Kick-start your dissertation writing for the summer

Dr. Íde O'Sullivan

Writing Consultant

Regional Writing Centre
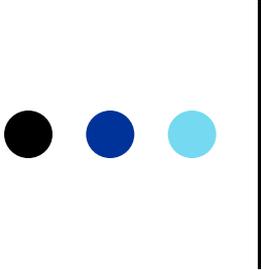
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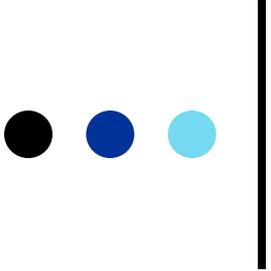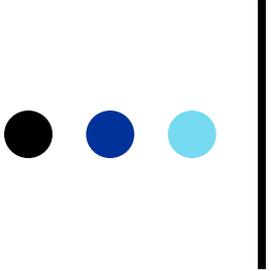
Workshop outline

# **Freewriting/Writing to prompts**

- What writing for your dissertation have you done, and what would you like to do in the short, medium and long term?

- Keep writing non-stop for 5 minutes.

- Write in sentences.

- Do not edit or censor your writing.

- Private writing – no one will read it.

- Discuss what you have written in pairs.

Writing Consultation

1. Current stage of research
2. Benefits of engaging in research
3. Drawbacks of not engaging in research
4. Barriers to engaging in research
5. Goals (SMART goals)
   1. Short- and long-term goals)
6. Relapse prevention
7. Action plan

Adaptation of The Writing Consultation
(Murray, Thow, Moore, and Murphy 2008)

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Get on the 'write' track
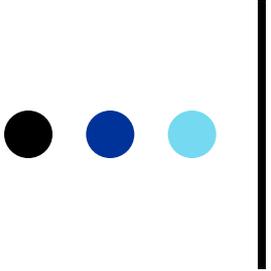
A writing-for-publication programme (Murray and Moore 2006 96-101)

- **Stage 1**
  - Defining the writing goals
  - Drafting the abstract
  - Outlining the paper
- **Stage 2**
  - Outlining the paper in detail: headings and subheadings
  - Writing regularly
  - Giving and receiving peer review
- **Stage 3**
  - Drafting the introduction and review of literature (with feedback)
  - Writing full draft (with feedback)
  - Revising drafts of all sections (with feedback)
  - Dealing with and responding to feedback from journals and resubmitting
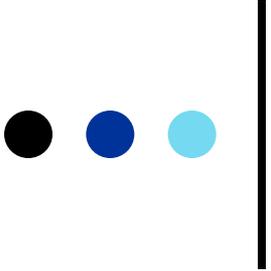
Cracking the codes

- Analysing the genre/text and modelling
- Generate a list of the important criteria which will make your writing more effective
- Ask yourself the following questions:
    - How is the paper structured?
    - How is the contribution articulated?
    - What level of context is provided?
    - What level of detail is used?
    - How long are the different sections?
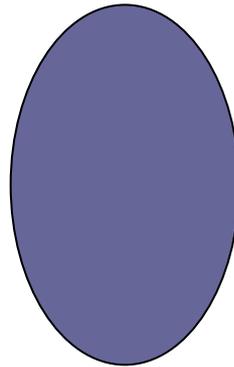   - …
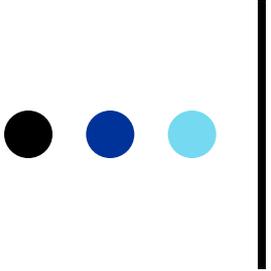
CARS Model

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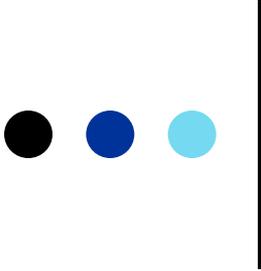- Occupying the niche
  - Outlining purpose

(Swales 1990: 141)
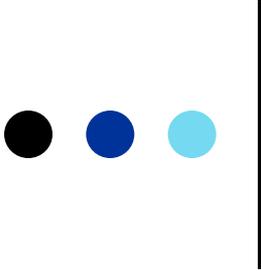
Getting started

- Choose one of your short-term writing plans
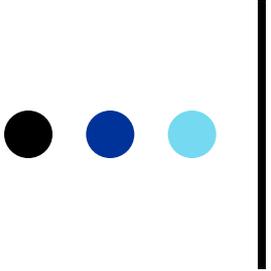- Lay an egg… (Phil Race)

Brown's 8 questions

1. Who are the intended readers? (3-5 names)
2. What did you do? (50 words)
3. Why did you do it? (50 words)
4. What happened? (50 words)
5. What do the results mean in theory? (50 words)
6. What do the results mean in practice? (50 words)
7. What is the key benefit for readers (25 words)
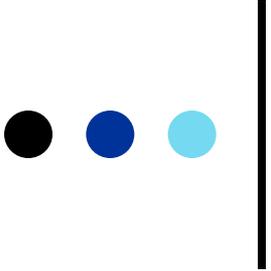8. What remains unresolved? (no word limit)

<div align="right">(Murray, 2005: 111)</div>
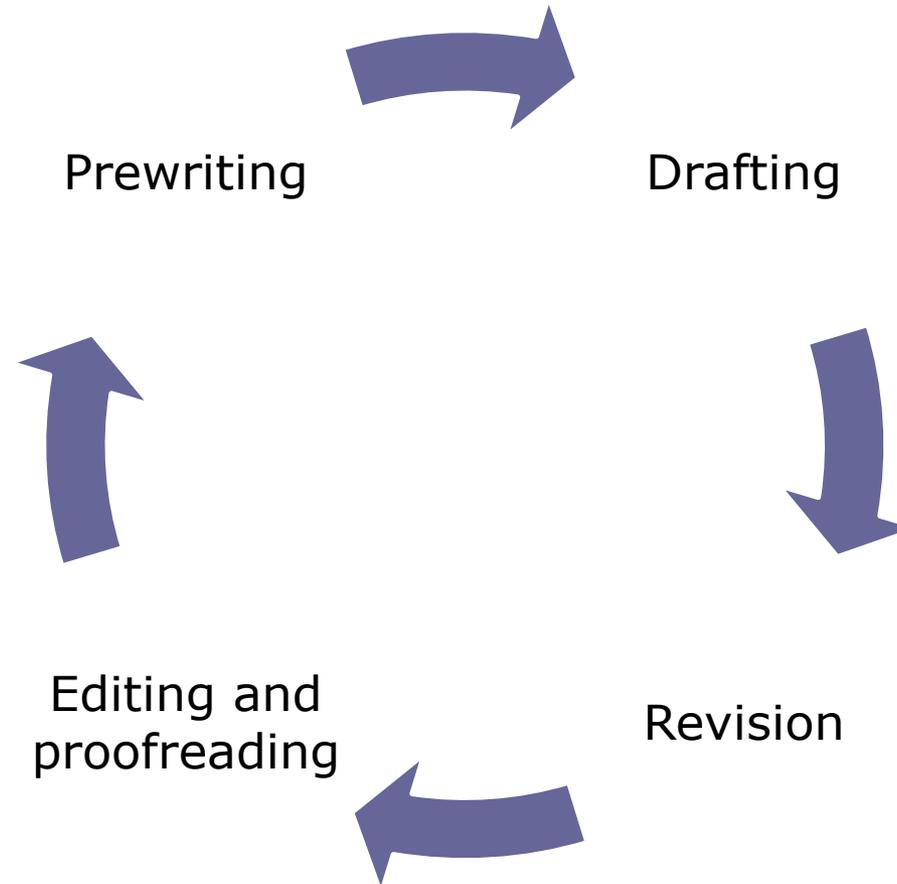
Writing a 'page 98 paper'

- 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)

The writing process

Prewriting → Drafting → Revision → Editing and proofreading → (back to Prewriting)

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My process

Cognitive Strategies

Metacognitive Strategies

Assessing my research/writing process

Affective Strategies

Social Strategies

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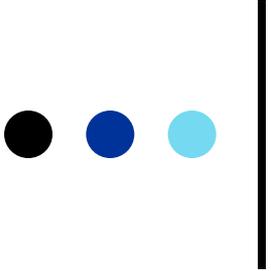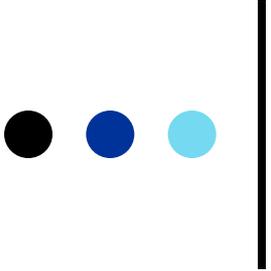Get on the 'write' track

# 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?

Peer support

- Dialogue about writing
- Getting feedback on writing
    - The "writing sandwich" (Murray, 2005:85): writing, talking, writing
    - Writing "buddies" (Murray and Moore, 2006:102)
    - "The Writing Consultation" (Murray, Thow, Moore and Murphy 2008)
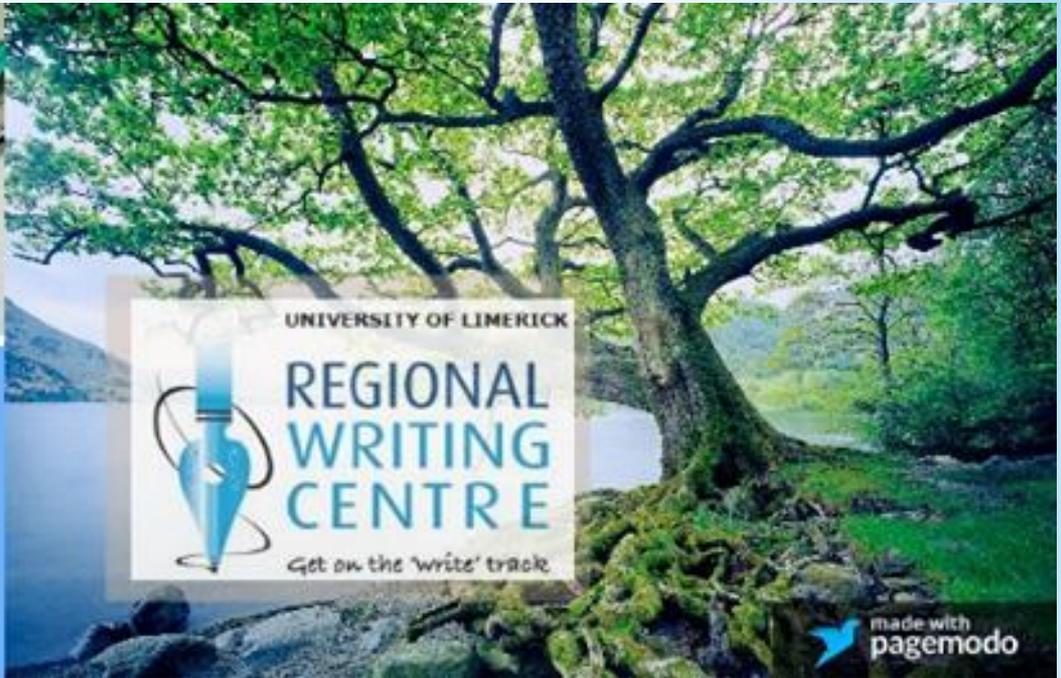   - Writers' groups
    - Writers' retreats

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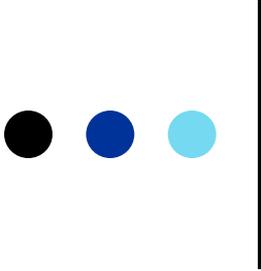
Resources

- 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/

- Strunk, W. and White, E.B. (2000) *The Elements of Style,* 4th ed. New York: Longman.

- 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/

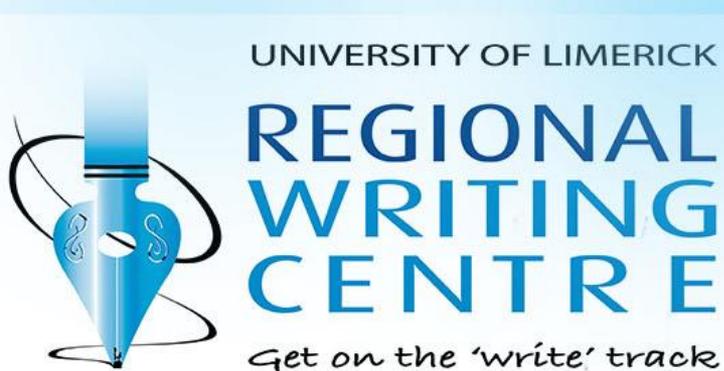- Using English for Academic Purposes: http://www.uefap.com/index.htm

MAIN BUILDING
C1-065

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www.ul.ie/rwc

Writing Centre Resources

- **One-to-One Peer Tutoring**
- **Writers' Groups**
- **Workshops and Seminars**
- **Writers' Space**
- **Online Resources**

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How to Book an Appointment

* Go to our website at http://www.ul.ie/rwc/

* Click on "Book A Session With A Peer Tutor" on the right hand-side of the page

* Log in and click on a white box for an appointment that suits you