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It's not a hobby : reconceptualizing the place of writing in academic work

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Abstract

The writing activities involved in research are not fully articulated in discussions of academic work. In this context, academics say they have to disengage from other tasks in order to write, which raises fundamental questions about the place of writing in academic work. A study designed to find out more about this disengagement showed that it involved acts of engagement with writing.

Reconceptualizing disengagement from other tasks as engagement with writing repositions writing as part of academic work. This is critical for new and emerging researchers: it provides concepts to underpin practices that will enable them regularly to write. This article provides a model for physical, social and cognitive engagement with writing and explores how it can be put into practice.

Implications for academics and those responsible for developing research capacity are discussed.

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