

Because every
writer needs
motivation



Because even
the best writers
need help



UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

**REGIONAL
WRITING
CENTRE**

Get on the 'write' track

**MAIN BUILDING
C1-065**

**writingcentre@ul.ie
www.ul.ie/rwc**

Writing Centre Resources



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

RWC Events



UL's One Campus One Book:

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



How I Write, Ireland:

- o Invites students to interviews which enquire into how authors write.
- o Provides recording of past interviews.

Essay Writing Competition:

- o Run by the RWC for secondary school students.



C1-065 Main Building

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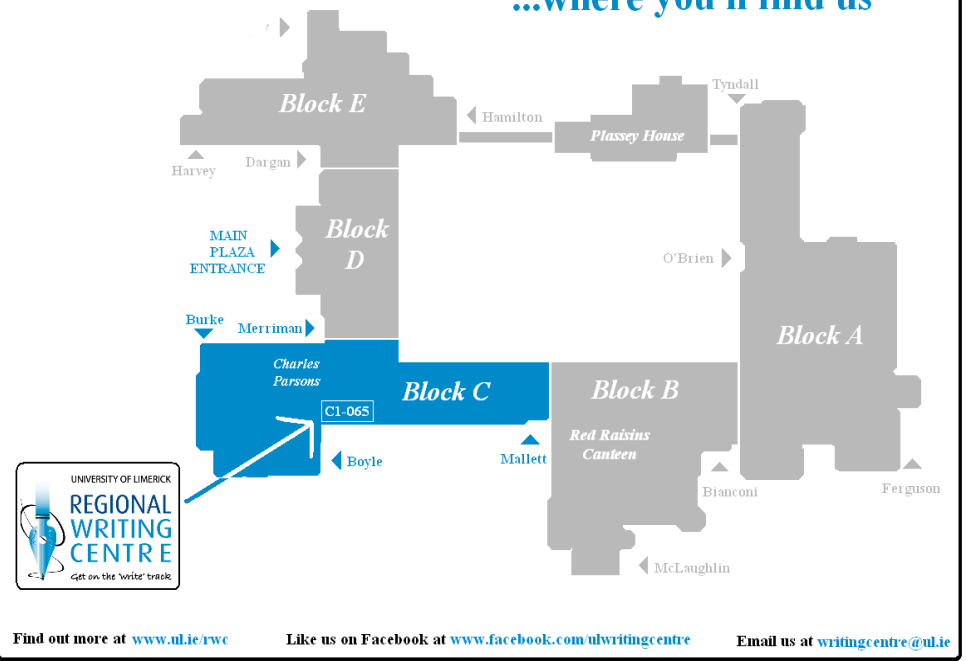


UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK

REGIONAL WRITING CENTRE

Get on the 'write' track

...where you'll find us



Find out more at www.ul.ie/rwc

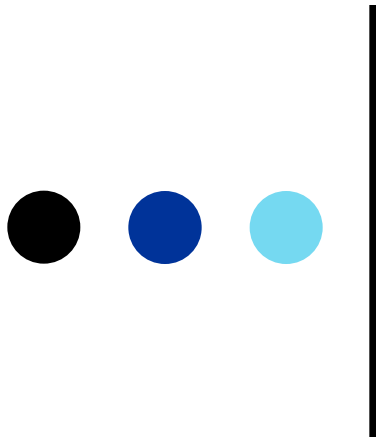
Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ulwritingcentre

Email us at writingcentre@ul.ie

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

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Academic-writing workshops for International Students Writing Workshop 1

Íde O'Sullivan and LawrenceCleary
Regional Writing Centre

www.ul.ie/rwc

University of Limerick



IED Workshops

Wednesday 2–3pm in the Graduate Attributes Hub

- **Week 5:** *Thinking critically and writing critically: bringing a critical orientation to your work through analysis, reflection and evaluation*
- **Week 6:** *Reporting the work of others: positioning yourself in relation to the work of others*



Reflection

Freewriting

- What I worry about and struggle with as I embark on writing at postgraduate level.
- 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.



Writing issues

- Lack of critical analysis
- Little synthesis of material
- Little engagement with the literature and lack of evidence to support statements
- Uninformed/Biased opinions
- Lack of focus / no organising principle / no logical argument
- Repetition
- Poor structure and organisation (paragraphing)
- Poor referencing (inappropriate/inconsistent referencing style)
- Lack of attention to detail
- Inappropriate register



Writing critically

- What is critical thinking?
- What is critical academic writing?
- 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?



Critical thinking

- McPeck (1981:8 cited in Borg 2008:13) defines **critical thinking** as
 - “the prosperity and skill to engage in an activity with reflective scepticism”.
- **“Critical thinking:**
 - is clear, precise, accurate, relevant, logical and consistent
 - integrates a controlled sense of scepticism or disbelief about claims, assertions and conclusions (i.e. not taking information and positions at face value
 - involves interrogating existing information for strengths, weaknesses and gaps
 - is deliberately and demonstrably free from bias and prejudice.”

(Paul and Elder 2006 cited in Borg 2008:13



Reading critically

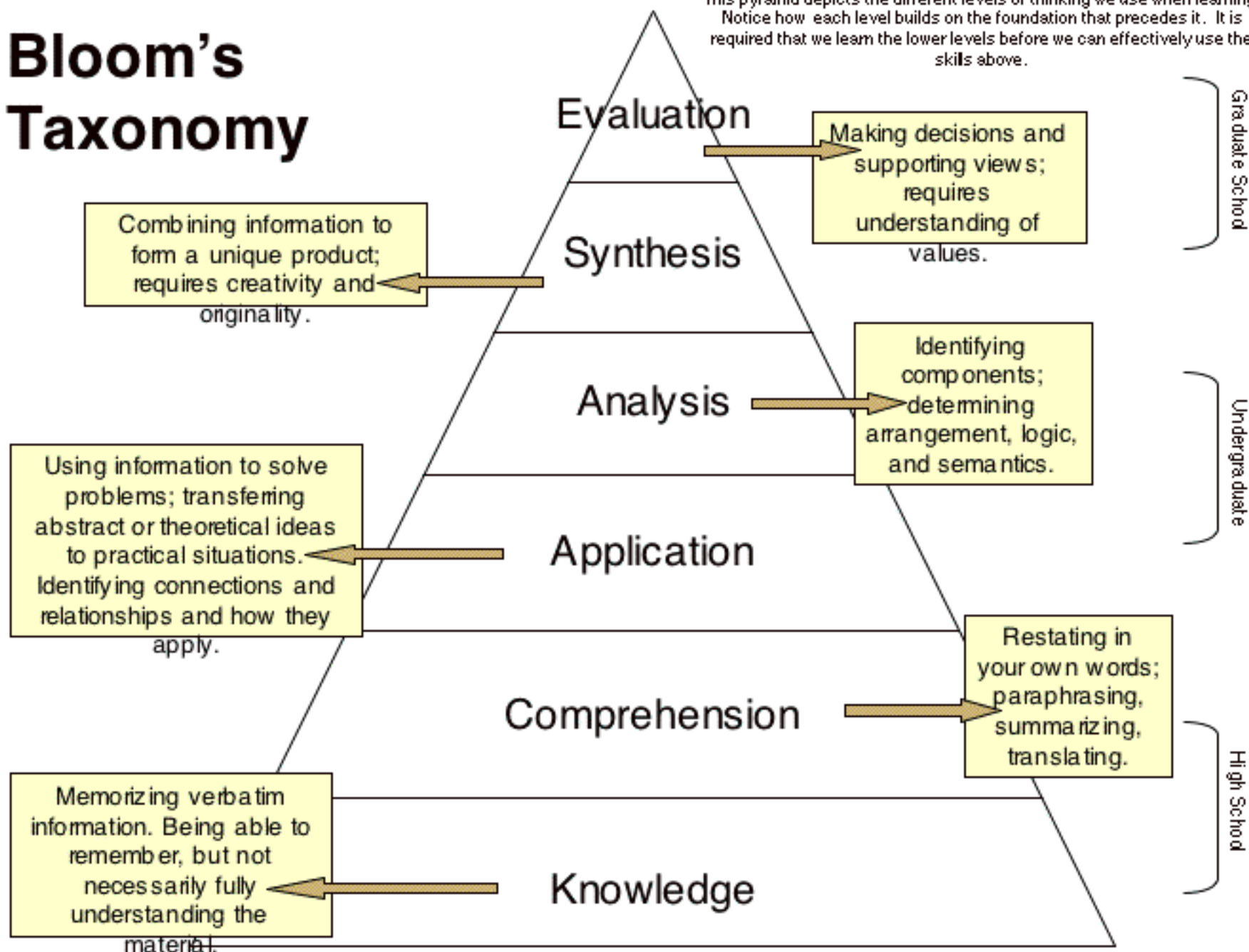
A critical synopsis of a text

1. Sketch a simple outline of the key arguments or ideas.
2. What are the authors seeking to do with this article?
3. What are the authors saying that has relevance to my work?
4. How convincing is what the authors are saying?
5. What use can I make of this?

(Fitzmaurice 2010 adapted from Wallace and Wray 2006)

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.





Evaluating/choosing appropriate evidence

- What types of evidence are appropriate/important in your discipline?
- Critically analyse information sources:
 - Author, date of publication, publisher, title of journal
 - Content, audience, reasoning, coverage, style, evaluative reviews
- Focus your reading – read critically
- Do not only describe evidence, but evaluate and interpret it also.



Example: Writing critically?

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)



Rewritten 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)



Structuring your argument

Toulmin's Model

- **Claim:** the position or claim being argued for; the conclusion of the argument.
- **Grounds:** reasons or supporting evidence that bolster the claim.
- **Warrant:** the principle, provision or chain of reasoning that connects the grounds/reason to the claim.
- **Backing:** support, justification, reasons to back up the warrant.
- **Rebuttal/Reservation:** exceptions to the claim; description and rebuttal of counter-examples and counter-arguments.
- **Qualification:** specification of limits to claim, warrant and backing. The degree of conditionality asserted.



Resources

- Regional Writing Centre, UL: <http://www.ul.ie/rwc/>
- Using English for Academic Purposes: www.uefap.com/writing
- 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/>
- Academic Phrasebank, University of Manchester: <http://www.phrasebank.manchester.ac.uk/>
- Mendeley: <http://www.mendeley.com/>