

The space of writing in higher education research

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How, when and where do academics write, and how do they learn to write? What factors influence their productivity? What practical and emotional obstacles do they face? What are their formative experiences, their daily routines? Most importantly, what attitudes and practices set the most successful academics apart from their peers? This presentation reports on a major international study that will shed new light on the *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990) of scholarly writing. To date I have collected interview and questionnaire data from more than 1,000 academics in 15 countries on five continents. My informants, who hail from every academic rank and from across the disciplines, responded in rich and nuanced detail to intimate questions about their professional formation as writers, their day-to-day writing routines, and the emotions they associate their writing. The most successful and productive academics, it turns out, adhere to no uniform set of daily writing *habits*. What they do have in common are four distinctive clusters of attitudes and attributes that I call their *habits of mind*. These dispositions form the foundational BASE (Behavioral, Artisanal, Social, Emotional) of an imagined *habitation* or living space where academics can write, flourish, and breathe clear air. Here I offer a preliminary blueprint for reshaping the physical places and emotional spaces of higher education research writing.