

Because every
writer needs
motivation



Because even
the best writers
need help



UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK



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- **Workshops and Seminars**
- **Writers' Space**
- **Online Resources**



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Structuring your dissertation

Writing the literature review

Íde O'Sullivan and Lawrence Cleary

Regional Writing Centre

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Reflection

Freewriting

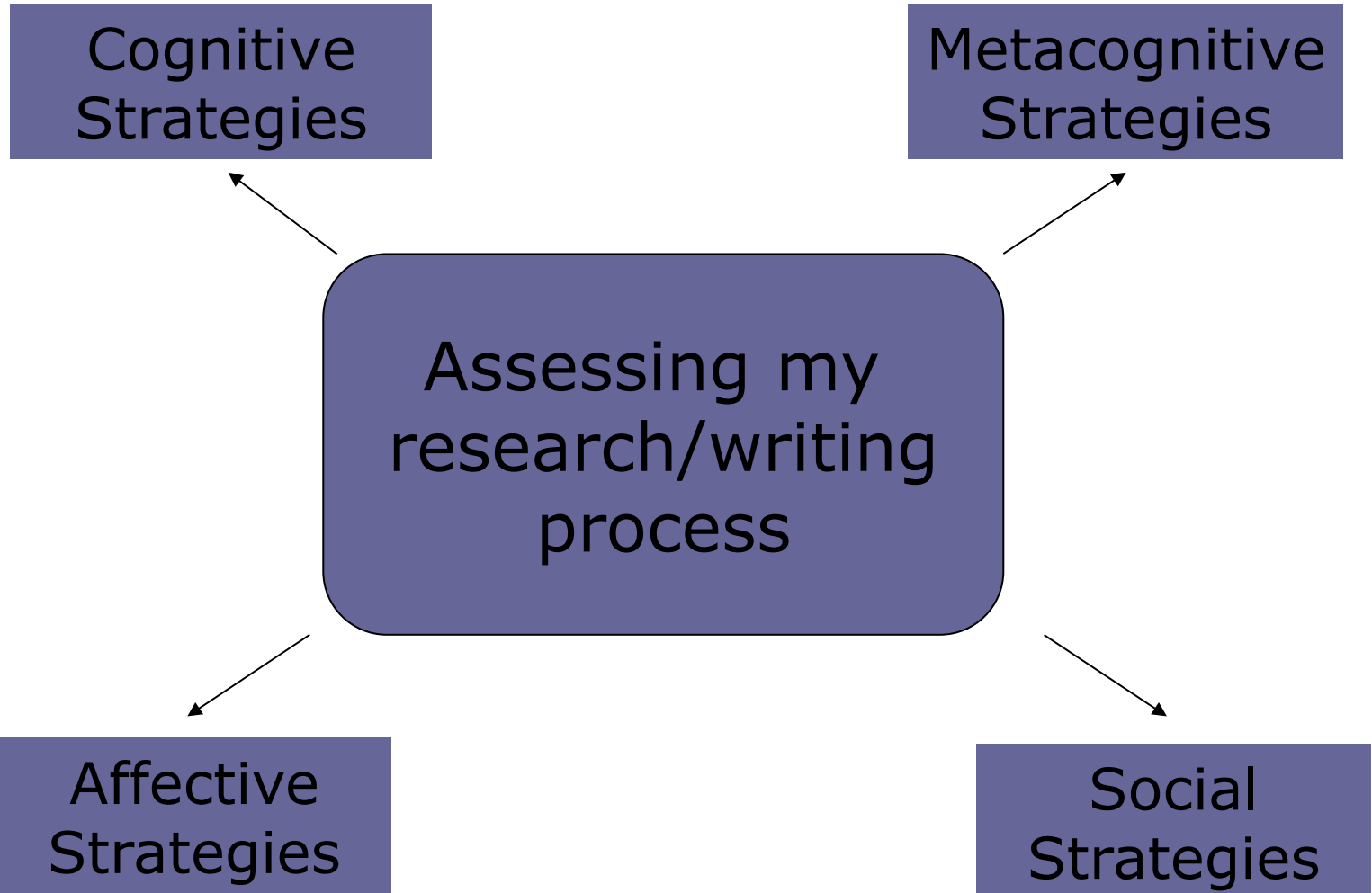
- What I worry about and struggle with as I face writing my dissertation?
- Keep writing non-stop for 5 minutes.
- Write in sentences.
- Do not edit or censor your writing.
- Private writing — no one will read it.



Writing prompt

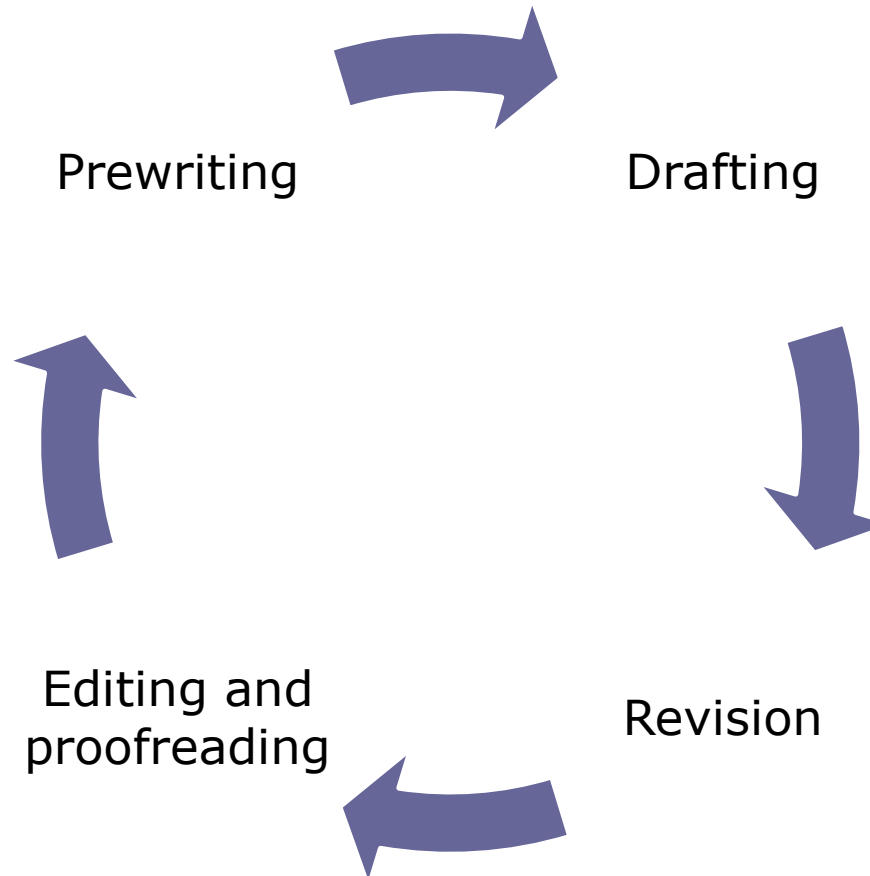
- What writing have you done and what writing do you need to do in order to complete your dissertation on time?
- Keep writing non-stop for 5 minutes.
- Write in sentences.
- Do not edit or censor your writing.
- Private writing -- no one will read it.

My process





The writing process





Structuring your dissertation

● ● ● | Presentation and Layout

A major report or dissertation is generally divided into **three parts.**

Preliminaries

Main Text

End Matter



The manuscript

- Introduction
- Literature review
- Method
- Results/Analysis
- Discussion
- Conclusions



What is your organising principle?

- Research question
- Thesis (statement)
- Hypothesis



Writing prompt

- What question am I trying to answer / problem am I trying to solve / hypothesis am I trying to affirm?
- What do I need to know in order to answer that question? Test the hypothesis?
- What other questions do I need to answer?



Writing the literature review

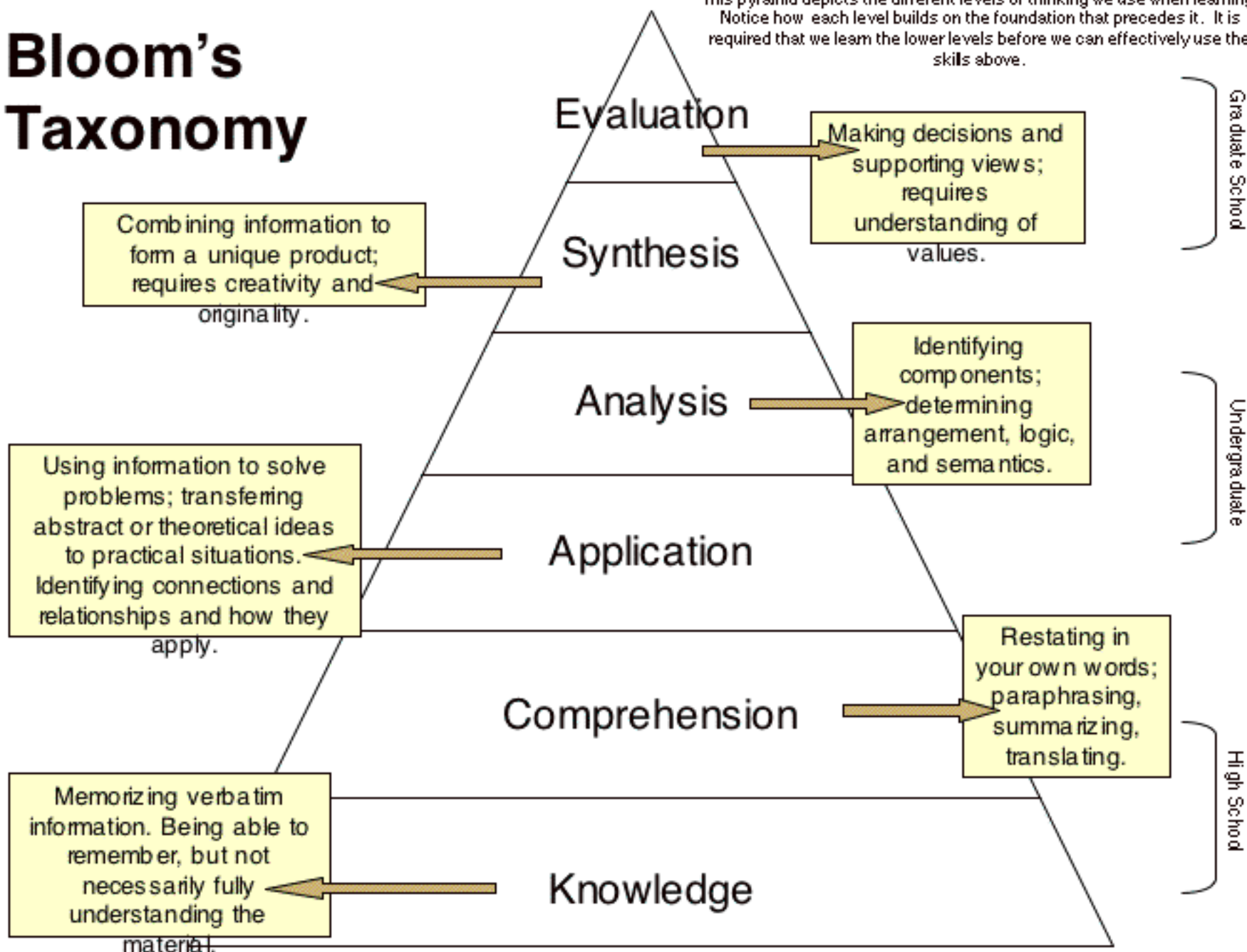


Writing the literature review

- What is it?
 - Definition from Merriam-Webster: “an interpretation and synthesis of published research” (Merriam cited in Murray 2006: 108).
- What is its purpose?
 - To guide and inform your process
 - To inform your audience about the credibility and value of your conclusions

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.





Writing the literature review

- The researcher explores the relevant literature providing a commentary on the existing state of knowledge (theories, and empirical evidence), trends, controversies, etc. and identifies gaps in the knowledge to defend the value of pursuing the line of enquiry proposed in the research thesis.
- The literature review can be divided into a number of sections which address the key topics of your research.



Writing the literature review

- The review should not merely string together what other researchers have found. Rather, you should discuss, critique and analyse the body of knowledge with the ultimate goal of determining what is known and is not known about the topic or if there is merit in replicating a previous study.
- This analysis leads to the design of your research questions and/or hypotheses.
- The purpose of the study should suggest some theoretical framework to be examined in your empirical study.



Questions your lit review should answer (Murray 2006: 115)

- Why is this subject important?
- Who else thinks it's important?
- Who has worked on this subject before?
- Who has done something similar to what I am doing?
- What can be adapted to my own study?
- What are the gaps in the research?
- Who is going to use my material?
- What use will my project be?
- What will my contribution be?
- What specific question will I answer?
- [What specific questions will my research not be able to address?]



Text Analysis

1. How is the literature review structured?
2. Does the literature review consider the aims/topic of the study?
3. Does the literature review outline the contribution of the thesis/research?



Writing prompt

‘Writing in Layers’ (Murray 2006: 125-27)

- Outline the structure: write your section heading for the literature review.
- List the sub-headings for the literature review.
- Write an introductory paragraph for the literature review.
- Write a sentence or two on the contents of each sub-section.
- At the top of each section, write the approximate word-count requirement, draft number and date.



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)



Resources

- Cite it Right:
http://libguides.ul.ie/ld.php?content_id=8693093
- Regional Writing Centre, UL: <http://www.ul.ie/rwc/>
- Using English for Academic Purposes:
www.uefap.com/writing
- Academic Phrasebank, University of Manchester:
<http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>
- Purdue Online Writing Lab:
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
- The Writing Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill:
<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/>