AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PAPER CHASE
COLLABORATIVE WRITING PROCESS
Alicia A. Dahl, PhD, MS – Assistant Professor – UNC Charlotte – ADAHL3@UNCC.EDU
AGENDA

• Welcome & Introductions
• Honesty Hour: Pitfalls of Writing
• Paper Chase Method
• Best Practices
• Lessons Learned
• Q&A
INTRODUCTIONS

• Please drop your name & role/affiliation in the chat
• How many manuscripts do you currently have “in preparation”?
• What are your current professional expectations for writing? (RPT criteria, annual reporting, etc.)
THE PITFALLS OF WRITING

• How many of you are currently working on a manuscript?
• How long have you been working on that specific manuscript?
• What stage is it at?
• What are some of the reasons your work is stalled?

Time
Co-Authors
Data Lag
UGH...REVISIONS

Alicia A. Dahl, PhD, MS – Assistant Professor – UNC Charlotte – ADAHL3@UNCC.EDU
ENTER...THE PAPER CHASE METHOD

• Imagine if you could get all of the co-authors in a shared space at once for a long period
• Minimal interruptions
• Dedicated attention for writing the manuscript
• AND handle all of the revisions together through a collaborative approach???

Alicia A. Dahl, PhD, MS – Assistant Professor – UNC Charlotte – ADAHL3@UNCC.EDU
YES, PLEASE
HOW IT WORKS

• All data work is done ahead of time - this is purely a writing exercise
• All coauthors are present and available
• Scheduled, structured writing blocks that rotate after a set amount of time – each person gets to contribute to all sections
• Collaborative in nature *discuss authorship order early*
• GOAL: Develop a paper from the first word through journal submission in 24 hours.

Alicia A. Dahl, PhD, MS – Assistant Professor – UNC Charlotte – ADAHL3@UNCC.EDU
BEFORE THE CHASE

CONSIDERATIONS & PREPARATIONS
STEP 1: RESEARCH QUESTION & DATA

• Develop a research question – make sure you have the data to answer it!
• Establish the analyses needed to answer the question
• Estimate the timeframe for the data to be analyzed
• Since this exercise is dissemination focused, a good rule of thumb is “use data you already have”
STEP 2: CONFIRM YOUR COAUTHORS

- Decide who needs to be at the table
- Authorship order – establish at the beginning so people understand their expectations
- Those who can’t make the paper chase commitment might be best included as an acknowledgment, or be required to take on tasks outside of the scheduled chase.
- Plan for several group meetings ahead of the chase to discuss the project, analysis, and address any concerns.

Alicia A. Dahl, PhD, MS – Assistant Professor – UNC Charlotte – ADAHL3@UNCC.EDU
STEP 3: SELECT THREE POTENTIAL JOURNALS

• Review their guidelines
• Consider the review time
• Create a list of 3 target journals (rank) and get to know the authorship guidelines for your top choice
• Consider special issues
STEP 4: CONFIRM A DATE AND PLACE

• Coordinate schedules with co-authors

• Typically, a complete paper takes about 24 working hours
  – Sweet spot: 3 consecutive working days or a weekend
  – Other options: 4-5 consecutive half days, 2 full days with 2 half days following, 2-hour weekly writing blocks over the course of a semester

• The writing space should be comfortable with plenty of outlets! Zoom is a possibility, though less preferred
DURING THE PAPER CHASE

AIM FOR EFFICIENCY & EFFECTIVENESS
STEP 5: CREATE A ROLE ROTATION SCHEDULE FOR THE EXERCISE

• 1-2 people per paper section at a time (google docs is helpful!)

• Roles include:
  – Introduction
  – Methods
  – Results
  – Discussion
  – Journal Tasks – References & Cover

Alicia A. Dahl, PhD, MS – Assistant Professor – UNC Charlotte – ADAHL3@UNCC.EDU

Play to your strengths to start
STEP 6: PAPER CHASE!!!

- Write, write, write (Day 1 Goal)
- Fill in gaps & edit (Day 2 Goal)
- Refine & Submit (Day 3 Goal)
- Consider a facilitator to manage the assignment of tasks and to serve as a peer reviewer
- Consider a scientific editor to review prior to submission

Alicia A. Dahl, PhD, MS – Assistant Professor – UNC Charlotte – ADAHL3@UNCC.EDU
AFTER THE PAPER CHASE

STAY COMMITTED
• Decide who will handle the revisions once the paper is peer-reviewed (First/Last Author)

• CELEBRATE!!!

• Develop an infographic to pair with the finished product
EXAMPLE OF THE PAPER CHASE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Owner</th>
<th>Last modified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Data</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 24, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 1 - Friday</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 1, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 2 - Saturday</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 1, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 3 - Sunday</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 1, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal Materials</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 1, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Chase 2022 - MamaView</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference PDFs</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 1, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Last modified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 1, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 1, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 1, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 1, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Day 1_Compiled.docx</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 26, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>Last modified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro_Round 1_Sophie</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 25, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro_Round 1&amp;2_Alicia</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 25, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro_Round 3&amp;4_AnnaLise</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 25, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intro_Round 5_SB</td>
<td>me</td>
<td>Mar 25, 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Shanika</td>
<td>Farida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00-9:30 AM</td>
<td>Welcome &amp; Agenda Setting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:30 AM</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goal: summarize findings from</td>
<td>Goal: detail data analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>survey analysis</td>
<td>methods; review research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>process details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-10:40 AM</td>
<td>Break (10 minutes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:40-11:45 AM</td>
<td>Results</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goal: summarize findings from</td>
<td>Goal: summarize findings from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>analysis</td>
<td>analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:00 PM</td>
<td>Group Check-In &amp; Goal Setting for next session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-12:45 PM</td>
<td>Networking &amp; Lunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45-1:50 PM</td>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goal: detail data analysis</td>
<td>Goal: summarize findings from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>methods</td>
<td>analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Day 1 - Friday*

*Blocks are for content generation; use breaks & group discussion time for Q&A or problem solving*
BEST PRACTICES
FROM A TIME OR TWO....OR SIX
BEST PRACTICES

• Use a collaboration tool like Google Docs with separate files for each paper section & day
• Upon completion of the working day, download and compile all paper sections for a “group read through”
• Live edit the paper together prior to submission for consistency & flow. Aim for “one voice”
• Save reference integration until the final day (use comment feature until then) Related: Cite as you go
• Create tables & figures before the chase
LESSONS LEARNED

• This is HARD work & exhausting in a different way
• Take breaks and energize throughout the long writing days
• A facilitator makes a huge difference in the efficiency of the team!
• Team should be made up of people strongly familiar with the project
• Active learning helps! Create mind maps, keep running lists of common terms/abbreviations, and discuss title ideas throughout
• Great way to pull students and community partners into academic research
WITH THE RIGHT TEAM, IT WORKS!

PUBLISHED 5 PAPERS IN 4 YEARS
ADDITIONAL 3 PAPERS UNDER REVIEW
THANK YOU!

ALICIA A. DAHL, PHD, MS – ASSISTANT PROFESSOR – UNC CHARLOTTE – ADAHL3@UNCC.EDU