BSc Paramedic Studies (Year 2): Writing for Research

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Regional Writing Centre

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Get on the 'write' track

Workshop outline

- Writing for publication
- Writing concerns/issues
- The writing process
- Writing an introduction
- Synthesising the literature / intertextuality
- Structuring the research proposal
- Paragraph structure (unity and coherence)
- Writing clearly and concisely
- Effective writing strategies

Getting started

Freewriting

- A topic of interest relevant to Paramedic Studies that I would like to explore for this research proposal is …

- Keep writing non-stop for 5 minutes.
- Write in sentences.
- Do not edit or censor your writing.
- It is private writing – no one will read it.

Reflection

- Why write for publication?

- Implications of publishing/not publishing

- Fears/misconceptions about writing and publication

Reflection

Freewriting

- What I worry about and struggle with as I write my research proposal…

- Keep writing non-stop for 5 minutes.

- Write in sentences.

- Do not edit or censor your writing.

- It is private writing – no one will read it.

New writers' errors (Murray 2005: 4)

- "Writing too much about 'the problem'"

- "Overstating the problem and claiming too much for their solution"

- "Overstating the critique of others' work"

- "Not saying what they mean, losing focus through indirect writing"
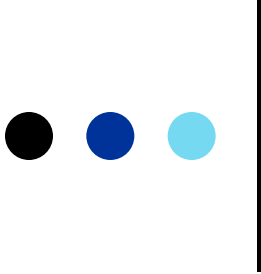
- "Putting too many ideas in one paper"

Key features of academic writing

What comes to mind when you think about academic writing?
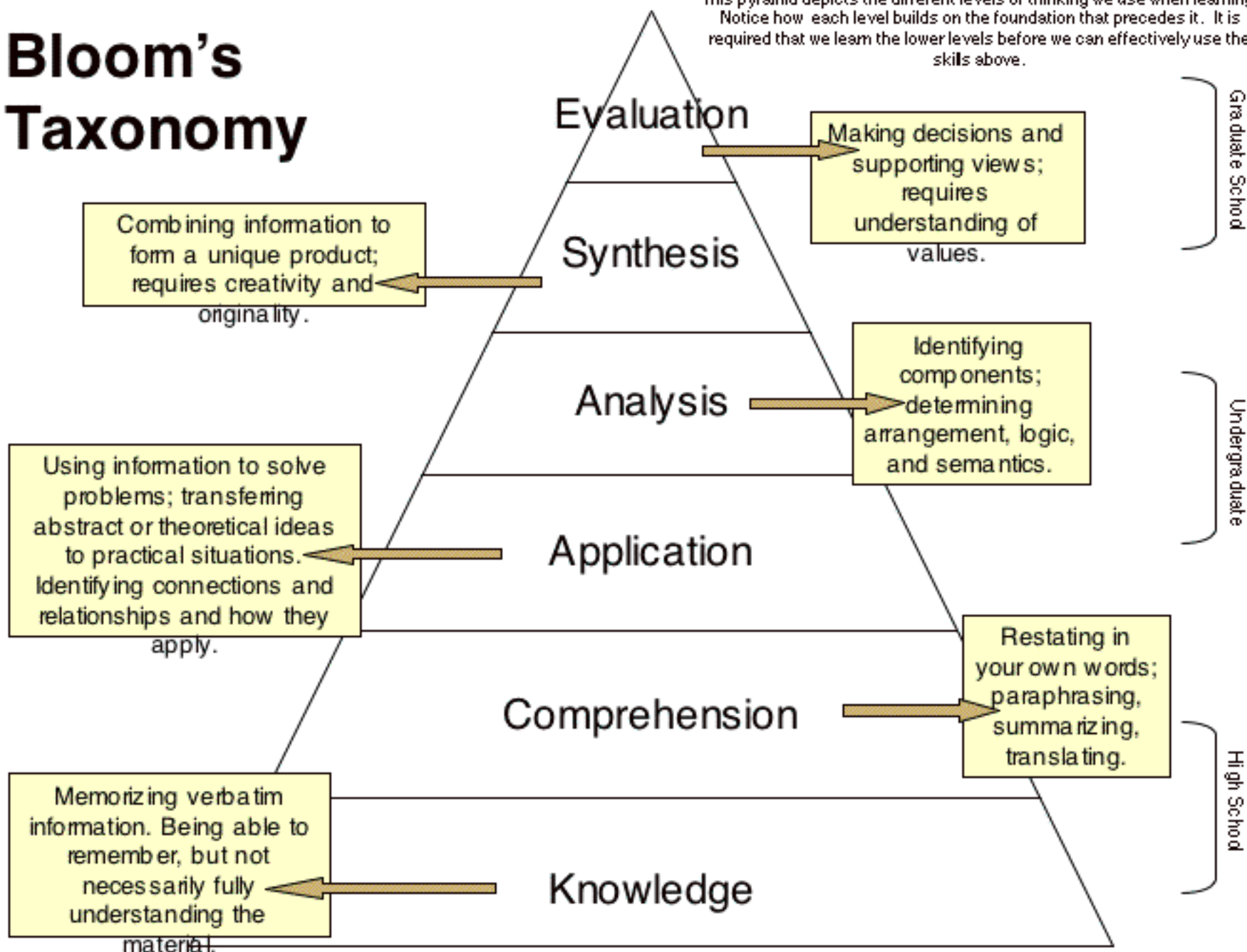
Feedback on previous assignments

Positive

- Clear understanding of the concepts and principles involved
- Evidence of outside reading and research
- Interpretation, evaluation and synthesis of existing evidence/research
- Reflective
- Well structured/organised
- Logical

Writing issues

- Lack of evidence to support the points being made
- Lack of evaluation and synthesis of the existing literature
- Not demonstrating a deep understanding of the concepts and principles under discussion
- Lack of attention to detail
- Inaccurate reporting/interpretation of published research

Bloom's Taxonomy

This pyramid depicts the different levels of thinking we use when learning. Notice how each level builds on the foundation that precedes it. It is required that we learn the lower levels before we can effectively use the skills above.

Evaluation

Making decisions and supporting views; requires understanding of values.

Synthesis

Combining information to form a unique product; requires creativity and originality.

Analysis

Identifying components; determining arrangement, logic, and semantics.

Application

Using information to solve problems; transferring abstract or theoretical ideas to practical situations. Identifying connections and relationships and how they apply.

Comprehension

Restating in your own words; paraphrasing, summarizing, translating.

Knowledge

Memorizing verbatim information. Being able to remember, but not necessarily fully understanding the material.

Graduate School

Undergraduate

High School

Louisiana State University € Center for Academic Success € B-31 Coates Hall € 225-578-2872 € www.cas.lsu.edu

Writing critically

➢ How can you bring a critical orientation to your work?

➢ What questions should you ask when reading and writing in order to develop critical and analytical thinking skills?

Joining the conversation: example

To be successful, EMS handoffs must quickly and accurately convey information [1], [2], [3] and [4]. Previous studies evaluating EMS handoffs in the trauma setting have found that 65%–72% of "key data points" were transmitted in high-acuity patients, with 9% of data not being documented by either the trauma team or EMS providers [1], [2] and [4]. Unfortunately, retention of verbally delivered information given by EMS providers to ED staff is poor, with only 56% of the information retained accurately [5]. Although this represents a large amount of information transfer, the perception of an adequate EMS handoff varies greatly by provider. In one study, 92% of paramedics believed that the transferred information was appropriate, and only 14% of nurses and 29% of trauma surgeons agreed [1].

Given the importance of these events and the reported variability in the perception of the accuracy and appropriateness of transferred information, we sought to evaluate provider perception of information transfer by EMS and ED personnel and compare this to an external observer's objective assessment.

(Panchal et al. 2015: 19)

Useful resources

- **Writing critically**
  - Academic Phrasebank, University of Manchester: http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/being-critical/
  - Using English for Academic Purposes: http://www.uefap.com/index.htm/

My writing process

How does writing happen for me?

The writing process

Pre-writing

Drafting

Revision

Editing and proofreading

Prewriting

- Planning
  - Evaluating the rhetorical situation, or context, into which you write
  - Choosing and focusing your topic
  - Establishing an organising principle
- Gathering information
  - Entering the discourse on your topic
  - Taking notes as a strategy to avoid charges of plagiarism
  - Evaluating sources
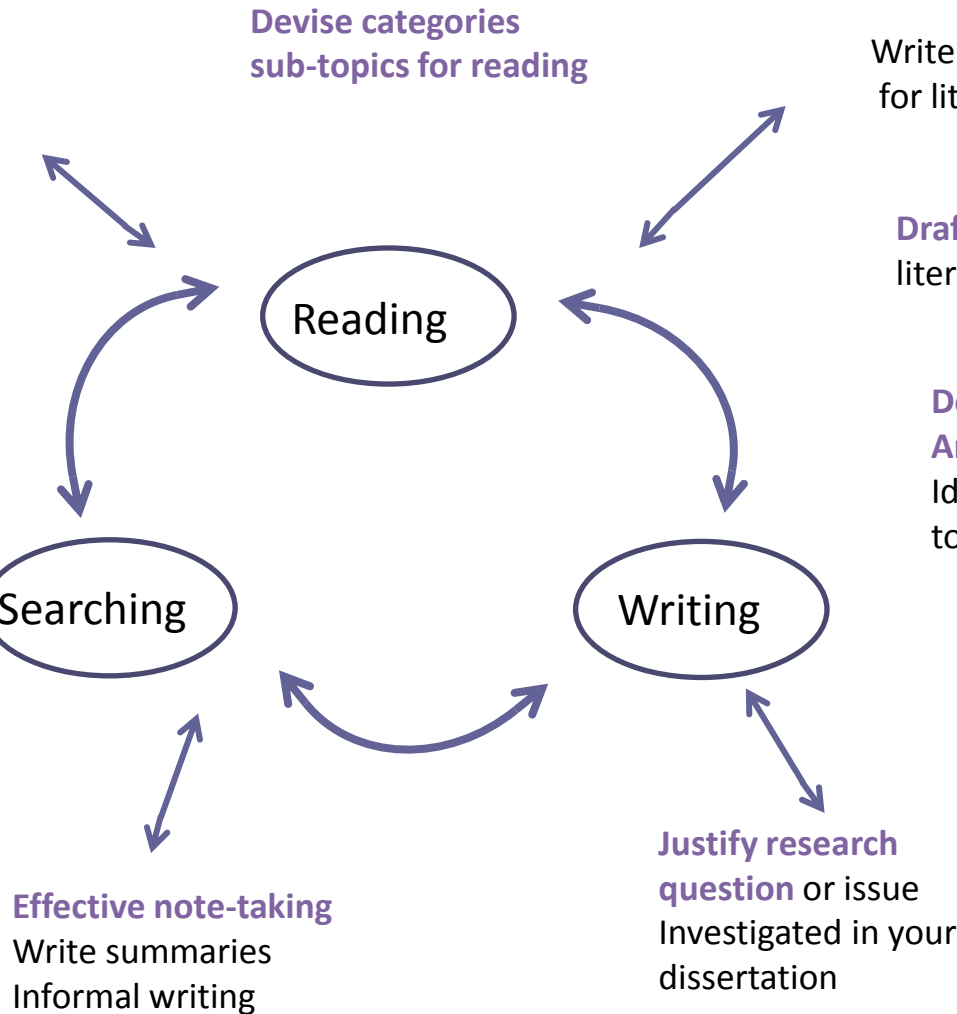
Literature Review Process
(adapted from Ridley 2008: 81)

Writing a 'page-98 paper'

- My research question is … (50 words)
- Researchers who have looked at this subject are … (50 words)
- They argue that … (25 words)
- Debate centres on the issue of … (25 words)
- There is work to be done on … (25 words)
- My research is closest to that of X in that … (50 words)
- My contribution will be … (50 words)

(Murray 2006: 104)

Outlining your proposal

- Devise headings and subheadings for each section
  - This helps you see the logical progression (or lack of it) of your ideas
  - It identifies the main ideas
  - It helps detect omissions

The writing process

Pre-writing

Drafting

Revision

Editing and proofreading

Drafting

- Try to visualise your report/paper. Work toward that vision.

- Begin to structure it—establish your section headings; give them titles. These do not have to be permanent.

- Examine the logical order of ideas reflected in those titles.

- Do not get hung up on details; elements of the draft are subject to change in the revision stage.

- Start to write the sections that you are ready to write.

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Drafting

- Continue to reassess your rhetorical situation.

- Does what you have written so far contribute to the achievement of your purpose?

- Experiment with organisation and methods of development.

- Don't get bogged-down in details; focus on the big issues: organisation and logical development.

Writing an introduction: CARS Model

- Establishing a territory
  - Claiming centrality
  - Reviewing items of previous research
- Establishing a niche
  - Counter-claiming
  - Identifying a gap
  - Question-raising
- Occupying the niche
  - Outlining purpose

(Swales 1990: 141)

Methodology and research design

Justification

- Why and how did you choose the targeted population/sample?

- Why did you choose the particular method?

- Is the methodology appropriate to your field of study?

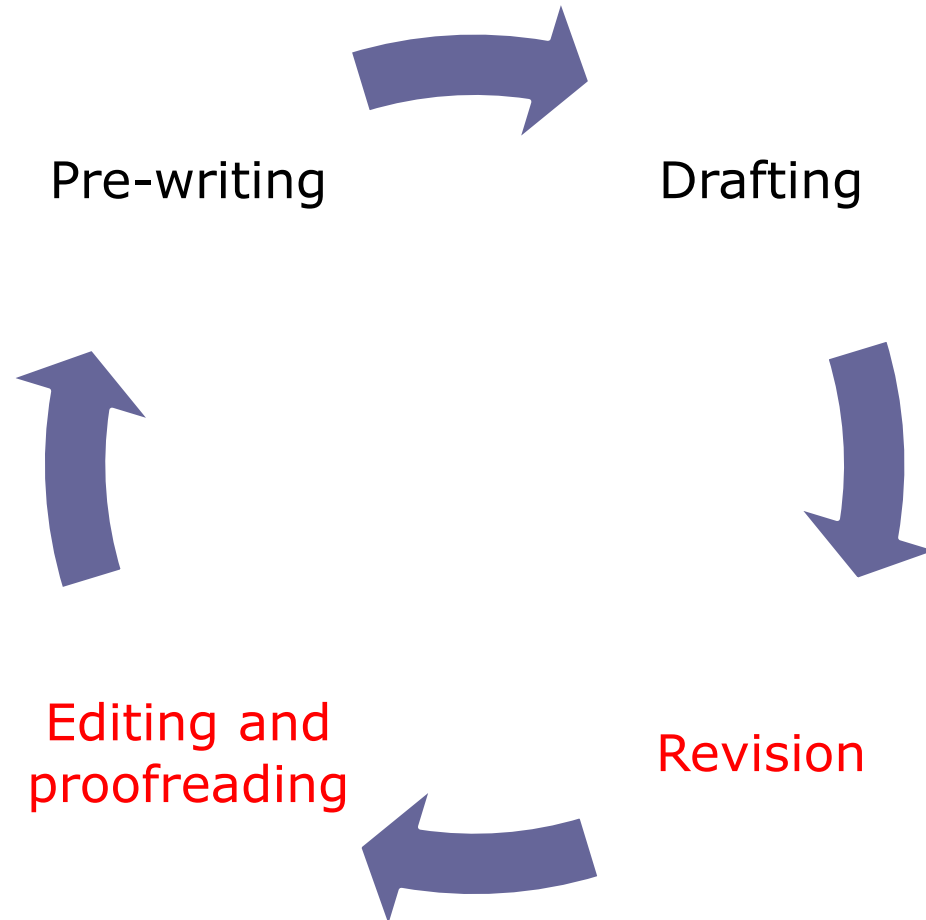- Is the methodology appropriate to the objectives of the study?

Methodology and research design

Justification

- Methods affect results
- Methods affect validity and reliability
- Methods affect conclusions

The writing process

Pre-writing

Drafting

Revision

Editing and proofreading

Importance of revision

"There is no such thing as good writing – just good rewriting".

(Moore *et al.* 2010: 101)

Example

According to Marks et al. (2005) physical activity reduces your risk of chronic diseases like cancer and heart disease. Research shows that many Irish people do not get enough exercise. The SLAN report explains that 55% of Irish people are physically active. The SLAN survey states that older people have less physical activity than younger people (2007). Ellis et al. (2007) in their study say that people with disabilities have less physical activity. Physical activity is also known to help mental wellbeing. The aforementioned survey also discusses that women are more likely to be inactive.

(Extract taken from Maguire, Delahunt, and Everitt-Reynolds 2011)

Revised example

Physical activity is known to reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as cancer and cardiovascular disease (Marks et al., 2005). Regular physical activity is also associated with improved psychological wellbeing (Biddle & Ekkekakis, 2005). Evidence suggests that many people do not meet the recommendations for physical activity (Marks et al., 2005). The 2007 SLAN survey found that just over half of Irish adults were physically active (Morgan et al. 2009). Levels of physical activity are associated with demographic factors. For example levels of physical activity are lower among women, older people (Morgan et al., 2009) and those with disabilities (Ellis et al., 2007).

(Extract taken from Maguire, Delahunt, and Everitt-Reynolds 2011)

Revision (global issues) Organisation and structure

- Does the text achieve your writing goals as established in your evaluation of the rhetorical situation (writing context) and by your research question?

- How does the introduction fit in with the body of the paper? Did you address what you said you would address? Did you fulfil your promises?

- Is information logically arranged, and is the organisation of your text clear?

- Is each section in the right place to fulfil your purpose? Does each section contribute to your reader's understanding of your topic?

- Have you drawn connections between the sections?

Revision (global)

- Does each paragraph treat in a controlled manner an identifiable idea, and does that idea follow logically the ideas expressed in previous paragraphs and do they allow readers to predict the ideas expressed in the paragraphs that follow?

- Does each paragraph have a topic sentence and is the paragraph cogent, coherent and unified? Take a close look at [paragraphs](#).

- Is there deviation, wander and digression?

- Does your conclusion take into account the discoveries made during your research and writing processes?

- Strategy: Reverse outline

Revision (local) Editing and proofreading

- Look at logical and grammatical relations as expressed within paragraph boundaries.

- Do your sentences express complete ideas, and do you vary your structures? Are they grammatical?

- Is the relationship between pronouns and noun substitutes and the things they represent clear?

- Verbs express relationships of time and indicate person, number and mood. Are those relationships consistent and appropriate?

Copyediting / Proofreading

- This is the careful editing of each line and each graphic to ensure that the material is expressed in clear, correct English, checking errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, format and sentence structure.

- Proofreading is not editing in the broader sense – it is an effort to achieve correctness in the elements mentioned above.

- Read passages aloud.

- Get others involved.

What mistakes do you typically make?

- Punctuation
- Using capital letters in the wrong places
- Sentences without verbs
- Inappropriate use of verbs – e.g. 'elicit' when they mean 'produce'
- No paragraphs in long sections of text
- Poor spelling
- Poor understanding of conjunctions and connections
- Citations

Tips for editing

- Purdue OWL: Proofreading
  - https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/561/1/
- Personalising proofreading
  - What mistakes do you typically make?
  - How can you fix these errors?
- Peer review

Writing clearly

- Logical method of development
- Effective transition signals
- Good signposting
- Consistent point of view
- Conciseness (careful word choice)
- Clarity of expression
- Paragraph structure
  - Unity
  - Coherence

My writing process

Cognitive Strategies

Metacognitive Strategies

Assessing my research/writing process

Affective Strategies

Social Strategies

Reflection: understanding your relationship with academic writing

- Writing would be so much more enjoyable and less daunting for me if …

- How would I characterise my writing process? What works? What is preventing me from moving forward?

- What are the things that I do to make writing happen?

Social strategies

- Dialogue about writing
- Getting feedback on writing
- Peer-review
  - The "writing sandwich" (Murray 2005:85): writing, talking, writing
  - Writing "buddies" (Murray and Moore 2006:102)
  - Writers' groups
  - Writers' retreats
- Engaging in critiques of one another's work allows you to become effective critics of your own work.

Getting started

- Where and when do you write?
- How long does it take you to get started?
- What kind of avoidance tactics go on?
- Why are you *not* writing?

Getting started

- Create time and space for writing
- Freewriting
- Writing to prompts
  - "What writing have you done for this assignment, what writing would you like to do…"
  - "The aim of this paper is…"
- Experiment with different types of writing

Writing strategies

- Getting unstuck
    - Writing to prompts/freewriting (write anything)
    - Set writing goals
    - Write regularly
    - Integrate writing into your thinking
    - Break it down into a manageable process
- Write about why you are having difficulty making advances in your writing
    - "I don't feel ready to write."
    - Writers' block
    - …
- Why write about why you are having difficulty?

Observing models of good practice

In your own time..

- Identify an article that employs a similar methodology to the one you have chosen for your research project.

- Analysing the genre/text.

- Generate a list of the important criteria which will make your writing more effective.

Effort and Commitment

Supportive Relationships

Reward and Celebration

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Resources

- Academic Phrasebank, University of Manchester: http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/

- Ebest, S.B., Alred, G., Brusaw, C.T. and Oliu, W.E. (2005) *Writing from A to Z: The Easy-to-use Reference Handbook,* 5th edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

- Regional Writing Centre, UL: http://www.ul.ie/rwc/

- The OWL at Purdue: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/

- The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: http://writingcenter.unc.edu/

- Using English for Academic Purposes: http://www.uefap.com/index.htm

References

Brown, R. (1994/1995) 'Write Right First Time', *Literati Club, Articles on Writing and Publishing, Special Issue for Authors and Editors*.

Ballenger, B. (2006) *The Curious Researcher: A Guide to Writing Research Papers,* 5th edition. New York: Pearson Longman.

Moore, S. (ed.) (2008) *Supporting Academic Writing Among Students and Academics,* SEDA Special (24).

Murray, R. (2005) *Writing for Academic Journals*. UK: Open University Press.

Murray, R. (2006) *How to Write a Thesis,* 2nd edition. UK: Open University Press.

Murray, R. and Moore, S. (2006) *The Handbook of Academic Writing: A Fresh Approach.* UK: Open University Press.

Murray, R., Thow, M., Moore, S. and Murphy, M. (2008) 'The writing consultation: developing academic writing practices', *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 32(2): 119-128.

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MAIN BUILDING
C1-065

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Writing Centre Resources

- One-to-One Peer Tutoring

- Writers' Groups

- Writers' Space

- Workshops and Seminars

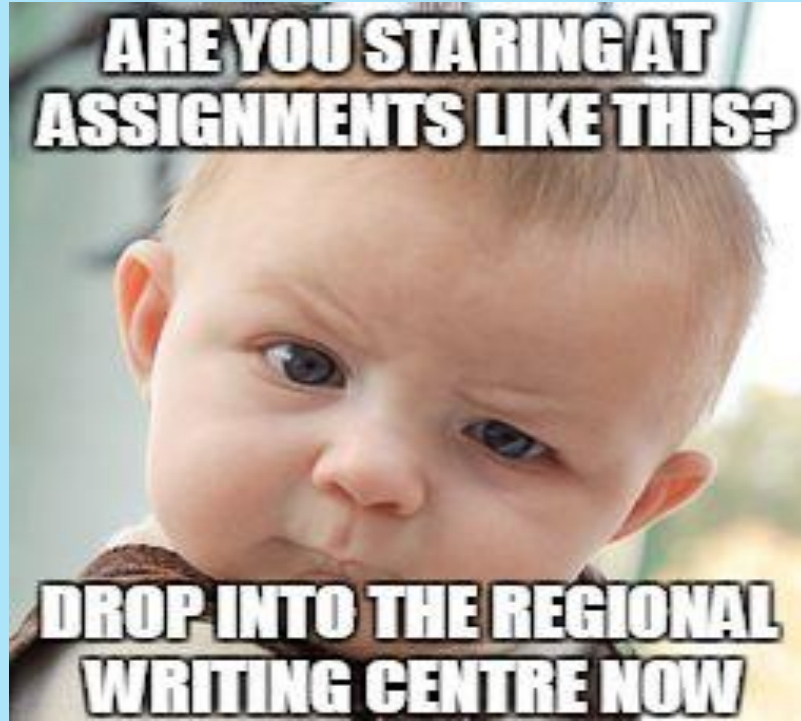- Online Resources

Free resources for all students and staff

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Peer Tutoring in Writing

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Let the Writing Centre get you on the "write" track.

Drop in to the Regional Writing Centre for a FREE one-to-one consultation with one of our experienced peer tutors.

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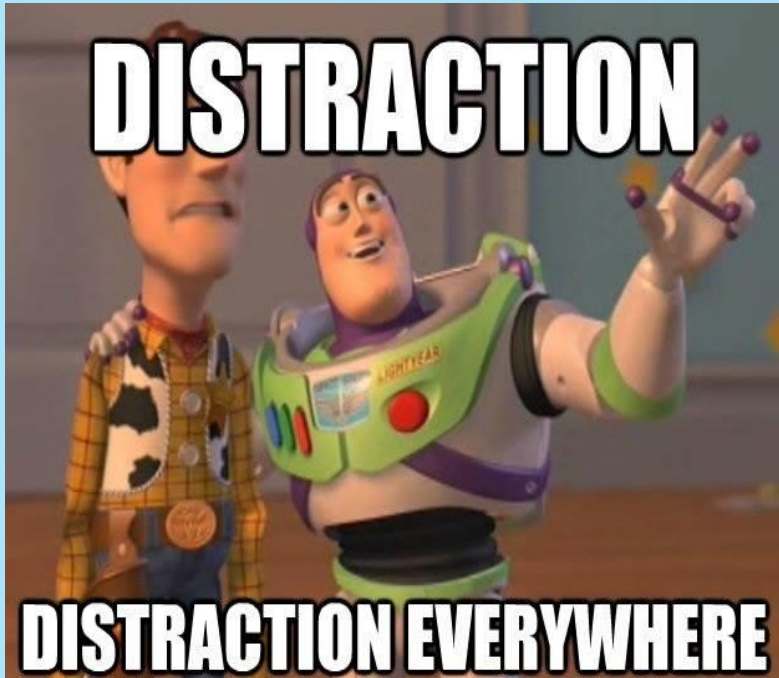REGIONAL WRITING CENTRE
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Writers' Group

- *Struggling* to write?
- Too many *Distractions?*
- Too much *Procrastination?*

Join Writers' Group in our distraction-free Writers' Space.

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RWC Events
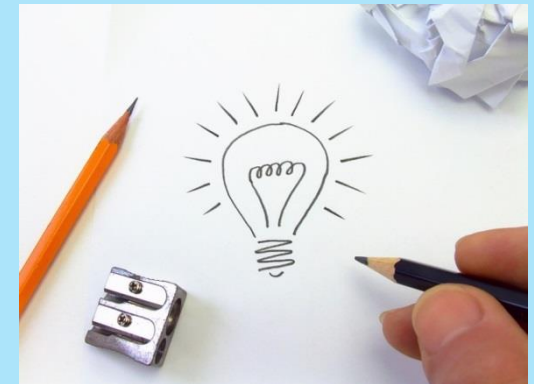
UL One Campus One Book

- encourages students and staff to read the same book and talk to one another about it during the academic year.

How I Write, Ireland

- invites students to interviews which enquire into how authors write, and
- provides recordings of past interviews.

Essay Writing Competition

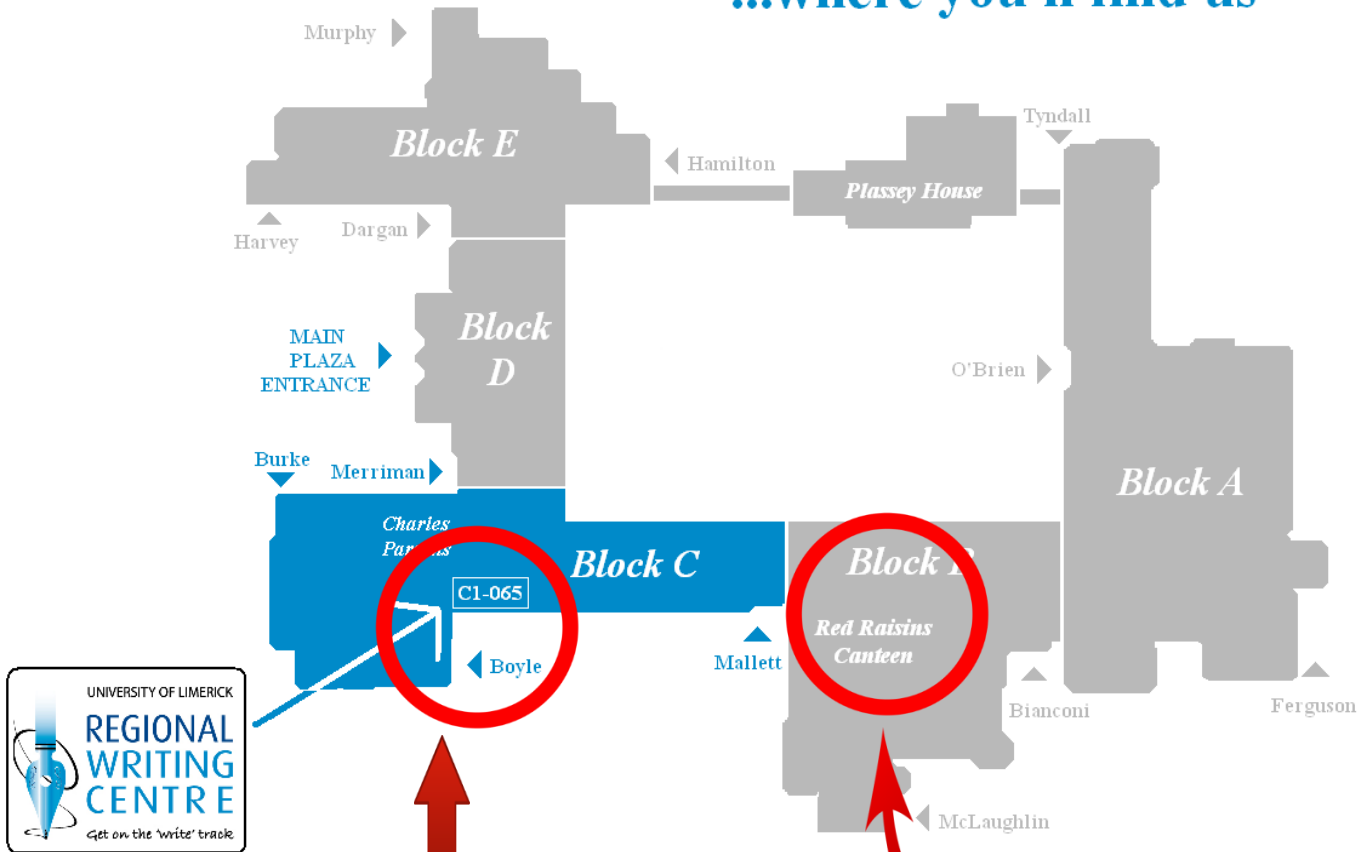- invites secondary school students to enter the RWC's National Secondary School Essay-writing Competition.

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Block E

◀ Hamilton

Tyndall ▼

Plassey House

Harvey ▲   Dargan ▶

MAIN PLAZA ENTRANCE ▶

Block D

O'Brien ▶

Burke ▼   Merriman ▶

Charles Parsons

C1-065

Block C

◀ Boyle

Block A

Block B

Red Raisins Canteen

Mallett ▲

Bianconi ▲

Ferguson ▲

McLaughlin ◀

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Regional Writing Centre located on C1 corridor

Red Raisins located here
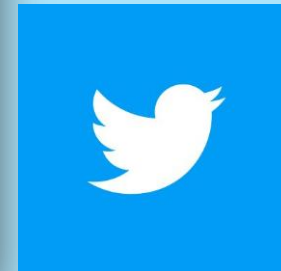
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