Writing Retreats for Research: Roles, Results and Reflections from the VALID Project in Vietnam

Presentation at the Department of Public Health’s Global Health Section, November 4, 2021
By Tine Gammeltoft, Dan Meyrowitsch & Ib Bygbjerg
VALID objectives:

- To generate new knowledge about the role of informal social support in everyday disease management among people with type 2 diabetes,
- To develop, implement and assess a pilot intervention programme that aims to enhance everyday diabetes management,
- To strengthen research capacity and research collaboration.

VALID (Informal Support for Diabetes Management in Vietnam):

- **Partners:** Thai Binh University of Medicine and Pharmacy; University of Southern Denmark; University of Copenhagen,
- **Funding:** DK Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- **Components:**
  - Ethnographic study (extended case study) (WP1)
  - Cross-sectional surveys with people with diabetes + their informal social supporters (WP2)
  - Pilot intervention: diabetes clubs and classes (WP3)
  - Research capacity building (WP4)
Writing retreats have multiple aims:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>EXPLORING</td>
<td>To explore data sets with a view to setting joint writing/publication priorities,</td>
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<td>SHARING</td>
<td>To discuss interpretations and implications of findings,</td>
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<td>LEARNING</td>
<td>To enhance research capacity (in a broad sense: writing skills; knowledge of the publication landscape; authorship rules and expectations; etc),</td>
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<td>TEAMBUILDING</td>
<td>To strengthen participants’ sense of being a team and working as a team,</td>
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**WRITING 😊**
Preparing for the Ninh Binh retreat

- Reviewing the project’s publication plan (developed at project start, including plans for authorships)
- Going over data sets
- Developing a retreat program
Program: VALID Writing retreat November 24-30, 2019

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<th>Sunday</th>
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<th>Tuesday</th>
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<td>7.30-9.00</td>
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<td>Joint project meeting (all): Taking stock and planning the week</td>
<td>Travel from TB to Ninh Binh</td>
<td>8.00 Five brief presentations (Dat, Cuong, Dan, Dieu, Diep) on the topic: “What is my article about?”</td>
<td>8.00 Brief reports from groups + discussion</td>
<td>WP1 and WP2: Writing groups + WP3: Pilottesting Q3, cont.</td>
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<td>9.15-11.00</td>
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<td>“Working with data” workshops* facilitated by Dan (WP2-3) and Tine (WP1) (stocktaking)</td>
<td>Introduction: How to make the move from data to articles? (Jens) Authorship and research integrity (Tine)</td>
<td>Writing groups</td>
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<td>Lunch 12-14</td>
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<td>PM 16.30-18.00</td>
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<td>Stakeholder workshop at TBUMP</td>
<td>Working in writing groups on international articles</td>
<td>Writing groups, cont.</td>
<td>Joint project meeting: developing a roadmap for the coming time</td>
<td>WP1 and WP2: Writing groups, cont.</td>
<td>WP3: Pilottesting Q3</td>
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<td>Dinner 18.30</td>
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Writing groups at the retreat:

- Group 1: Dieu, Diep, Ib (WP2)
- Group 2: Dan, Dat, Cuong, Thanh, Bai, Hieu (WP2)
- Group 3: Ai, Dung, Duc Anh, Tine (WP1)
- Group 4: Ngoc Anh, Tuc, Jens (WP3)
Learning
Exploring and sharing
Teambuilding
What came out of it?

• A joint foundation for thinking and writing (not easy to measure as an output, but important),
• Inspiration and a sense of collectivity (also not easy to measure),
• WP1 output: two conference presentations + three international articles,
• WP2 output: three international articles + others in pipeline
"With many thanks for company, inspiration, interaction, thoughts, fine food & drinks – and beautiful environment, to: Ai, Anh, Cuong, Dieu, Diep, Hieu, Huong, Thanh, Vu, Dan, Jens, Tine. From: Bắc Ib"
Thank you for listening!