TIPS ON HOW TO PREVENT PROCRASTINATION IN WRITING

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT:

Procrastination: the action of delaying or postponing something.

It is important to prevent procrastination in writing so that students are less stressed about the writing process. It is also important to understand why we procrastinate in order to utilize these tips to prevent it.

Why do we procrastinate? We procrastinate because we tend to not want to do the task or activity at hand, or we do not allow ourselves enough time to complete a task; however, it is also vital to realize that procrastination is a natural thing we do as part of being human.

The first step to take towards preventing procrastination is to realize the consequences that come from procrastination. The consequences of procrastination can be external or internal. For example, an external consequence would be getting a D on your paper because you waited
until the last minute to turn it in, and an internal consequence would be feeling guilty for not working on your paper while you are doing something you enjoy. The time to take action is before your procrastination leads you to feel discouraged, stressed or overwhelmed.

**SIGNS THAT SHOW YOU ARE PROCRASTINATING**

Sometimes we as writers get so good at procrastinating that we don’t even know that we are doing it. If you are unsure or are in denial about whether or not you are procrastinating, here are some signs you should look out for.

1) You ignore the task that you need to do in hopes that it will go away.
2) You find that the degree of difficulty of what the task involves is over- or under-estimated on its actual degree of difficulty.
3) You minimize the impact that your performance now may have on your future.
4) You find yourself substituting tasks for other important tasks. (Example: Doing a load of laundry instead of making an appointment with the University Writing Center to help you on your paper.)
5) You find your “short” breaks turn into long ones or into periods of time where you don’t do any work at all. (Example: The claim that you are taking a break to play video games for half an hour turns into an hour or more dedicated to just playing video games and not doing work.)
6) You find yourself focusing on one small part of the task, at the expense of the rest. (Example: You claim to work on the discussion section while putting off other parts such as the introduction and the conclusion.)
7) You spend too much time researching or choosing a topic.

**STEPS TO PREVENT PROCRASTINATION**

1. Make a plan
   a. Make a schedule to set up what you will accomplish and what you will do to write your paper.
   b. It is important to create mini goals and deadlines for these goals to motivate you to write your paper.
   c. Be realistic with the schedule you create.
   d. Plan with a classmate, co-writer, or friend to have someone to hold you accountable.
2. Create a to-do list – get the worst tasks out of the way first. This helps the writer get over the “have-to” part of the paper.

3. Eliminate distractions – Work in a space that is most productive for you as a writer. It is generally recommended to work in a quiet space without any distractions such as your phone, social media websites, friends, other people, pets and other obstacles that can distract you from writing.

4. Free write – It is important to realize that your first draft is not going to be perfect. That is why it is necessary to avoid procrastinating so that you are allowed enough time to draft and revise your paper.
