

## Draw Your Writing Process: A Metacognitive Writing Activity

We often hear about the writing process as a straightforward, step-by-step sequence: brainstorm, outline, draft, revise. While this model is tidy, it doesn't fully reflect the reality of how effective writing often happens. Writing is a **context-based**, **individualized**, and **recursive** process. There isn't a one-size-fits-all approach—what works for one writer might not work for another.

In this activity, we'll explore not *the* writing process, but *your* writing processes. Reflecting on how you approach writing—your tools, strategies, and habits—can offer valuable insights into how you think, plan, and create.

**Directions:** To understand your writing habits and practices better, you'll reflect on how you completed a recent formal writing project and create a visual representation of your process. This will be shared with your peers during a **Gallery Walk**. Follow these steps to get started:

- 1. Choose a Writing Project:** Think about the last formal writing project you completed. This could be a grant proposal, article, syllabus, or research paper—but not something casual like an email. Identify the tools, steps, and strategies you used to complete it. Your process may have been linear, recursive, or completely unique.
- 2. Create Your Visual Representation**
  - Use the legal-sized paper and arts and crafts materials provided.
  - Draw your writing process in a way that makes sense to you. It could be a timeline, a road map, or a symbolic image.
  - Incorporate pictures, words, and other materials to represent your process. For instance:
    - Essential tools/objects (laptop, coffee, sticky notes, etc.)
    - Writing habitats (where you write best: at a desk, on the couch, in a coffee shop)
    - Colors or shapes that reflect your emotions or mindset at different stages.
- 3. Focus on Both Big and Small Details**
  - Think about the broader phases of your process (e.g., research, drafting, revising).
  - Include smaller details, like when you take breaks, how you organize your ideas, or rituals that get you into the writing zone.
- 4. Embrace Creativity (and Imperfection!)** Don't worry about how polished your drawing looks—this isn't about artistic skill! Just focus on clearly communicating your process. Remember, none of us are Picasso! 😊
- 5. Share Your Work** Once you've finished your drawing, display it in the room as part of our **Gallery Walk**. Take time to view your peers' work and reflect on the similarities and differences between your processes.

**Why Do This?** By visualizing your writing process, you can:

- Recognize patterns in how you write.
- Identify strategies that work well (and those that don't).
- Compare your process with others to gain new insights and ideas.

This activity helps us understand that writing isn't a one-size-fits-all endeavor—it's a dynamic and personal journey. Let's celebrate and learn from the variety of approaches we all bring to the table!

### **Gallery Walk**

In this Gallery Walk, you will have the opportunity to reflect on and respond to your colleagues' visual representations of their writing processes. By reviewing others' work and offering thoughtful feedback, you can engage in a collaborative dialogue about the diverse ways faculty approach writing tasks. This activity not only promotes reflection but also fosters a supportive, respectful exchange of ideas and strategies for effective writing.

## 1. Gallery Walk

Once everyone has completed their drawings, take a few minutes to quietly walk around the room. View the various representations of your colleagues' writing processes. Take note of the different methods, stages, and creative approaches others have used to express their writing journeys.

## 2. Provide Thoughtful Feedback

As you explore the artwork, use the sticky notes and a writing utensil to write a specific and respectful response to each drawing. Think about how their visual representation compares to your own process or how it might inspire new ways of thinking about your writing.

Use the following sentence starters to guide your responses:

- "I like how you [describe a specific element you appreciate]."
- "I would like to know more about [an aspect of their process that intrigued you]."
- "I'm curious about how you [ask a question about their approach or technique]."
- "I think it's interesting that you [comment on a distinctive feature of their drawing]."

Remember: Your feedback should be encouraging, specific, and open-ended. Aim to create a space for sharing ideas and fostering conversation.

## 3. Return to Your Drawing

Once you've visited each drawing, return to your own and read the responses others have left for you. Reflect on their feedback and make quick notes on any observations you find insightful or inspiring. If possible, take a picture of your drawing along with the sticky notes using your phone or tablet for future reference.

### Reflect:

- What common themes or strategies do you see emerging from the responses?
- Did any feedback challenge your own approach or inspire you to reconsider certain aspects of your process?
- What new techniques or perspectives could you incorporate into your own writing practice?

## 4. Optional Reflection

After the Gallery Walk, take a moment to reflect on the experience. You may want to jot down a few key takeaways or share thoughts with a colleague. Consider how this activity might inform both your own writing and your approach to teaching writing in the classroom.

## Reflective Discussion

1. What interesting things did you notice? How were some processes similar? How were they different?
2. What words or images were on more than one drawing? What may this indicate about our writing processes?
3. What was something that you expected to see or didn't expect? What were some apparent patterns? How may these ideas inform how you think about your

writing processes?

4. 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?
5. What questions or lingering ideas do you want to continue thinking about? Questions for yourself? Your classmates?
6. How did seeing your peers' writing processes affect your understanding of your own? Did you discover any new insights about your own process through comparing it with others?
7. What do you think are the most important factors that influence your writing process (e.g., environment, tools, time, mindset)? How do these factors appear in the drawings of your colleagues?
8. What challenges did you notice in your peers' writing processes that are similar to your own? How might you address or overcome these challenges together?
9. Did you notice any unique or innovative approaches in others' processes that you might incorporate into your own writing practice? What would be the first step in trying out one of these new strategies?