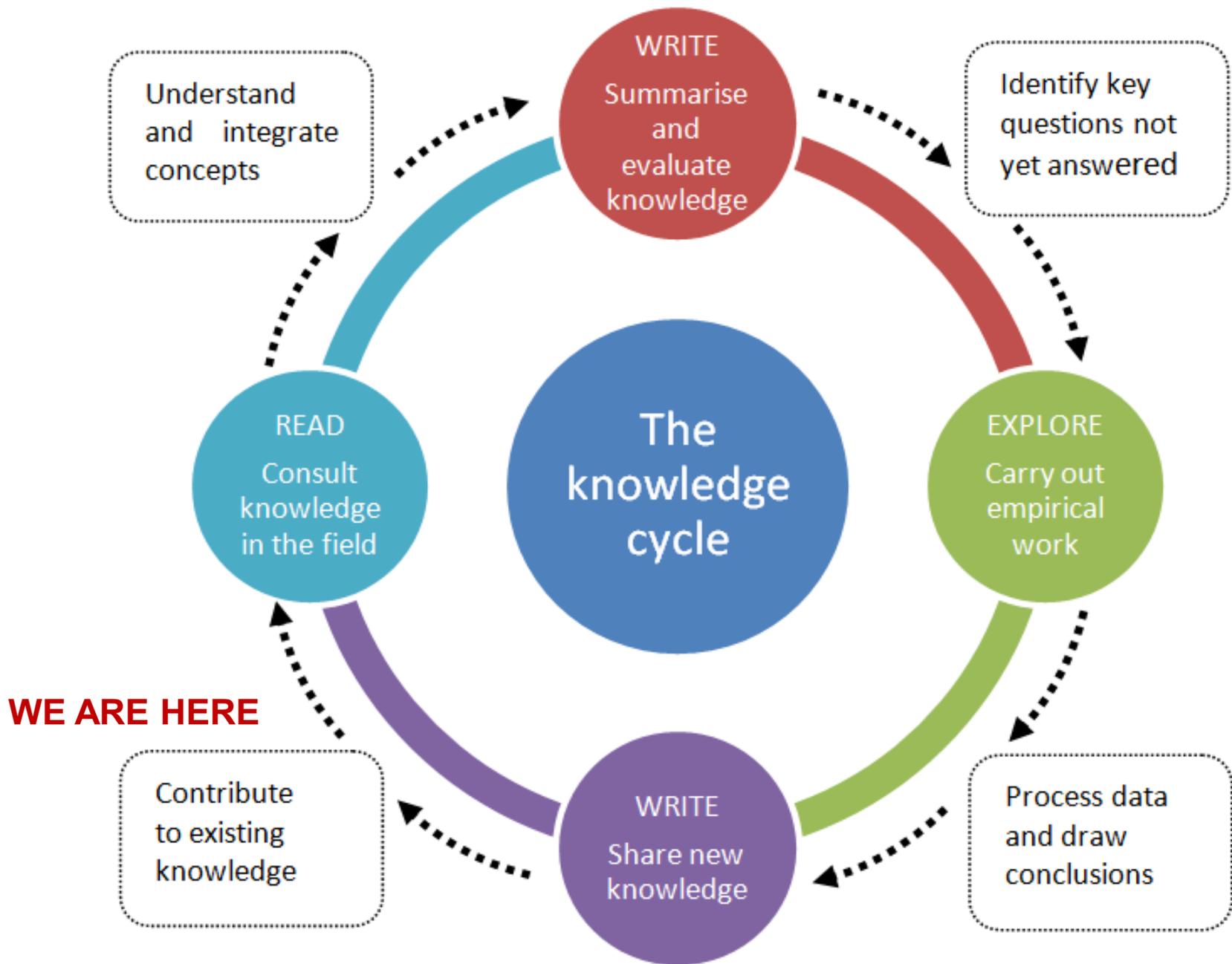


# Research Capacity Building Workshop

## 21. Writing a book





# Online Forum

An online forum has been set up at the following web address:

<http://dutmoodle.dut.ac.za/moodle/>

Click on category *RPS Research Capacity Building*, and click on course *Research Matters*.

Materials are posted there online after workshops, including useful articles and books.

To log in:

User ID: staff or student number

Password: research

*Pdf copies of 3 books and 1 book chapter have been posted online for attendees at this workshop.*

# Motivation – why bother?

To get ad hoc publications subsidy (in 2/3 years' time):

- It must be a scholarly book, blind peer reviewed, and published by reputable publishers, e.g. Springer, Benjamins. A thesis published verbatim as a book is not eligible for subsidy.
- A book chapter (same as above).
- Journal articles must be published in a DHET-approved journal: check that the DUT journal lists you consult are *up to date*.

If the subsidy is paid directly into your personal bank account, 25% tax is deducted (it may be paid into your DUT research account untaxed).

Collect evidence to show that you have fulfilled the requirements as you go, and don't wait until it is asked for at the last minute.

DUT requires a *published* copy of the book/chapter/article (which will not be returned, as it is required for audit purposes).

# 1. Preparing to write your book

## Have the tools of your trade:

- Use a recent model computer with updated software.
- Keep up with reading new literature in your field/area.
- Have a recent copy of EndNote with literature updated on it.
- Collect electronic and hard copies of notes, articles and other readings.
- Have an office space where you can shut everyone out.

## Have something to write about:

- Use knowledge of own research/experience/specialist topics.
- Re-draft and re-work content of theses, reports and previous papers and articles.
- Establish specs/criteria in advance – choose the journal, consider your audience, consult the publisher's instructions.

# (Preparing to write your book contd.)

## Obtain publisher details:

- Make inquiries of the publisher *in advance*, not on the day of the submission deadline.
- Have a template ready to use (from a previous book/article, if the publisher does not supply one).
- Make sure you have facilities (email, internet connection, courier) to submit on time, and establish the manner of submission (website or email – note that websites usually “hang” on the day of the submission deadline, as most authors are trying to submit at the last minute).
- Make sure the file of your book/chapter/article is not going to be too large to send by email.

# (Preparing to write your book contd.)

## Organise your sources:

- Your other writings are also a source.
- Electronic copies of books facilitate finding citations, using “search”.
- File electronic or hard copies of sources so that you can access them quickly and easily.
- Enter all sources (including your own and students’ writing) on EndNote, and use or adapt an EndNote style to follow the style recommended in the publisher’s instructions or template.

## Planning

- Make a rough plan of what you could write about and how you could treat the subject.
- Plan your time carefully (when the content is complete, days, weeks and months can be spent on editing what you thought was the “final” draft.)

## 2. Writing rough drafts

### Draft “smart”:

- Write first, edit later.
- Write drafts when you are fresh.
- Take regular breaks, but do not allow yourself to be distracted.
- Write a summary (*not* an abstract) first to focus on the main elements (or you may find it more creative to work from a drawing or diagram.)
- Use structures suggested by the summary – put these into the template (they may change later.)
- Write in sections so as not to divide your focus.
- Feed sections into the template as drafts are finished (this gives you a sense of progress and indicates how the text will “present” in the final version.)

## (2. Writing rough drafts contd.)

- Briefly indicate possible references while drafting, but fill in later.
- It is best to compose in the font/line space required by the publisher.
- Turn off the grammar and spelling checker while you are composing: turn them back on at the end of larger sections and do a quick edit *later* when you are tired of drafting.
- Don't judge the quality of your writing now, just get down the content (it takes some time to "warm up", and you can always revise or erase less polished "start-up" sections later).

# 3. Revising for your reader

Structure at regular intervals in between writing drafts:

- Considering your reader prompts you to redraft: add/adjust/delete text.
- Feed the drafts into the headed sections on the template to see that they are in proportion with focus shown in the topic.
- Recap on not just ordering of sections, but whether to add, remove, combine or split sections, or to adjust headings to reflect their content (which may not be what you planned initially.)
- Adjust paragraphing as needed.
- Ensure all sections are collated as you get to the end.
- Make sure to add glossaries, footnotes, indexes or annexures explaining things the reader may not understand.
- Do a chapter/book table of contents to see whether your headings unfold logically and indicate to the reader what the sections are about.

*(N.B. You may change the order of sections in retrospect.)*

# 4. Editing and proof-reading

Write first, edit later:

Edit when you are tired of drafting, but do the final proof-reading of the whole draft when you are fresh and can spot errors. Save drafts with a new number when doing major editing, in case you erase something you later wish to include or refer to.

If you cannot do so yourself, get a good academic proof-reader to correct your work, and make sure that you have funds to pay him/her.

# 5. Evaluating your writing

## Evaluate strategy as well as text:

- Recap at intervals as you go, to ensure that you are on track, but don't judge the quality of your writing too early on, just focus on content.
- Putting the completed drafts in the publisher's template helps you to assess the quality of the piece (this is because the structure and format communicates to the reader, as well as the actual content.)
- When the final draft is near complete (before fine editing), assess the whole draft to see if the quality of writing is consistent throughout. It is here that you pick up style errors, unnecessary repetition, or points which are not properly explained or defined.

# (5. Evaluating your writing contd.)

Check that the publisher's criteria have been fulfilled:

- Check with the publisher's instructions before submitting your book/ chapter. N.B. Publishers do not actually *write* academic articles/books, and their instructions are usually confusing and contradictory, and seldom match what is on their templates (even as to the font). They also usually ask for a completely different referencing format after you have submitted the piece (always do references on EndNote, so that you can make quick style changes on demand later).
- Convert EndNote references to *text* (i.e. remove data fields) before submitting to the publisher.
- Read the whole final draft to ensure that errors have not crept into the text. (*N.B. Converting EndNote references to text can and does change your spacing.*)