

Beginning the graduate research reading and writing journey

Dr. Edwin Creely (Faculty of Education)
Hannah Fulton (Matheson Library)

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BEGINNINGS

Write one sentence about what motivated you to become a research student.

Let's share our sentences.

MOTIVATIONS...

“I was curious about research and about what research entails.”

“The joy of old things – the lure of the archive and *real* manuscripts.”

DESCRIPTION OF WORKSHOP

The workshop focuses on **approaches and strategies** for competent **reading and writing** as students **transition** into becoming researchers and preparing to write for supervisors, as well as participating in academic communities and peer networks within and beyond the faculty.

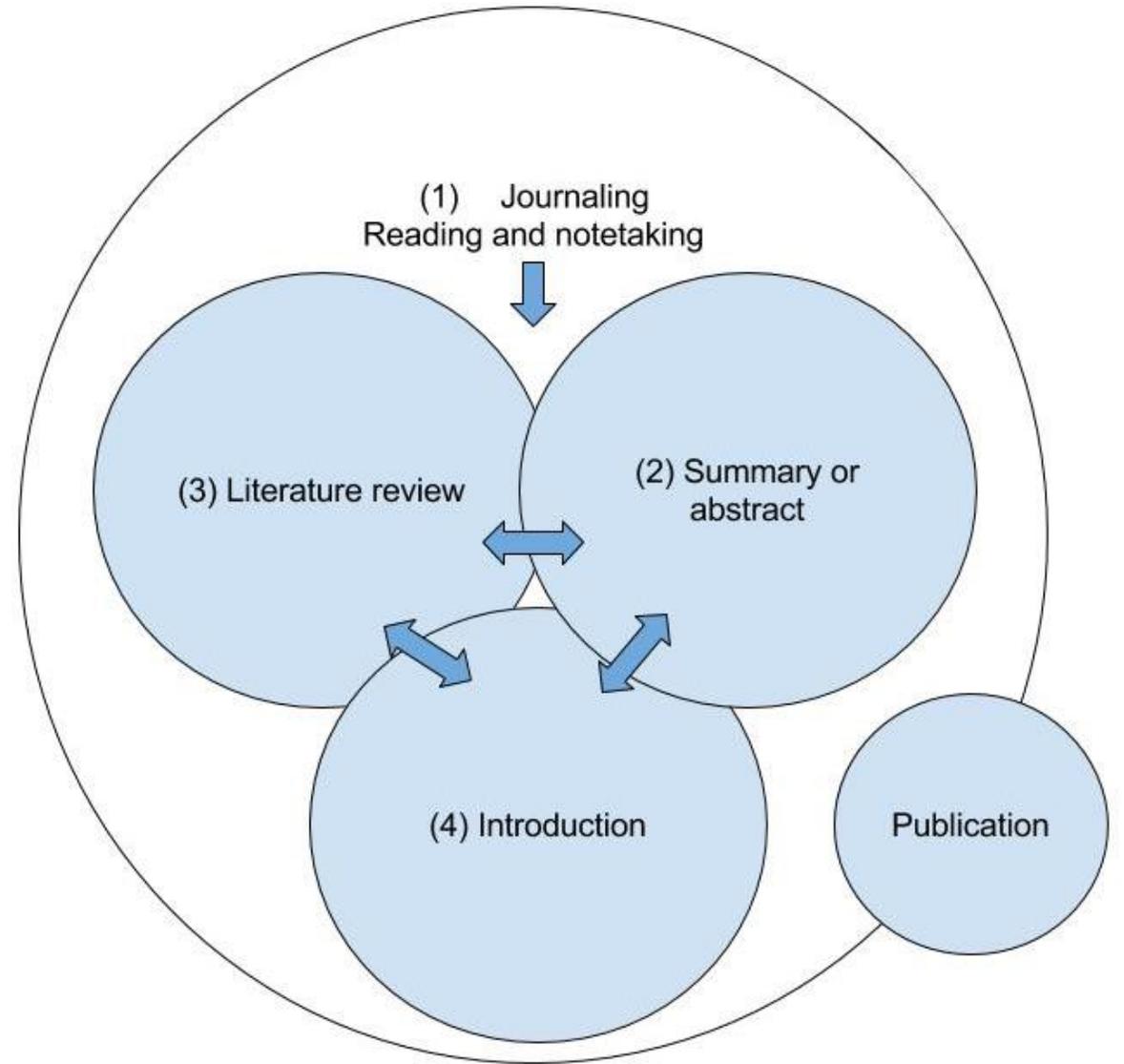
It also focuses on highlighting Library resources and other services that can assist research students develop their academic research, reading and writing skills. The competencies and literacies that research students need to produce engaging and effective academic writing are discussed and workshopped.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through participation in the workshop you will:

- Understand the processes of effective reading and note taking
- Understand the variety of support and library services that can assist students with writing and research needs
- Appreciate important genres of academic writing and the typical features of that writing
- Develop an understanding of a reflective journal and its place in mapping the research journey
- Participate in practical writing activities orientated to important genres of academic writing
- Participate in discussion and workshop activities about feedback and writing
- Understand the difficulties and issues with being a research student and managing study loads
- Appreciate the importance of peer-support writing networks

WHAT WILL BE IN THE WORKSHOP TODAY?



DISCUSSION

What have you tried so far in terms of developing 'healthy' reading and writing habits?

Do you have a system? Have you found any tools that work? Let's share.

JOURNALING, READING AND NOTETAKING (1)

- What is a journal?
- What's the point?
- Why combine it with reading and notetaking?
- A journal as a safe writing space

JOURNALING, READING AND NOTETAKING (2)

Why keep a journal?

- Intellectual heavy lifting: a place to think and to track the changes in your research position and development
- Mindmapping: plan for structured writing and give shape to ideas
- The filing cabinet: Ideas for the future
- Taking your temperature: emotional writing or a place to vent
- Always ask yourself - is this for me or my supervisor?

JOURNALING, READING AND NOTETAKING (3)

What ways can I use to keep a journal?

- Paper or digital
- Memos, audio, video files
- Blogging
- Spreadsheets
- EndNote

What applications can I use to keep a journal?

- Evernote
- RedNotebook
- Scrivener – some limitations



CONCEPT MAPPING APPS AND SOFTWARE

- Open source (free): Libre Office (Mac, PC, Linux)
- OmniGraffle Professional (Mac) (expensive but exceptional)
- Lots of cloud-based, online apps (some free , some paid)
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_concept-_and_mind-mapping_software
- Old school - whiteboard

The benefit is that you can visually plan your writing and logically connect ideas more easily.

DISCUSSION

Reflect on what might be useful.

What will you combine with your existing systems?

SUMMARY OR ABSTRACT PARAGRAPHS (1)

What is the purpose of a summary?

- It enables you to continually rewrite a paragraph which sums up your research and provides a hook for clarifying the change to your ideas and your position as the thesis progresses.

Does it enable you to do?

- Frame your methodology or focus for research.
- Refine your research questions.
- Update your supervisor of changes to the project.

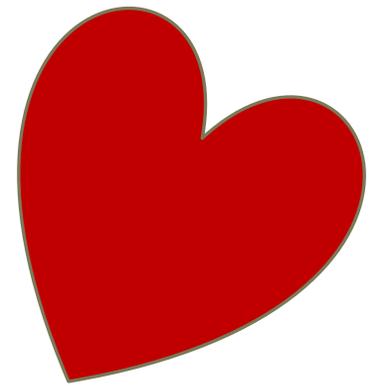
SUMMARY OR ABSTRACT PARAGRAPHS (2)

Activity:

Before we talk specifically about what goes into a summary or abstract paragraph, we would like you to spend 7 minutes writing a love letter to your research.

It only needs to be a page of romantic words that reveal what your research means to you and the **core ideas of the project**. At the end, we will share our love letters with each other.





DEAR THESIS...

Every time I think of you, passion wells up within me. What you are achieving for the field of in vitro technology is so powerful!

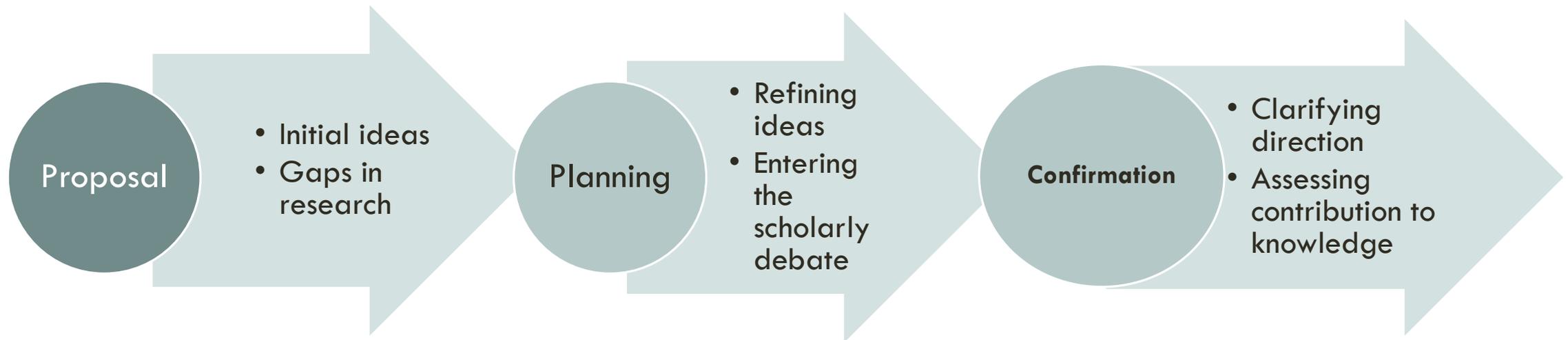
Together we can tell the world whether in vitro culture will permanently imprint the metabolic genome of a developing embryo with a different program – or whether in fact all is ok. That, once implanted, an embryo will re-set its metabolism without long term effects.

I know we are only looking at this through the lens of monocarboxylate transport proteins and glucose homeostasis – but we have a lifetime together investigating other anabolic and catabolic processes to help our infertile community.

I love you project. Your work fulfils me.

Love xx

SUMMARY OR ABSTRACT PARAGRAPHS (3)



SUMMARY OR ABSTRACT PARAGRAPHS (4)

What should be included in a summary or abstract?

- What is the focus or aim of the research?
- What is the research literature saying?
- What are the key research questions?
- What is your methodology?
- What is the structure of the thesis? (Chapter titles)
- How will you/or have you collect data?
- What are some of the key findings? (if relevant) And what do they mean?

ACTIVITY

What is your greatest fear about the literature review?

- Share with a partner.

Activity

- Write 50 words on how you see yourself or position yourself in terms of the scholarly literature at this point.
- Read your writing to the group (if you feel comfortable!).

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

What is it? What does it look like?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4rr-LU0OV0>

What can you do with it?

- Establish an academic position in terms of the literature
- Develop a deep understanding of a field
- Develop your muscles for critique
- The roller coaster of authority: how can you speak with your voice of authority

THE INTRODUCTION OR INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER (1)

What is the purpose of an introduction?

What can you use it for in terms of your development?

This research project examined the candidature experiences of six early stage doctoral students in an education faculty at an Australian university. The qualitative and phenomenological study focused on describing and analysing these experiences and locating essences (or *Wesen*), or deep structures of meaning, within the experiences of participants over a period of one-month. This exploration of experience is aimed at establishing what matters for these students, including the issues that surround doing candidature, formation as an academic and balancing doctoral study with the complexities of life.

This excerpt from the opening paragraph of the introductory chapter of my thesis serves to orientate the reader into the research space and the focus of the project.

THE INTRODUCTION OR INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER (2)

What should be included in an introduction?

- Why you are doing this research?
- The research context
- Key research questions
- An overview of the approaches to and methodology of the research
- An overview of the structure and chapters of the thesis

CORE TYPES OF WRITING

Description—using words to represent and identify what is there

Summary—overviewing or identifying the core ideas

Analysis—pulling apart what is there to understand how it works

Evaluation/critique—discussing the significance and meaning of what is there and developing a critical view of it from your perspective

Synthesis—bringing together the meaningful whole of what is there based on description, summary, analysis and evaluation/critique

ALL five types will be typically represented in a thesis

WHAT CORE LITERACY SKILLS DO YOU NEED TO SUCCEED AS A RESEARCH STUDENT?

Clarity. Developing clarity of written expression within an appropriate academic style

Voice. Establishing a personal voice and a core argument within your writing (being too descriptive is not doing academic work)

Flow. Organising your writing into a clear and logical flow of ideas (yours and others)

Self-evaluation: How do you see these skills emerging in your own writing?

DEALING WITH FEEDBACK FROM SUPERVISORS

Activity: Dealing with feedback.

In pairs discuss how you would respond to perceived, negative feedback from a supervisor

Discussion:

How can you profit from a supervisor, even if there is challenging feedback to writing?

Consider recent feedback you received from your supervisor. How have you responded to that feedback? How have you used it in your writing?

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

<https://thesiswhisperer.com>

<http://patthomson.wordpress.com/>

<https://doctoralwriting.wordpress.com/>



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CONCLUSION

Any questions or comments?

