

Draw Your Writing Process: A Metacognitive Writing Activity

We often hear people talk about "writing process" as a linear, one-two-three kind of thing. For example, first, you brainstorm. Next you create an outline. Third, you write a draft. Then you reread and maybe get some feedback. Lastly, you revise and turn in the "final" draft, never returning to it again. While that linear process seems nice and neat, it is not a reality for what good writers always do.

Writing is a recursive process. There is not a one-size-fits-all way to do things, *but* we can work to figure out what works best for each of us. This kind of learning about writing involves getting to know what other successful writers do – their ways of thinking, questioning, doing, and writing. This kind of learning about writing asks you to investigate into and play with the tools, steps, and strategies you have learned about or used before to determine what works best for you in a particular context for a specific audience and purpose to craft the most effective written product. One way to think about this kind of learning is that we are not learning about *the* writing process. Instead, we are reflecting on and discussing *your* writing processes.

To start learning more about our writing processes and ourselves as writers, we will reflect on *what* you did for this assignment along with *how* and *why* you did. Taking the time to think about your thinking (also known as metacognition) we can start to know what aspects of your process you may want to intentionally use in the future and/or what steps, tools, and strategies may be less useful for you in other writing situations. We are thinking about what we have done now to better prepare ourselves for the future.

Directions: You will use your essay, your daybook and electronic files, and the arts & crafts materials provided to draw your writing process. Your art work will be shared with your classmates, and it will be one of the files you will include in your digital portfolio. Here are the steps to help you think through this activity.

1. Think of the last formal writing project you worked on. It could be a grant, an article, a syllabus, a research proposal... But not something like an email. Determine the tools, steps, and strategies that went into your finished product. The steps may have been linear, recursive, or something all your own.
2. Using a piece of legal-sized paper and the arts and crafts materials, draw your writing process. It could be a timeline, a road, a specific image... whatever makes sense to you. You can use pictures, words, and any other materials that will help convey the details of your process.
3. I have found that considering things like your essential tools/objects for writing and/or your writing habitats along with things like the shapes and colors you associate with this process can help think through this activity.
4. Consider both the big picture and smaller details. Don't worry about your drawing skills. Just do the best you can. None of us are Picasso. 😊
5. When you are done, find a space within our room to display your writing process.

Gallery Walk

After everyone has finished their drawings, take a few minutes to walk around the room to see what others have created. With your stack of stickie notes and a writing utensil, write a response to other's artwork and stick the note on it. Please remember to be specific and respectful to your peers. Some sentence starters for your responses include

- "I like how you..."
- "I would like to know more about..."
- "I am wondering how you..."
- "I think it is interesting that you..."

Before you return to your seat, be sure to go back to your drawing and read others' responses to your process. Take some quick notes on your observations and/or take a picture of the drawing and the responses with your phone or tablet.

Discussion

- What interesting things did you notice? How were some processes similar? How were they different?
- What words or images were on more than one drawing? What may this indicate about our writing processes?
- What was something that you expected to see or didn't expect? What were some apparent patterns? How may these ideas inform how you thinking about your writing processes?
- What are some steps, tools, and strategies do you want to intentionally take with you to other writing situations? How could they be adapted or refined?
- What is a questions or lingering ideas do you want to continue thinking about? Questions for yourself? Others?