NEWS FROM THE DSC—Fall 2016

Data Rally, Writing Groups, SERA Proposals, and Brown Bag Speakers for Fall

The DSC had a very busy and exciting summer that included meeting with cohorts on campus for Summer Intensives and traveling to Junction for a 4-day Writer’s Retreat. Now that fall is in the air, we are planning even more events to enhance your scholarly and professional development.

In September, the DSC will present a brand new event, our first ever Data Rally! This 5-day event will offer instructional presentations, one-on-one interactions with writing coaches, and feedback on your work. See inside for more information.

In addition to the Data Rally, we are hosting a 30-Day Challenge Writing Group Program to help you overcome the mid-semester writing slump often encountered by dissertation writers. Engage (virtually) with the DSC writing coaches and your peers to reinvigorate your writing productivity during the month of October.

Our Brown Bag Speaker Series is proud to announce four new presentations this semester. Our sessions cover a range of topics from preparing and delivering academic presentations to developing your research agenda to integrating source material in your writing.

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Sonya Sherrod will once again be offering one-on-one consultations at the SERA conference in the spring. To that end, we are encouraging students to present by offering targeted support at every step of the process. Don’t miss the proposal deadline: September 18th!

At the end of this newsletter, you can find instructions for contacting the DSC and for submitting your drafts to receive helpful feedback.

Remember that we are here to serve YOU!

Important Dates and Deadlines

September 5: HOLIDAY
September 16: DSC Brown Bag Dr. Kamau Siwatu presents, “Preparing Academic Presentations.”
September 18: SERA Proposal Deadline
September 19–23: DSC Data Rally
September 23: Last day to file Application to Graduate
September 30: Last day to submit Defense Notification
October 3 – November 1: DSC 30-Day Challenge Writing Group Program
October 7: DSC Brown Bag Dr. Kamau Siwatu presents, “Delivering Academic Presentations.”
October 21: Last day to defend dissertations
November 11: Brown Bag Dr. Patriann Smith presents, “Developing the Research Agenda.”
November 4: Last day to submit final dissertations for formatting review
November 23 – 27: HOLIDAY
December 16: University Graduate Commencement
Announcing the DSC Data Rally
By Marcelo Schmidt, PhD

A crucial stage in the dissertation writing process is that of collecting and analyzing data. This stage typically begins when your dissertation proposal has been accepted/approved by your dissertation committee. Although the data collecting and analyzing stage can be a very exciting and invigorating experience, it can also become an incredibly frustrating and hellish process when it is not approached with a clear plan, proper tools, and a good amount of knowledge and skills.

The DSC wants your data collection and analysis experience to be as productive as possible. To this end, we are hosting a weeklong interactive data rally this fall semester. This data rally will introduce you to survey software (Qualtrics), basic data analysis skills using Excel and SPSS, and will guide you through best practices on how to present data analysis results in your manuscript.

Join us if you are writing your proposal, are in the early stages of chapter 4 of your dissertation, or are simply looking for a jump start on acquiring these skills.

When: September 19–23.
Format: The daily session (12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.) will consist of a 1-hour presentation followed by interactive hands-on practice facilitated by members of the DSC team. Each evening from 5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m., a DSC coach will be available to review and provide immediate feedback on students’ data related work from that day. Students may attend any or all of the scheduled meetings. The rally will be conducted through Blackboard and is suitable for local and distance students.

If you are interested in attending, please follow this link to complete our Qualtrics Registration for the 2016 Data Rally. For more information, contact the DSC at dsc.educ@ttu.edu.

Space is limited, so don’t wait!

30-Day Challenge Writing Group Program
By Amber Lancaster, PhD, ELS

Does your writing productivity decline in the middle of the semester? Momentum to write your dissertation often fades after the initial excitement of the new semester wears off, and those end-of-semester goals are still in the distance. If you find yourself saying, “I’ve still got time to write that chapter later,” and need a little extra productivity boost, then joining the DSC Fall 2016 Writing Group might be just for you!

The DSC will host its 30-Day Challenge Writing Group program from October 3 to November 1. This 30-day challenge is designed to bridge the beginning and end of the semester and help motivate you through the mid-semester writing slump.

The Writing Group will take place in an all-online, asynchronous forum that includes weekly goal setting posts, peer-support group discussions, and customized support from writing coaches to help you meet your goals. The Writing Group will also host synchronous virtual “Weeknight Writes” that you can participate in to foster a greater sense of community engagement and writing accountability.

Weeknight Writes consist of checking in with the group, stating your writing goal for that evening’s session, and then simply writing into the evening (for as long as you can). Email the DSC for more information or if you are interested in joining: dsc.educ@ttu.edu.
Reporting from Junction on the August 2016 Writer’s Retreat

Focus with Intensity: August 2016 Writer’s Retreat was a resounding success for the nine participants who made the trip. This 4-day retreat allowed students to pull away from their daily distractions at home and at work to carve out a place and time to focus on writing. Each student reported daily successes in meeting their goals.

The Office of Graduate Education and Research in the College of Education generously offered travel funding to all students who wanted to attend. The facilities at Junction provided everyone with an environment conducive to focused writing. Students and coaches alike enjoyed the natural setting of the TTU Center, which offered opportunities to tube in the South Llano River, observe wildlife in a natural setting, swim, hike, and stargaze under a very dark sky in the beautiful Texas Hill Country.

Participants produced over 90 pages of new material and revised or reviewed over 400 pages of existing writing. At least one student submitted a finished proposal to her committee within 24-hours of the completion of the retreat. The event reported a 100% satisfaction rating from all participants, who wholeheartedly recommend the experience to their peers.

Receive Support to Attend the 2017 SERA Annual Meeting
By Sonya Sherrod, PhD

The 40th Annual Southwest Educational Research Association (SERA) Annual Meeting will be held in San Antonio, February 15–17, 2017. This is a regional research conference that is extremely student friendly. SERA is the ideal venue for doctoral students to build their skills in writing and presenting research. Furthermore, funding may also be available for your travel expenses! Check out the guidelines on the Graduate Student Resources web page.

We at the DSC encourage you to seek our assistance right away in preparing your SERA research proposal, as the deadline for submission is September 18th. We would love to see you ALL present and glean invaluable knowledge from other scholars around the Southwest.

While at the conference, you may schedule a one-on-one consultation with a DSC Coach, who would be delighted to attend your presentation and offer you immediate support and feedback.

Remember, September 18th is the deadline for submitting your SERA proposal. Let’s get started!

DSC Brown Bag Speaker Series Going Strong with Guest Speakers
By Lesley Shelton, MA

The DSC is pleased to announce four new presentations are being offered in our Brown Bag Speaker Series. These talks are offered virtually, via Blackboard Collaborate, so they are equally accessible to distance and local students. The sessions take place on a Friday, from noon to 1:00 pm.

On September 16 and October 7, guest speaker Dr. Kamau Siwatu will be delivering two related presentations. September’s topic is “Preparing Academic Presentations,” while October’s topic covers “Delivering Academic Presentations.” These two presentations are very highly recommended by members of the DSC team.

In November, we will be joined by another guest speaker, Dr. Patriann Smith. Her presentation is titled, “Developing the Research Agenda.” This is a very valuable presentation for all of our graduate students, and we hope that you will be able to attend.

Our last presentation for the fall will be “Effectively Integrating Source Material” on December 9 by Lesley Shelton of the DSC Coaching staff.

If you have an idea for a topic you would like to see covered, please email us at d s c . e d u c @ t t u . e d u. Registration instructions can be found on our Brown Bag Series webpage.
The Doctoral Support Center for Writing & Research Excellence (DSC) was created in the fall of 2014 as an innovative solution to address the burgeoning demands of academic writing support for doctoral students in the College of Education (COE) at Texas Tech University. This support is offered online and face-to-face to meet the needs of all COE doctoral students. The DSC offers comprehensive support for academic writing and research tasks encountered in a doctoral program, including assignments for coursework, human subjects protection proposals, dissertation proposals, and dissertations. The DSC also provides support for students through enrichment activities such as workshops and rallies. Essentially, the DSC provides “wrap-around” support for students from start to finish in order to assist them in the successful attainment of their doctoral degrees.

How to Submit Drafts to Blackboard for Review and Feedback

Log in to Blackboard and select the course designated as the DSC from your dashboard.

Follow the instructions to submit your draft. Be sure to specify your concerns using the comments.

The DSC team will review and comment on the draft and send you feedback through the “Track Changes” and “Comments” review features in Microsoft Word, as well as the Comments box in Blackboard. You may also receive an attached document with general comments or notes.

You will revise the draft, incorporating feedback as you see fit. Ultimately, YOU make the final writing decisions, in consultation with your chair and committee.

Be sure to give us plenty of time to address your concerns. Questions about submissions can be directed to the Writing Coach. General questions should be directed to dsc.educ@ttu.edu.