



# **My pain-gain game: Thesis Writing Journey**

## **An Insider Story**



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- International PhD student
- Applied Linguistics
- Taught Track & Thesis
- Task complexity and speech production
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year
- EFL Teacher

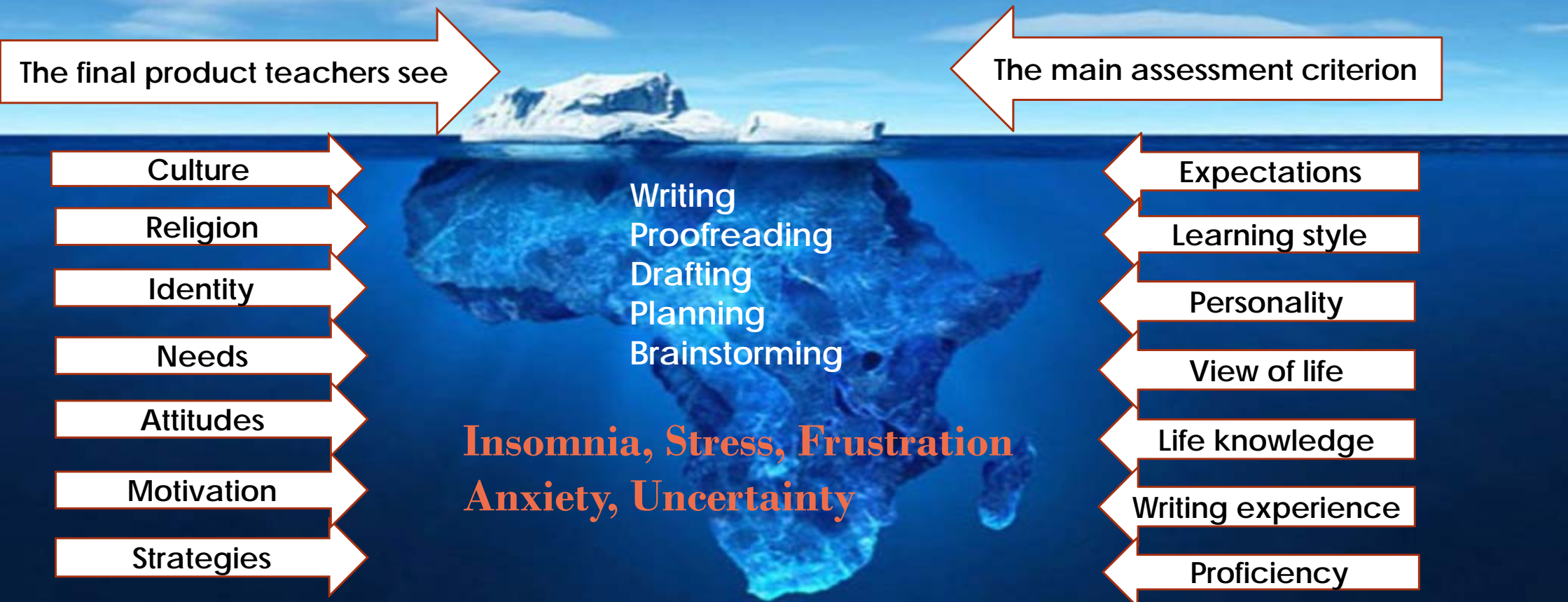


## First impression **Not** Last impression

- ➔ Great Expectation (meeting Charles Dickens)
- ➔ Culture shock (mock test)
- ➔ PhD different tracks (black box)
- ➔ Meeting SUPERvisor (game of luck)



# What is academic writing



# What is dissertation/thesis writing?





## Feedback: Favour or Fever!

- Negative attitude towards comments
- Indicator of failure
- Criticism
- Ego and confidence crises
- Feedback phobia
- Teachers think they are doing us favour
- Actually! They are causing us fever!



## My story with Feedback (FB)

1

79 comments  
57%

2

Confidence  
crisis

3

To be or  
to be

4

Excellent  
piece of  
writing

## Strategies I use to deal with FB

- Remind myself that FB is a learning opportunity.
- Open the file in the morning in presence of my friends.
- Go through the comments with no action.
- Visit the file later and classify the comments.
- Seek clarifications from teacher or supervisor.
- Face the truth and start reacting.
- Take notes and keep a record.





## Plagiarism: Good or Evil!

- ▶ What you read is a model for what you write!
- ▶ Write as they write but do not write what they write!!!
- ▶ Avoid by any means!
- ▶ Means to avoid are still needed!
- ▶ International students' attitude towards plagiarism.
- ▶ Unavoidable chunky and cheesy language.
- ▶ Camouflage game.

## My story with Plagiarism (PGM)

1

33%  
Turnitin

2

Puzzled  
& Diverged

3

Test different  
strategies to  
solve the  
puzzle

4

7%

## Strategies I use to avoid plagiarism

- Remind myself: it's my own work.
- Remind myself: I can't swim without getting wet.
- Paraphrase is my interpretation or reflection on what I read, not re-wording of what I read.
- Know more about the topic (establish expertise).
- Consult more than one reference/author.
- Always take notes and acknowledge the sources.
- Avoid: CPC



## Lessons Learned

- Do To Learn *rather than* Learn To Do.
- No gain without pain.
- “Being challenged in life is inevitable, failure is optional” \*
- Learn how to write is not a clear-cut process.
- Take advantage of plagiarism and criticism.
- Be reflected and establish know-how skills.
- Discover your own strategies.

\*Roger Crawford



## Lessons Learned → Action Points

- Need for hands-on training on how to deal with FB & PGM.
- Need to help ss distinguish between paraphrasing & rewording.
- Need to consider students' attitude towards FB & PGM.
- Need to consider unseen ingredients that shape ss writing.
- Need to help ss cope with writing complexity and difficulty.
- Plagiarism to avoid Plagiarism.



**Thank you**