

REFLECTIVE

WRITING



REFLECTION

Reflection can be described as a way of thinking about an experience with the goal of examining it and learning from it. Being able to reflect on your own experience in an academic and studio context allows you to take knowledge you've gained and build on it, rather than cycling through the same approaches, getting the same results.

Developing a methodology for reflection can offer up new ways of seeing your experiences with writing and those techniques can be applied to studio practice as well.

BENEFITS OF REFLECTION

- Writers who are more attuned to conscious reflection make "deeper choices"
- Writers' identities are connected to various parts of their lives including their histories, processes, and prior experiences, and using reflection allows them to tap into these as a way to become better writers
- Revision, which includes some amount of failure, becomes particularly helpful when writers reflect and learn from these experiences
- Reflection offers writers the ability to be active agents of change, making meaningful contributions to any rhetorical exchange

"Reflection allows writers to recall, reframe, and relocate knowledge and practices; therefore, it needs to be worked at in order to be more effectively learning and practiced."

— Kara Taczak

ACTIVITY #1: BUILDING REFLECTIVE CAPACITY

What's the most impactful (interesting, surprising, generative) experience from your classes this week?

Writing can be a way to build reflective capacity. The moment when you're trying to answer this question is a moment of heightened awareness, which is, in effect, reflection. You are making the experience visible to yourself.

Take the experience you were thinking about before and test it out with this **3-stage model** for reflective writing: what? so what? what now? Describe what happened in the moment, then examine the event from a perspective of academic growth, how it affected you, what it was that was most important about the experience, and then figure out what you learned: think about what you might have done differently, or where that moment could take you in the future.

3-stage model: what, so what, what now



"[Reflection] allows writers to recognize what they are doing in a particular moment (cognition), as well as to consider why they made the rhetorical choices they did (metacognition).."

— Kara Taczak

ACTIVITY #2: INTEGRATING REFLECTIVE WRITING INTO STUDIO PRACTICE

"The ability to theorize and question is especially important for writers engaging in new or especially challenging tasks because it helps writers relocate the knowledge and practices acquired from one site to another."

— Kara Taczak

This model of reflection can help with moving from the studio into an academic writing context.

Write a reflection on a work you made in studio using the ORID model. Fold a page into quadrants, label each one and write into the sections:

- **objective (concrete experience)**
 - o describe what happened as neutrally as possible
- **reflective (affective experience)**
 - o articulate the emotional experience of making the work in studio
- **interpretive (cognitive experience-connections, learning)**
 - o try to interpret what you've done, think of connections to things you've read, discussions you've had in classes, and make links to the larger issues or concepts the work itself might suggest

- **decisional (how /what to incorporate into future experiences)**
 - o think about how to take what you've done today into what you might do the next day, consider how to move the work forward

By building reflective writing into your studio practice, you start to generate the textual material you need to write your thesis, but your practice itself can also benefit because taking the time think about what you've done, allows you to move forward more easily. Taking stock of what you've done in the studio at the end of the day means you start the next day with the knowledge you need to move forward.

Keeping a studio journal can help incorporate reflective writing into your practice. Creating the habit of writing before you leave the studio can be incredibly beneficial because you can also use the material generated there to help write your thesis. Integrating writing into your practice at the outset is a useful strategy for all of the art writing you might need to produce too including artist statements, curatorial briefs, exhibition essays and even artist bios.

REFLECTIVE MODELS (FROM WRITEONLINE.CA)

Keep the action of reflection exciting by experimenting with different models of reflection listed here. It's likely that you will land on one or two that work really well for you, but it's good to test out different approaches to figure out what works.

1. **what? so what? what now?**
 - a. what did I do? what did I feel?
 - b. why is it important? what did I learn?
 - c. what now? what can I do differently?
 - d. what can I carry forward?
2. **DEAL: describe, examine, articulate learning**
3. **ORID: objective (concrete experience); reflective (affective experience); interpretive (cognitive experience-connections, learning); decisional (how / what to incorporate into future experiences)**
4. **Journalistic**
 - a. who, what, where, when, why and how
5. **the compass: look in four directions as you consider an event:**
 - a. inward: consider feelings and emotions
 - b. backward: consider context and its impact on your higher level feelings (what is influencing how you react)
 - c. outward: what are the social and cultural factors affecting my experience / feelings
 - d. forward: what will I carry forward / do differently?
6. **Bond's model**
 - a. start with feelings about an event or experience
 - b. recreate or return to the experience (in your mind) and pay attention to the emotions
7. **Gibb's reflective cycle**
 - a. description
 - b. feelings
 - c. evaluation / judgment (what was good or bad)
 - d. analysis
 - e. conclusion
 - f. action plan
8. **CIA: critical incident analysis**
 - a. account
 - b. initial responses to the incident
 - c. issues and dilemmas
 - d. learning
 - e. outcomes

ACTIVITY #3: CREATIVE (WRITING) REFLECTION

Translation – try translating a visual work into a written work. Try to “translate” one of your pieces into a form of writing. If it wasn’t a painting or a photograph or a performance (for example) but it was a piece of writing, what kind of writing would it be? A poem? A novel? A memoir? An essay?

Experiment with writing in whatever form you think connects. Where does your work sit? What art relates to your work? What writing relates? What music relates?

Write a paragraph or so discussing the connections you see from your work to other practices.

REFERENCES

Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts About Writing Studies. Eds. Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle. Utah State UP, 2015.

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The Creative Habit, Twyla Tharp. Simon & Schuster, 2006.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1. Reflecting on your experience allows you to **take knowledge you’ve gained and build on it**, rather than cycling through the same approaches, getting the same results.
2. Reflective writing can help you take writing **from one context** (like studio practice) and apply it **to another context** (like academic writing).
3. Reflection **gets easier** with practice and works well when it becomes part of a creative routine.