 2013). Thus, novice academics tend to write alone, leading to an increased sense of isolation.

These extra academic demands and the impact on researcher identity and well-being has been documented over the past 30 years, where researchers, such as Boice (1987) raised his concern emphasising how a high teaching load leaves minimal time for academic writing, leading to burnout. The countless mental and behavioural shifts can disrupt a person's well-being if they cannot engage in sustainable practices or obtain appropriate mentorship. Thus, there are strong correlations between academic workload, writing in isolation and the challenges of achieving mental well-being (Chang & Lee, 2020; Hollywood et al., 2020; Price et al., 2015).

PARTICIPATION IN COLLEGIATE, ATTENDEE-DRIVEN WRITING NETWORKS

Writing in isolation in order to achieve a final product has been identified by various researchers over a prolonged period as being of concern (Boice, 1987; Cloutier, 2016; Rustin, 2016). In recent years, both expert and novice academics have shed light on strategies to support novice researchers; (cf. Pretorius et al., 2019). Most importantly, when writing occurs within a collaborative setting, these approaches can enable optimum performance. It is this assertion that has prompted the study discussed here. Exploring ways that traditional writing stereotypes as an isolated practice can be countered is central to understanding how writers can increase their productivity by writing alongside peers. This research has sought to understand the inherently social practices involved in writing and ways that participation in collegiate, attendee-driven writing communities might encourage novice academics to overcome self-sabotaging barriers of isolation, perfectionism, imposter syndrome, and anxieties around their personal capabilities (Cameron et al., 2009; Mcphail-Bell & Redman-Maclaren, 2019). This is crucial for supporting their abilities to have an impact in their chosen fields of expertise.

While it is widely acknowledged that the writing and dissemination process is more challenging than often appreciated, writing development and success is attainable through guidance, support, and mentorship (Wegener et al., 2016). This research project's findings reveal how the participating doctoral students' identity formation within the neoliberal university context can be supported via participation in collegiate, attendee-driven writing networks. While much research has been undertaken about postdoctoral student writing, our study can be situated in Aitchison and Guerin's (2014) work where the notion of academic writing events is gaining increasingly scholarly interest (cf. Wilder, 2021).

METHODOLOGY

This study draws upon research from recent years highlighting the benefits of participation in writing events, such as those involving peer writing groups. Academic writing events that advocate peer social support help to demystify the logistics, threshold concepts and anxieties surrounding the notion of academic writing (Aitchison & Guerin, 2014; Simmons & Singh, 2019). Collegiate literacy networks, such as peer-based writing groups, provide a social space for like-minded writers to come together in solidarity both to write and to engage in emotional support (Roulston et al., 2016). This study has been designed to explore doctoral student experiences of participating in a range of different academic writing events in order to understand the benefits gained.

Peer writing spaces can take on multiple forms, and writing groups exist in many forms. Two main types of peer writing groups are common within academia. Firstly, there are social, peer-based writing groups where participants work silently on their writing projects with an emphasis on productivity (Thesis Whisperer, 2013, as cited in Mewburn et al., 2014). These can often exist in grass-roots networks where peers come together without formal arrangements through the university systems, allowing a more organic style less affected by rigid processes that must be adhered to if the groups were made part of 'official university business'. Secondly, reflective writing groups are created to help mitigate the isolation and the pressure to achieve continually. These reflective sessions involve discussing writing that has been completed by group members between each gathering. These types of sessions are often provided by the universities themselves and are subject to the associated 'red-tape' of large institutions. However, the benefit of university-provided groups is the level of support that might be offered by a staff member being responsible for the groups' implementation and the knowledge and advice that might be offered in conjunction. In both styles, participation enables novice writers an opportunity to understand the learning process involved in understanding the writing conventions for academic prose (Cahusac de Caux et al., 2017). As such, this research explores novice academics' experiences of both styles of writing events. However, this article focuses upon the

initial style described: Peer-based writing groups in the form of collegiate, attendee-driven writing events.

PEER-BASED WRITING GROUPS

This research draws upon a review of a range of literature regarding various types of social, peer-based writing groups. We have found that key features successful writing groups have in common consist of setting personalised writing goals; negotiation of faculty expectations and self-care in academia; provision of a dedicated writing space; expectations for self-authorship; designated silent writing time; implementation of interval-style breaks; and a collaborative atmosphere to overcome isolation (Kempenaar & Murray, 2019; Roulston et al., 2016; Wegener et al., 2016). This article draws upon these principles to explore two doctoral students' experiences during their candidature and in what ways they felt that collegiate, attendee-driven writing networks provided support. We have looked closely at their 'writing as process' stage, where these individuals developed their academic ideas through written composition. Further, we have analysed the socioemotional and well-being benefits academic socialisation may have afforded the two research students as novice academics. Their relationships with colleagues at various stages of their academic careers have been considered, and the research has explored each of these novices' reflections upon how they have developed relationships throughout their candidature.

For this article, when exploring writing events that the novice academics have participated in, the authors intentionally utilise the term *collegiate* to emphasise co-construction and exploration that occurs when like-minded people come together to engage in their work. These collegiate environments provide opportunities for researchers (both doctoral students and early career researchers) to work on their writing tasks and then use brief break times to support one another. This might involve discussing logistic writing strategies, such as structuring the writing to adhere to the disciplinary genre, or concept advice, for instance, how to revise a draft based on supportive feedback (Tyndall et al., 2019), among other skills that require development.

A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH

This article draws on data generated through a qualitative research design. This study provides insights into the participants' experience of collegiate, attendee-driven writing networks and their professional identity construction. We achieve this through the application of qualitative research methods. The study aimed to provide a more profound level of understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Punch & Oancea, 2014; Patton, 2015), being the value of collegiality, along with a thick, rich description (Geertz, 1973) of the participants' shared experience of this particular phenomena. Upon obtaining approval from the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee, the data collection process commenced.

Methods for participant selection involved an internal recruitment process where known colleagues within the university were contacted by email or phone, or during in-person interactions. These novice researchers were asked to consider who has been a trusted mentor to them. They were then encouraged to invite these mentors into the study where they felt it appropriate; then informed consent was obtained. Given the researchers' professional relationship with the participants, a semi-structured interview methodological approach best suited this investigation. Therefore, the authors draw upon DeJonckheere and Vaughn's (2019) approach to semi-structured interviews involving qualitative research methods. This method advocates for research where participants and the researcher are known to each other. Furthermore, it allows for collecting open-ended data while exploring participant thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of the phenomenon. This research design aimed to encourage the participants to reflect upon their academic writing experiences, providing anecdotes about how their participation has supported their doctoral candidature. The method ensured that personal and sensitive issues were addressed professionally and ethically.

DATA GENERATION: SEMI -STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Data collection for this project involved in-depth semi-structured interviewing. The method of semi-structured interviews is a standard research tool for qualitative research, and we sought to open up opportunities for comprehensive conversations that provided great detail about the participants' experiences. Orellana et al. (2016) advocate for the use of semi-structured interviews as this method enables researchers to gather rich data to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena explored. To date, the overall study has generated more than fifteen hours of interview data. The nature of the semi-structured interviews nature enabled professional dialogue with each participant and was guided by a flexible interview protocol. Follow-up questions, probes and comments further supplemented the semi-structured interview process. Therefore, this method was chosen for data generation as, through interviews, participants can reveal their perceptions, beliefs, and constructions of their lived realities (Punch & Oancea, 2014). The utilisation of interviews probes into the participants' stories of their lived experience (Creswell, 2013). The interviews were recorded electronically followed by verbatim transcription. The authors worked collaboratively to review the transcripts, deciding to discuss two participants within this article: Elnaz and Helen. Elnaz and Helen were selected as this study is part of a larger project where their stories will be further explored in an article to follow, involving their academic relationship/mentorship with Sue and also with an extremely experienced academic within the faculty, Beth, who will be discussed in that later article.

Semi-structured interview questions involved broad prompting topics for the discussion, and the interviewer followed the interviewees' stories during the interviews. The interview direction was open, and no specific categories of responses were expected (Punch & Oancea, 2014). This contrasts with structured interviews where the design would encourage participants to discuss specific topics and limit participants' space to tell their stories or support their perspectives and beliefs.

The semi-structured interviews were designed to facilitate a comprehensive and adaptive conversation with each participant, allowing for flexibility and prompting for more information (Drever, 2003; Punch & Oancea, 2014). It is essential to highlight that although semi-structured interviews are flexible, the pre-planned questions served as a guide and allowed for probing for further information. The interview questions were pre-planned because semi-structured interviews do not mean that the discussion should be 'random' or 'unprepared' (Patton, 2015; Pollit & Beck, 2017). The interview questions were designed for participants to reflect on how their involvement in academic literacy events such as collegiate, attendee-driven writing groups, impacted their research dissemination output. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview questions allowed the participants' flexibility to elaborate on how these collegiate experiences may have shaped, influenced, or influenced their identity work as novice (or in the case of the mentors, experienced) researchers per their current role.

For this study, each interview spanned approximately sixty minutes. The interview data were recorded through audio and visual tools, consisting of an audio recorder and a separate video camera with the participants' consent. Following the generation process, the data were transcribed into typed transcripts for analysis. While this was mostly only the recording of utterances, where relevant, body language was also noted. Data analysis occurred within a sociocultural framework, explained later in this article, where key ideas and themes were identified, including the broad categories of: identity work, relationships, workload, writing and writing events. Furthermore, sub-categories were identified within each of these. While the analysis went on to use a narrower and different, critical sociocultural lens for a second layer of analysis, this article reports on the findings identified from the initial analysis undertaken with a wider, sociocultural perspective.

PARTICIPANTS

Set within the context of an Australian higher education institution, 11 interviews were conducted for this study. However, this article focuses on the experiences of two novice academic participants, Elnaz and Helen. Both participants were known to Sue, the lead researcher for this project, due to

her academic role and her involvement in implementing peer-based, attendee-driven writing groups over several years preceding this study. During the data collection phase, Elnaz and Helen were graduate research students who had studied alongside Sue, initially while she was completing her doctorate and as she was embarking upon, and then established a full-time academic role within the Faculty of Education. While Elnaz and Helen knew one another, they interacted within different collegiate and social circles as they were peers within the faculty. As such, they did not spend great periods of time together, nor were they influenced by one another in their participation within this project.

Elnaz and Helen contributed to this study by offering their perspectives on their academic identity through the shared experience of academic life. They were each interviewed individually. These interviews focused on exploring how each participant's academic identity was impacted, whether positively or negatively, through their participation with peers at all levels of expertise. These interactions included those within collegiate, attendee-driven academic literacy networks and their professional relationships with senior academics, other than their supervisors.

Elnaz and Helen's insights enabled the researcher to gain knowledge of a range of academic literacy communities of practice (Wenger, 1998) in operation throughout the university. Accounts provided by the research participants involved personal reflections on the novice researchers' own practices as well as those of their peers. Using a foundation of what is already understood about academic writing and its challenges, including isolation of the novice academic writer and the demands of up-skilling, the project explores the extent to which novice researchers experience tensions around their capacity to learn and enact desired writing skills. As well as exploring whether they believe that being a member of academic literacy event communities has had any impact on either their skill development, enactment, or their identity work as novice researchers.

Getting to know Elnaz

Elnaz had completed a PhD before the one she was undertaking during this study. This had been completed in a country where the course is considered less rigorous, and as such, her qualification is not recognised in Australia. As such, Elnaz decided to complete an additional PhD in the Australian context. This allowed her to continue working towards her goals of achieving an academic role as a teacher educator and researcher within the tertiary environment. Additionally, completing a research project in Australia enabled Elnaz to pursue a topic of study "that I was interested in all my life and I didn't have a chance to do... research on because in the context of my country, it is really dangerous…". Elnaz felt empowered to conduct this investigation and described the experience as being "the life I always wished for" because she has been able to gain "access to all the articles and books that I may want… the facilities in the university is marvellous" (interview with Elnaz, 13 October 2017).

Getting to know Helen

Helen's participation in this study occurred when she was striving to submit her thesis for examination within the coming year. At this point she remarked, "I'm at that exciting bit, but then also it's a little bit scary in a way too, because you're starting to make some claims". Helen had been an early childhood educator for many years and identified strongly as someone for whom scholarly endeavours had not come easily. She was proud and seemed somewhat shocked to have successfully enrolled in the doctoral program, asserting that her mother's lack of education had "rubbed off on the rest of the family". She was the first member of her family to attend university, let alone complete an undergraduate degree and soon, postgraduate qualification. Helen described education as being valued within her family, but that "it was hard…to put it into practice" (interview with Helen, 7 October 2017) due to numerous day-to-day challenges experienced within her home environment.

ANALYSIS

This research has adopted a sociocultural perspective as foundational for understanding the academic literacy events themselves. From this position, a critical sociocultural analytical framework was then applied. This was done to look more closely at the identity work undertaken by the novice academics and the agency and power relationships at play within their writing communities (Lewis et al., 2007).

INITIAL LENS OF SOCIOCULTURAL ANALYSIS

By beginning with a sociocultural lens, the participants' experiences explored within this project were understood in terms of how these novice academics developed an understanding of their roles, and how they developed expertise in enacting these roles. This is through recognition of the social and cultural frames that shape academic experience, the relationships people build with one another and the 'norms' embedded in our 'ways of being' (Comber, 2001; Lewis, 2001; S. Wilson, 2017), in this case, within this Melbourne-based tertiary institution. Within this project, literacy is considered a social practice, and as such, writing is considered a social artefact. The writing events explored are thought of as literacy activities that are undertaken in a 'certain' manner. The writing events involve expected "ways of talking, acting, watching, interacting…" (Gee, 1997, p. 289). Particular behaviours are valued, and the 'routine' established within each writing event recurs, becoming inculcated over time (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Luke, 1993; Luke & Freebody 1997; Street, 1984). While in some studies, a sociocultural lens would be applied to explore cultural backgrounds such as ethnicity, the cultural context most relevant for exploration here is that of academia and how academics operate within tertiary institutions.

The social and cultural information drawn upon by participants within any writing events is particular to its context. Such events are negotiated. Different individuals attended each writing event, and the context, time and place of each event differed, resulting in (often minor) changes that can be perceived from one writing event to another. However, this study's events were anchored as a series and were moulded by a tangible way of understanding, familiar from one writing event to the next (S. Wilson, 2017). As noted in the introduction, we refer to academia's cultural context as higher education grounded in the neoliberal discourse where metrics determines one's identity and reputation as an academic. In other words, success is measured in terms of the quality and quantity of scholarly dissemination. Within this highly pressurised context, we explore how attendee-driven social writing networks can mitigate the challenges of doctoral writing and academic expectations imposed by tertiary institutions upon novice researchers; thus influencing the development of their identities during the process and as they continue to grow and gain experience.

The writing that was completed by participants during the writing events discussed was also culturally and socially shaped. Any media engaged with is read in particular ways, with readers constructing specific meanings for specific purposes (Kress, 2009). As mentioned earlier in this article, the writing disseminated by any researcher is strongly influenced by the discipline within which their project sits. Discipline-specific ways of writing exist within any specialisation. As well as this, there are particular structures expected for different types of publications (S. Wilson & Cutri, 2019). Traditional theses have an expected structure, as do journal articles, for example. Each journal for which a researcher may write, of course, has its own 'way' of shaping the articles published within, and the audience that is being written for is considered in this. Additionally, any presentation composed by a researcher also has a style that must be adhered to, according to the presentation's purpose and audience. However, the writer of any of these publications or presentations is permitted to compose in their own style, to some extent.

The first layer of analysis was, therefore, completed with this sociocultural lens. This is because perceptions of competence in both the writing event and the writing composition are bound by expectations regarding who we are, what we know, and how we do what we are doing (S. Wilson, 2017). This article disseminates findings within this initial, sociocultural layer of analysis.

Elnaz's participation in writing events

Elnaz was a frequent participant in two different writing groups during this project. One encompassed a fortnightly writing event offered officially within the university. Students from different faculties across the university came together and shared excerpts from their writing under an academic advisor's lead. Feedback was provided from this advisor, as well as from the other students' various perspectives. These students came from a range of disciplines and were at varying stages of their doctoral candidature. The other writing group that Elnaz regularly attended was developed by Sue when she was a doctoral student and was not part of the university's official offerings. This group met regularly to write using the Pomodoro technique (Cirillo, 2018; Noteberg, 2010). Goals were also set at the beginning of each session (or at the beginning of a series of sessions for regular attendees, particularly as they became more expert at setting their own goals) to which the individuals were encouraged to be self-accountable. These ensured that the sessions were productive and allowed participants to consider the tasks they needed to achieve and develop priorities. Sue initially moderated the writing events, but as the group developed and gained momentum, Sue encouraged other PhD students from within the education faculty within which Elnaz was studying to begin to chair sessions.

According to when students sought to come together, this writing group was much more informal and occurred more frequently, but on an as-needed basis. Elnaz reported that participation in that second group was far more frequent, "a few days a week, sometimes every day" (interview with Elnaz, 13 October 2017). Elnaz's continued participation in the writing events as well as her comments during her interview highlight that she perceived her involvement in this space as crucial for building her academic identity. Throughout the interview, Elnaz framed her responses in a self-reflective manner, revealing the growth and evolution of her scholarly identity.

Helen's participation in writing events

While Helen did not attend the formal, university-provided, fortnightly writing group, she frequently participated in the same informal writing group offered by Sue and often attended by Elnaz and other PhD students, predominantly from the Faculty of Education. Helen highlighted two significant benefits from participating in academic writing events – productivity and combatting isolation.

Helen saw that through her participation in a shared writing space, her writing output increased. Furthermore, the shared writing environment's communal aspect helped Helen limit behaviours that were unproductive. Once Helen joined the writing group, she realised that "I procrastinated for a long time before I realised that I really needed some outside support".

Helen also stated that her participation in this informal writing group helped her cope with feelings of isolation. The associated social interaction with other members also highlighted to Helen that "it has been very inspiring talking with other people, and it…does inspire you to keep working" (interview with Helen, 7 October 2017).

Consequently, Helen noticed an improvement in her dissemination productivity as well as her identity work, explaining that "I'm able to get more achieved consistently, and the content and confidence I think go hand in hand. The type of content I'm able to produce, it affects my writing, it affects the confidence that comes out in my writing".

DISCUSSION

Collegiate, attendee-driven writing events that involve peer-based writing groups provide a less-pressurised environment for novice academics when writing together with other doctoral students. For this study's purpose, the literacy event is a specific attendee-driven writing event. While these events were advocated by the faculty, they were administered by the doctoral students. Given the literacy writing events were initiated by the doctoral students and occurred on an informal basis, we argue that this particular collegiate, attendee-driven writing network was a grass-roots movement. Founding

member Sue continued to endorse and support this group once she was working as a novice academic, but she encouraged doctoral candidates to take the lead and continue the group, arranging and moderating sessions as they saw fit. This collegiate, attendee-driven writing network involved doctoral students (predominantly within the education faculty) coming together to work on their thesis or any other academic tasks, such as journal writing. Each writing event aimed to provide a social space for students to avoid writing in isolation and using the break times to support their mental health and relationship building as well as sharing hints and tips pertaining to academic writing and/or doctoral candidature. The particular writing network that this study focuses on differs from other doctoral writing groups that specifically meet to discuss their writing or are working collaboratively on a piece of writing for publication. See Figure 1, where we differentiate various types of writing events for novice academics.
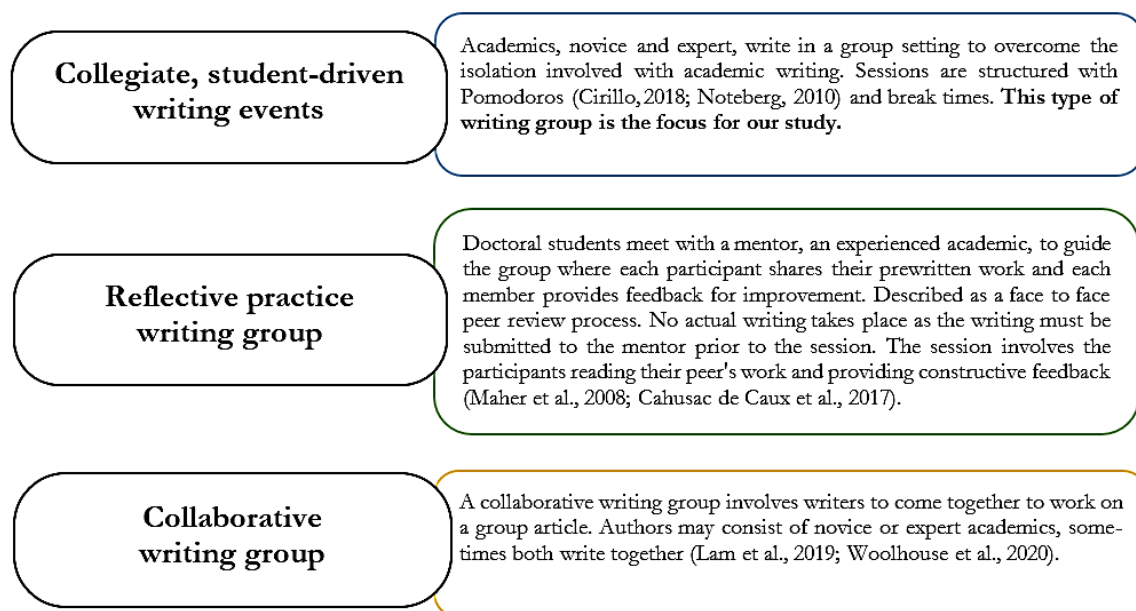
Collegiate, student-driven writing events	Academics, novice and expert, write in a group setting to overcome the isolation involved with academic writing. Sessions are structured with Pomodoros (Cirillo, 2018; Noteberg, 2010) and break times. **This type of writing group is the focus for our study.**
Reflective practice writing group	Doctoral students meet with a mentor, an experienced academic, to guide the group where each participant shares their prewritten work and each member provides feedback for improvement. Described as a face to face peer review process. No actual writing takes place as the writing must be submitted to the mentor prior to the session. The session involves the participants reading their peer's work and providing constructive feedback (Maher et al., 2008; Cahusac de Caux et al., 2017).
Collaborative writing group	A collaborative writing group involves writers to come together to work on a group article. Authors may consist of novice or expert academics, sometimes both write together (Lam et al., 2019; Woolhouse et al., 2020).

Figure 1: Different types of academic writing events for novice academics

Based on Helen and Elnaz's accounts, we contend that the collegiate, student-driven writing network's approach represents a semi-structured space. Social writing spaces are invaluable for novice academics as they can work away from academia's highly competitive environment, which was valid for participants within this project. Our data set represents the importance of supporting novice writers during their transition from solitary to social writing (Mewburn et al., 2014). One key element of these sessions was the collegiate atmosphere that Sue had developed and how the group members did not see one another in a competitive light. The community of practice (Wenger, 1998) had a common goal of academic success, and members of this collegiate writing network were encouraged to support one another rather than draw performance comparisons. This is particularly unusual in academia's cut-throat world where ongoing employment is becoming more challenging to obtain.

Transition into the collegiate, student-driven writing network

The transition process was acknowledged as being difficult in the early stages of joining a collegiate, attendee-driven writing group. Elnaz explained that her initial experience involved her comparing herself to other students in terms of her writing ability, reflecting: "I notice that I write much more slowly than them. I write really slowly. I think a lot. I just change sentences many times, etc., etc." However, Elnaz viewed the peer-based writing group as providing her with an opportunity to "get over that" (Interview with Elnaz, 13 October 2017).

Helen's early experience involved a psychological hurdle upon which she commented, "coming out of your comfort zone and meeting new people and being in that really social environment, but a social, academic environment, was a bit of a challenge for me as a person". Furthermore, Helen experienced a behavioural change, "I don't want to be sitting there with a cigarette, you know, that's not a good look" (interview with Helen, 7 October 2017). Even though the transition process initially presented a challenge, upon overcoming this initial hurdle, Elnaz and Helen were able to adapt to the norms and expectations of collegiate, attendee-driven writing groups and identify the benefits for their candidature, which seemed to outweigh the transitional challenges and provide resounding benefits over time.

DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC IDENTITY WITHIN PEER-BASED WRITING GROUPS

Collegiate, attendee-driven writing events are peer-based and occur in semi-structured spaces. As a result, this provides a degree of flexibility and negotiation for participants. Helen and Elnaz highlighted that such writing events can be negotiated and offered on an as-needed basis. This enabled both participants to feel a sense of autonomy over their participation. For instance, one informal structure is that social writing events such as these can occur off-campus, such as in a café or a participant can volunteer their home. Elnaz would often host private home sessions for faculty peers who were part of this writing network. Elnaz preferred to host home sessions as she felt more comfortable working in her own home and saw several personal benefits: "I love it because I stay at the comfort zone of my home and there are people there and I have to then sit down and write instead of going around doing nothing. Yes, I like it a lot." (Interview with Elnaz, 13 October 2017). Therefore, working within a communal space beyond the university can be a productive environment for novice academics seeking peer support.

Working within the comfort of her own and her peers' presence placed Elnaz in a dual role of PhD candidate and group moderator to ensure the participants, including herself, remained accountable to their writing goals. Elnaz further contends that there is a sense of accountability when she hosts a writing session:

> When the group is at my house, I'm getting more serious and work better and work more. Sometimes I distract myself when I'm alone. I try to just surf the net. I get up. I do chores, etc. When people are around, I sit down and work. (Interview with Elnaz, 13 October 2017).

Hosting a collegiate, attendee-driven writing event in her home provides Elnaz with a greater sense of accountability to focus on her work "for longer hours". Further, this provides her with a conducive environment to bring her peers together to write. Elnaz discovered that she no longer felt "alone" and the presence of other writers helped her feel accountable and "motivated" through her role as a host (interview with Elnaz, 13 October 2017). The sense of motivation helps both Elnaz and Helen to focus less on the pressure to perform academically and direct their attention more specifically on completing a set task they have identified as their next priority. As noted earlier, the pressure to perform evokes a sense of vulnerability. Helen's experience reflects how her mindset had evolved, and while there were aspects of imposter syndrome, the social interaction provided her with a support network so that she felt she was no longer alone through the arduous writing journey: "rationally you've still got that little voice in your head that's telling you [that you're not good enough]" (interview with Helen, 7 October 2017).

While the pressure of completing a dissertation is ongoing throughout the doctoral process, Elnaz and Helen's experiences reflect how their participation in social writing events supported their academic identity development during the writing process. This intertwining of scholarly identity with writer identity is of significant influence throughout the learning process of becoming an academic (S. Wilson & Cutri, 2019).

Through developing their academic identities, both Elnaz and Helen have demonstrated how they learned to position themselves within their particular research fields. For instance, when discussing one of the challenges faced during her doctoral studies, Elnaz highlighted the process of undertaking an autoethnography for her PhD:

> The approach is completely new. I started to learn doing autoethnography. That was something I've never had. Even the word was completely new to me. I learned everything from the beginning. The literature review was very difficult. Apparently, I didn't know how to do a literature review properly, although I had another PhD. I'm just learning this too, everything, in a good way though. They're challenging in a good way. I'm learning in every step a lot of things, many, many things. (Interview with Elnaz, 13 October 2017).

Elnaz's approach to the autoethnography genre for her second doctoral project involved a personal transformation in order to achieve academic growth. As Elnaz highlighted, she had previously completed a PhD; however, the style of autoethnography was new, as were the skills associated with completing a doctoral degree at an Australian university. Although Elnaz acknowledged the challenges she faced during this process, for instance, how to undertake a literature review for an autoethnography, she was able to work through this process step by step, enabling her to become familiar with autoethnographic research. In this process, she began to establish herself as an expert within this field. Elnaz's identity as a growing expert within the autoethnography discipline was revealed when she argued how she felt she has contributed to the field through her writing. She emphasised this feeling by acknowledging, "you still have to write something that can be generalised a little bit in order to be academic in order to be considered as a research to contribute to language in one way or another" (interview with Elnaz, 13 October 2017).

Being a part of the academic writing network also helped Helen grow as an academic and establish herself within Early Childhood Education. Helen revealed that the "social aspect" enabled her to move beyond her "comfort zone and meeting new people". Although Helen perceived "a social academic environment was a bit of a challenge for me as a person", she acknowledged that "a big part of the PhD journey is learning to step outside my comfort zone and try and learning new things and learning new skills" (interview with Helen, 7 October 2017). Through learning to share her progress with trusted members of the social writing network and learning sustainable writing practices from her peers, Helen was able to feel more confident in her writing abilities. Furthermore, Helen enjoyed the social aspect of sharing her progress and discussing her ideas before a significant milestone, such as a conference where she was concerned senior experts in her field would not recognise her contribution. However, Helen was thankful for the advice she received from her peers, such as constructive feedback on how to improve her technical writing. This, in turn, improved Helen's self-confidence. She reflected on her growth as an expert in the field of Early Childhood Education by stating that:

> The amount of times that you try new things and put yourself out there in these sort of different situations, you get better at it and you get more confident in yourself…suddenly you're doing things that you would never have imagined you'd do before. (Interview with Helen, 7 October 2017).

LEARNING SUSTAINABLE WRITING BEHAVIOURS FROM ACADEMIC PEERS

We argue that collegiate, attendee-driven writing events are semi-structured writing spaces due to providing a flexible environment. Elnaz and Helen participated in sessions joined by other faculty peers, consisting of other doctoral students and early career researchers, such as Sue and some other colleagues from the faculty once Sue embarked upon her new role and developed additional networks with peers throughout the faculty.

The benefit of a shared, flexible, semi-structured space is that the power hierarchy between research students and practicing academics is minimised. The novice academics come together in a collegiate space for a shared purpose — to write. As a result, such a space provides opportunities for informal

learning from peers further along in their candidature as well as from more experienced, practicing academics. Elnaz highlights this:

> I learn a lot from them. It's like a class, like a course sometimes…because now that you're getting friends with people, you can just share other stuff with them too. In this also, you write better. You write better emails now. You write more formal things when it should be formal. When you're asking someone or you're thanking someone, in many ways. (Interview with Elnaz, 13 October 2017).

In more recent times, once the network was extended to invite practicing early career researchers, working in a semi-structured writing group with a mix of novice and more knowledgeable faculty members has provided Elnaz and Helen support for other academic logistics. For instance, Helen felt that learning from her more knowledgeable peers helped her during the "self-learning process". While Helen acknowledged that "university is very much self-learning, self-learning at the top" and "I had to do my own, look for the answers on how to do that thing myself", forging relationships with other members of the network and developing a professional trust, led to sharing strategies and learning certain forms of writing useful for beyond the PhD, such as "proposals" and "abstracts" (interview with Helen, 7 October 2017).

The semi-structured writing space also has helped both Elnaz and Helen to develop sustainable writing practices and dispositions. In terms of balancing writing and social time, informal writing groups allow participants to control their work by setting realistic, achievable writing goals to occur within a time duration. Working within time intervals helped Elnaz and Helen to concentrate on the task at hand and avoid procrastination. The time intervals are part of the Pomodoro technique (Cirillo, 2018; Noteberg, 2010) where a decided amount of time for writing (traditionally 25 minutes) and checking-in (traditionally 5 minutes) is negotiated with the group. Elnaz explains how she applied the Pomodoro technique when she participated in writing sessions:

> [I'll] break it down into those little portions within a day…I'll work on this little section now and then, you know, that was really helpful. And being able to hear where other people were at, and that other people are doing this process as well, and working and… that appreciation, that sort of sense of community, that we're all in this situation where we're trying to get all this work done. (Interview with Elnaz, 13 October 2017).

The sessions' check-in aspect involved each participant sharing what they achieved during the writing interval, then set another goal for the next writing block. To Elnaz, "check-in means I have to just sit down and write because I have to report after 40 minutes so I do not stand up. …I do not go for a round of coffee. I just say that I will wait until the break" (interview with Elnaz, 13 October 2017). The check-in also served as an opportunity to provide a brain break and a chance to make oneself comfortable during the session. For instance, Helen explained that she "always enjoyed" listening to other sharing as it involved "getting your brain working and thinking things through and talking thing through with people". This social element also presented Helen with an opportunity to adjust "timeframes that we work for or…we can eat and drink or make a rustling sound. I don't mind any of that" (interview with Helen, 7 October 2017). Setting sustainable writing goals and having a check-in during the sessions helped with accountability and productivity. There is a set routine to ensure writer accountability, which Elnaz explained as,

> …by just being there…when you see other people are working, you that, oh, I have to just work too. When you see that other people are typing or working or writing, you get motivated a lot. You do not feel alone. It is charming. Time passes more quickly. You do not get tired. It's really good. (Interview with Elnaz, 13 October 2017).

Like Elnaz, Helen also perceived the collegiate atmosphere as beneficial to her writing. Helen found that the social space motivated her to start "writing again" and revisit the challenging task of analysing her data. Helen realised that she was gradually developing her expertise with data analysis: "I was

actually focusing on and not getting lost in all of it". Helen emphasised how the collegiate atmosphere helped because it "got me refocused" and how she "needed that support". This enabled her to remain accountable and "keep me on task" (interview with Helen, 7 October 2017). Elnaz and Helen both felt these social writing events not only kept them on task but enabled them to move forward to the next stage of their writing. Helen further elaborated, "it's more so helping to push me along and be accountable and stay on deadlines. That's been a really big thing for me" (interview with Helen, 7 October 2017). Therefore, based on Elnaz and Helen's experience of the writing group as a social writing event, their experiences reflect Wegener et al.'s (2016) assertion that writing is accomplished through peer guidance, support and mentorship. Furthermore, writing within a collaborative setting enabled particular behaviours to be valued. Consequently, the routines established can enable optimum performance within the writing group.

Collegiate, attendee-driven writing events also offer participants flexibility in their choice of tasks to complete during writing sessions. As noted earlier, it is common for novice academics to be working within their faculty while also completing their PhD. In the case of Helen, she explained that being an academic involves:

> …political structure where you feel like you … It's frowned upon to say no to things, to turn things down, to show that you're not capable of, because it can come across as that you're not capable of juggling all those balls in the air. (Interview with Helen, 7 October 2017).

Helen discovered that this provided her a time for productivity to balance her tasks through attending the collegiate writing event. The flexible social writing spaces allow participants to set personalised goals and negotiate faculty expectations such as responding to academic emails during a break time or marking assignments. Working within Pomodoros (Cirillo, 2018; Noteberg, 2010) and being accountable to personalised targets offers participants a choice to split the daily session to allocate writing and faculty work. Consequently, Helen could balance her academic commitments, particularly as she was encouraged to set self-accountable goals and learned to do this more and more effectively as her participation continued. Helen's supervisors also acknowledged her writing productivity:

> One of my supervisors said to me, oh, you're really pumping out the work at the moment, and what's changed, and what's happening? And I thought, oh, I don't know. And then I thought, oh, yes I do! It's been the involvement in the [writing] group and consistent deadlines and consistent goals and working within that community of people that, yeah, have really, yeah, has sort of really kept me on task.

Sustainable writing practices lead to novice academics being able to work within a realistic timeframe and manage a productive output. Consequently, such productivity impacts a doctoral student's confidence and belief within their writing capability. For instance, Helen highlights:

> To have those conversations yet with people in [collegiate, attendee-driven writing events] about my findings and talking it through. I know that just the practice of talking it through can really help… makes it clearer for you in your head… I think that will help me then be able to write more confidently. (Interview with Helen, 7 October 2017).

Socioemotional Support

The final theme to emerge from Elnaz and Helen's narratives is the significance of socioemotional support experienced within collegiate writing networks. Support for new researchers is crucial. Van Rooij et al. (2019) highlight that novice academics are vulnerable to academia's pressures, leading them to be more susceptible to psychosocial and emotional stresses, such as isolation and burnout. Therefore, the strong connections forged with peers within social writing networks support novices to develop their professional identity through informal, semi-structured settings. Helen's excerpt highlights how social interactions increase productivity:

> …rather than just having it sit in here and be maybe, perhaps, a little bit overwhelming… sort of break it down into those little portions within a day, so, okay, well, I'll work on this little section now and then, you know, that was really helpful. And being able to hear where other people were at, and that other people are doing this process as well, and working and… that appreciation, that sort of sense of community, that we're all in this situation where we're trying to get all this work done…it sort of gives you that assurance that you're worthy. (Interview with Helen, 7 October 2017).

Helen embraced participating within the writing events as she reflected that "it sort of gives you that assurance that you're worthy" (interview with Helen, 7 October 2017). This statement captures how Helen, representing a novice academic, was continually working to make sense of where she belonged, negotiating the interwoven nature of their personal and professional identities. Tyndall et al. (2019, p. 40) reinforced this further, contending that "outcomes focused on the process can be addressed through creating writing and learning communities and fostering peer learning". Social support amongst novice writers helps develop their confidence as the collegiate aspects enable them to overcome the isolation by recognising their common experiences and developing a shared feeling that they are 'in this together'. Furthermore, Helen's accounts highlight how her experience within a social writing network has helped mitigate the sense of isolation and the pressure to achieve continually; coming together in solidarity to write and engage in emotional support (Roulston et al., 2016).

Peer-based writing networks offer not only a time and place for writing, but the role of collegiate spaces also fosters guidance, support and mentorship. As a result, intrinsic motivation for personal accountability becomes the focus instead of drawing attention to the daunting pressure to write in accordance with what is expected from academics. When attention is drawn in a positive manner, the associated metrics can be met more positively and productively than when individuals are focused on the associated pressures, which can often become counterproductive. As argued, based on Elnaz and Helen's accounts, social support and knowledge exchange help with overcoming what Kearns (2013) refers to as 'self-sabotaging behaviours'. These lead to avoiding writing, such as via procrastination or overcommitting to other tasks. However, through the socioemotional support provided, Helen realised that she was learning strategies from her collegiate peers to work through her self-doubts and think more positively:

> Well what am I doing here? Maybe this … I'm not at that level. But everybody's got … everybody's journey is very different and everybody reaches different stages at different times, and in different ways. And even their research methods and things like that, you can't compare and this is what … I've had really good supervisors who have said from the very beginning don't worry about what they're saying and what they're doing. This is what we're doing and that's what matters. (Interview with Helen, 7 October 2017).

Helen's experience captures the socioemotional essence of collegiate, attendee-driven writing networks. She expressed how her mindset evolved, and while aspects of imposter syndrome did continue, the social interaction has provided her with a support network so that she felt that she was not alone through the difficult writing times or in moments where she doubted herself (Lau & Pretorius, 2019). This was imperative in her developing an appropriate identity for traversing the academic landscape, which was evident within Helen's comment that, "being able to speak to the people in the field that are the gurus in your particular area. To have them give you positive feedback-it sort of gives you that assurance that you're worthy" (interview with Helen, 7 October 2017).

Elnaz, although somewhat more confident in her ability to write, also found that the experience of participating in the collegiate, attendee-driven writing network provided her with knowledge about specific academic discourses throughout the institution and an opportunity to rehearse her academic ways of being with colleagues. Overall, both participants embraced participating in the social writing network and reflected upon their academic and personal growth journey throughout their transitions into academia. Through informal engagement and the social aspect, the ongoing process is essential.

Such findings from this study reinforce the work of Rockinson-Szapkiw et al. (2017) who argue that social conditions in which doctoral students are immersed will influence one's confidence and academic identity development. These elements helped the participants continue to make sense of where they belonged as individuals, through negotiating the interwoven nature of their personal and professional identities.

CONCLUSION

Our research supports other studies that have shown, most significantly, that writing in a shared space helps with self-belief and identity issues. This allows for productive writing to occur (Kempenaar & Murray, 2019; Nygaard, 2017; Wegener et al., 2016). The role of peer support is essential, as novice academics learn to build supportive scholarly networks at a time when they are moving away from the student-supervisor dyad. It is more important than ever that they develop their academic agency during this phase (Baker & Pifer, 2011).

Through sharing Elnaz and Helen's accounts, this paper has endeavoured to explore the benefits of participating in a collegiate, attendee-driven writing network. Three significant findings emerged from the dataset around identity work, output and empowerment/opportunities for growth.

Firstly, based on Elnaz and Helen's reflections, social writing groups can positively impact a novice academic's identity. Previous literature has explored the notion that scholarly writing is considered as self-representation (Ivanič, 1998). More recently, S. Wilson and Cutri (2019) emphasised that identity confusion can result from locating oneself within such new academic spaces. Consequently, we urge university stakeholders to offer scaffolding support for doctoral students who continually work to make sense of where they belong within academia. Our literature review and data findings revealed that doctoral students are often left in isolation for they are assumed to be independent and competent enough to survive in the savage academic world.

The second finding discussed the theme of sustainable writing behaviours and how these lead to productive research output. Elnaz and Helen's narratives revealed that allowing academics to contribute their voice within their scholarly community is key for meeting metrics but interwoven with their ability to see themselves as capable of fulfilling academic expectations while also working in a manner which will allow for productivity over the length of an academic career. Social writing groups enabled sustainable behaviours by integrating academics at different stages of their experience as researchers and provided academic and self-care support. This enabled these novices to develop strategies to navigate threshold concepts associated with the complex genres of academic discourses. Another critical factor was the flexibility of semi-structured writing groups, which allowed participants to set realistic goals within a designated writing time. Their goals involved only self-accountability, which supported them to be productive due to their dynamic social group setting.

Finally, this paper has shown that novice academics can benefit from sociocultural writing networks intended to empower them and provide growth opportunities. Novice academics should understand that their identity is not a fixed entity. Instead, it is a mindset that shifts throughout a dual process: Learning to write works in unison with writing to learn (S. Wilson & Cutri, 2019). By exploring social writing's socioemotional benefits, we highlight how traditional writing stereotypes that involve isolated practice can be countered. Thus, the social element is central to understanding how writers can increase their productivity by writing alongside peers. Understanding the inherently social practices involved in writing and ways that participation in collegiate, attendee-driven writing networks might encourage novice academics to overcome self-sabotaging barriers of isolation, perfectionism, imposter syndrome, and anxieties around their personal capabilities.

We conclude that a collegiate atmosphere for novice academics during the writing process helps mitigate feelings of isolation, vulnerability, low confidence in ability, learning from peers, overcoming isolation, and learning self-managing techniques. Nevertheless, these challenges that involve doctoral students moving beyond their comfort zone enable them to grow as experts within their discipline,

on the proviso that they are provided with adequate support. We argue that collegiate, attendee-driven writing networks provided our participants with this opportunity. The findings unique to this dataset encourage future research into various forms of collegiate, collaborative writing such as virtual writing events that have the potential to foster mental health, especially as the academic writing process is often isolating within neoliberal universities.

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