

City University of New York (CUNY)

## CUNY Academic Works

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Meeting Minutes

Library Association of the City University of  
New York

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2009

### LACUNY Junior Faculty Research Roundtable Meeting Minutes, September 2009

LACUNY

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MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 2009 MEETING  
LACUNY JUNIOR FACULTY RESEARCH ROUNDTABLE  
September 29, 2009, 3:00pm  
BMCC Library Room S404

**Members in Attendance:**

Maura Smale, City Tech (co-chair)  
Jill Cirasella, Brooklyn (co-chair)  
Catherine Stern, LaGuardia  
William Casari, Hostos  
Sandy Urban, York  
Rebecca Arzola, Lehman  
Marta Bladek, John Jay  
Kathleen Collins, John Jay  
Phyllis Niles, BMCC  
Dorothea Coiffe, BMCC  
Kanu Nagra, BMCC  
Austin Duffy, John Jay/Hunter  
Albert Neal, LaGuardia  
Joy Dunkley, BMCC  
James Watson, Bronx

This meeting's theme was Jumpstart Your Research and Writing, so we jumped right in with a lively discussion of sources of inspiration for research projects. Jill and Maura reminded JFRR members that links to sources of calls for papers and other LIS writing resources are in the Files area of the JFRR Yahooogroup ([http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lacuny\\_jfac/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lacuny_jfac/)), and also that Daisy Dominguez added these resources (and more!) to the JFRR wiki (<http://jfr.pbworks.com/>).

Many library faculty find opportunities for research in their day-to-day work as librarians. Interesting questions can arise from our job experiences and can often be explored in a scholarly way. There are a number of journals that might fit the bill for these kinds of studies, for example, *Evidence Based Librarian and Information Practice* or journals that cover a particular service area in libraries.

One stumbling block that many of us have faced is the feeling that there's nothing new under the sun, the sense that every idea we have has already been researched and published to death. We generated lots of helpful suggestions for overcoming nothing-new-paralysis, among them:

- Try writing on a similar topic for a different audience, for example, in a higher ed journal rather than a LIS journal
- Tweak something about the study: the institution, population, add a survey or other novel data collection method, etc.
- Take the long view -- often many articles on a topic feature a discussion of current research; instead, trace the appearance and evolution of a topic over time
- Remember that you can bring a new perspective and new information to the discussion

Another suggested source for writing projects is the master's thesis. Some of us are working on them currently and can get started thinking about how to turn part(s) of it into an article(s) right now. Catherine mentioned a useful book that was discussed at a faculty development event at LaGuardia (which Daisy's added to the wiki):

Belcher, Wendy Laura. *Writing your Journal Article in 12 Weeks: a Guide to Academic Publishing Success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, 2009.

We also spent much of the meeting discussing time-management strategies. Many of us agreed that it can be difficult to progress from the research to the writing phase of a project, and hard to sustain interest once we're in the writing phase. Jill and Maura gave a quick report on a book that's been mentioned in past meetings that they both read recently: *How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing* by Paul Silva (full citation on the wiki). It's a great, quick read with loads of useful strategies.

Silva starts by debunking what he calls "specious barriers to writing a lot": no time for writing, need to do more research, need a better workspace, waiting for inspiration. His solution to time problems is to make a writing schedule and stick to it. He counts research as productive work on a project and encourages academics to use their scheduled writing time for research, too. He uses a spreadsheet to set manageable, small goals (multiple goals per larger project) and track his progress, which can serve as a source of inspiration.

Of course, we all acknowledge that there's no one-size-fits-all solution. Maura's had some success with a writing schedule recently -- even an hour a day before work has made a big difference. Jill researches at a steady pace but tends to write in big bursts several days in a row.

Silva also suggests that a writing group can be helpful, so that there are external goals/deadlines for your projects. While the entire JFRR is much too big to be a manageable writing group, there are areas of our group that function in the same way, for example, research pact partners and using the email list to request readers for drafts of articles/papers. Jill and Maura reminded everyone that we can also use the subject groups (and associated wikispace) for this kind of support. Bill suggested another possible angle for the research pact is to schedule a weekly call with your research partner -- again, this can help provide extrinsic motivation to meet research and writing project goals.

After this productive discussion, the meeting adjourned with a reminder that for our next meeting we plan to bring in one or more speakers to discuss quantitative methodologies. If you have suggestions for speakers on either topic (or future topics), please let Jill and Maura know.

The next JFRR meeting will be held:  
Friday, November 20  
10am-noon  
Location TBD

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

*Minutes submitted by Maura Smale, City Tech*