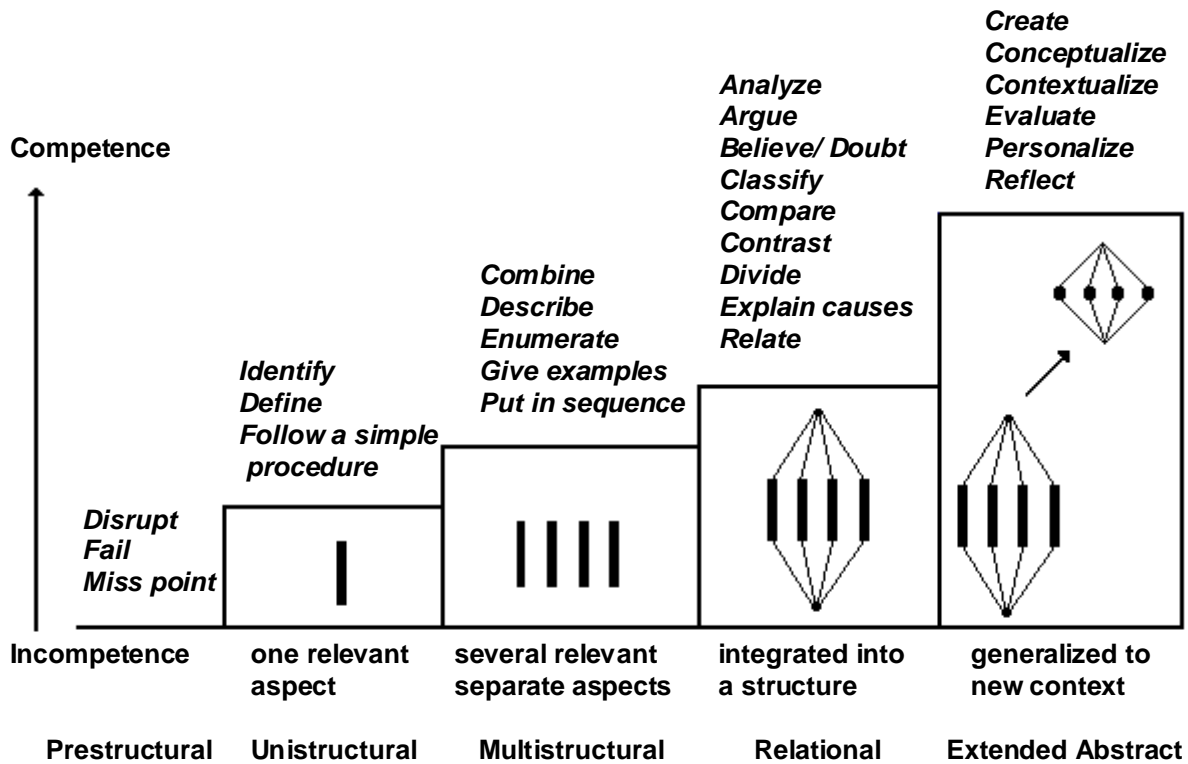


# Levels of Reasoning

When we approach a problem, our reasoning determines how competent we will be in resolving it. This diagram shows the different levels of reasoning and how we use them.



The levels of reasoning directly correlate to the letter grade that student writers can expect to earn. Incompetent writers earn failing grades because they don't know the first thing about the topic. Writers of borderline competency can only talk about one issue, and cannot say in any detail why it is important with relation to other issues. They earn a "D" grade. At the low end of competency, the "C-level," writers can identify different aspects of a topic, but do not know the relationship between those aspects, and therefore can't make judgement calls. This is a case of "knowing enough to get in trouble." At the "B-level," writers see the structure or connection between their issues, and can make rational decisions based on it. All forms of critical thinking are based here. What takes writing the the "A-level" is the generalization of that structure to a new context. Not the items themselves, but their organization is what's important. In this way, writers can draw structure from the base material and apply it to their lives or anything else. Almost all assignments at the college level specifically ask for extended abstract reasoning.