

RDP Academic Writing Sessions (Terms 2 and 3)

Approaching the Thesis:

This session will cover the common areas that some students may struggle with or want to improve upon when undertaking a research project. The session will cover strategies for:

- Planning
- Structures
- Aims and articulating your research focus
- Contribution to knowledge
- Approaches to your research experience
- Sitting down to write

Writing Literature Reviews:

The literature review is one of the most important sections of your thesis. How you engage with authors in your field, and how your own voice comes through amongst the masses of literature could determine the tone for the rest of the thesis. This session will cover:

- The purposes of a literature review
- The elements that make up a Literature Review and how to improve it
- Writing the literature review and issues of authority/authorship and 'invisible scholar' syndrome
- The language of a literature review

Writing Methodologies:

Methodologies are like the framework of a house. If the house is flawed, it will not stand. Having a strong methodological framework for your research is important. Too often methodologies can prove sticking points in a thesis and this session will look at the importance placed on this section. This session will look at:

- What is included in a methodology chapter
- Looking at quantitative and qualitative methods
- Structures
- What examiners want to know about your methodology
- Language of a methodology chapter
- We will look at examples of methodologies and review how simple writing strategies such as signposting can have a positive effect on the strength of the methodology and therefore the backbone of the whole thesis.

Strategies for Writer's Block:

At some point in the life cycle of your thesis you may experience writing block or writing aversion. It could last a day or several months. We will look at ways of dealing with procrastination but also the more emotional side to dealing with writing aversion and block through methods that promote a positive relationship with writing. This session will cover discussions and strategies of:

What is writing block?

Procrastination

Planning

Writing strategies and techniques for combating the block.

Writing for the Reader:

This class will distinguish between writing for the writer, which can lead to confusing and unclear prose, and writing for the reader, which focuses on clarity and the argument. This class is structured so as to look at the theory of writing based on four writing and language specialists:

- Writer to reader-based prose - Linda Flower
- Elements of good and bad writing - Joseph Williams
- Politics and the English Language - George Orwell
- Four steps to good writing - Rowena Murray.

We will look closely at writing strategies and the language used when you write for your potential readers so that your analysis and interpretation is clear.