



Process Journals: Using Reflection to Promote Learning

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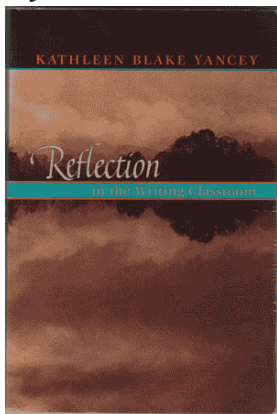
Two Uses of Reflection

- ❑ For Learning—epistemic, learner-based, constructivist
- ❑ For Evaluation—demonstration, teacher-centered, "seeing-in"

Views on Reflection

- ❑ Writing reflectively (reflective thinking) is a learned skill
- ❑ Reflection helps students formulate and gain ownership of their own knowledge (Constructivist view of learning)
- ❑ Reflection plays a mediating role for learning from experience.
- ❑ Reflection helps students formulate goals and solve problems as they compose. (John Dewey—validity testing)
- ❑ Deep reflection becomes "reflexive." Assumptions are disclosed and themselves become objects of examination and critique, transformational learning
- ❑ Reflection triggers what Jennifer Moon calls an "upgrade" in learning

Reflection in the Writing Classroom—three categories of reflection from Kathleen Blake Yancey's book *Reflection in the Writing Classroom*, (1997).



- ❑ **Reflection-in-action** —The writer in the midst of action stops to think about what she is doing or has just done.
- ❑ **Constructive Reflection** –comes "in and amongst the drafts" when one or a number of writing pieces are complete and the writer will most likely have more writing assignments to do.
- ❑ **Reflection in Presentation** —end-of-semester portfolio where students accompany the collection of writing with an elaborate reflective piece. Done for a summative evaluation situation.

Weaving Reflection Throught the Curriculum

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Journals—freewriting, double-entry, process, learning log ❑ Draft Letters (or Companion Pieces) ❑ Writer's Memos ❑ Sharing Writing—observation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Peer Response—author response ❑ Constructive Reflection (in and amongst the drafts)—mid-term, Writer's Reviews ❑ Writing Activities that are reflective in nature ❑ Portfolio reflection —reflection in presentation |
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Features of Process Journals

- ❑ **Writing about writing**(writing about learning)
--the goal of these journals is to get them writing about their writing/learning experience
 - ❑ **It is one kind of journal writing in the class**--mixed with freewriting journals
 - ❑ **Weekly**--turned in each week
 - ❑ **Purpose**—abstract generalization
--although they are grounded in specific experience, their goal is to help formulate larger understandings (not specific problem-solving for specific writing contexts)
 - ❑ **Length**--I push for more extended length. 250 words minimum.
 - ❑ **Evaluation**--graded only on addressing the topic and meeting the minimum length requirement
 - ❑ **Make them Public**--sharing these reflections opens the possibility for students to learn from each other (reflecting upon reflections)
 - ❑ **Ah Hah! Response**--a place for students to share when they come across new realizations and connections
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Example Process Journal Prompts

- ❑ Getting started on a writing project is hard. What do you do to prepare to write? What sorts of “invention” activities seem to work for you? Did you find the invention exercise I prepared for you helpful? How? Why? Look again at the section in our handbook on prewriting. Do you find it easier to “just write” and then plot out your ideas? Or does it work best for you to plot out a game plan (like an outline) which you use to write from? Share some of the things you do as you get ready to write.
 - ❑ Read Trimble’s chapter 2 called “Getting Launched,” and pick one quote from that chapter to include in this journal. Why did you pick this quote? You have just finished (or are about to finish) our first essay. Talk about your own “getting launched” process for this essay. What did you do to get started with writing your essay? How did it compare to Trimble’s discussion about getting launched? What can you take from this experience and perhaps apply to another situation where you have to start a writing assignment?
 - ❑ You recently completed the book project and “published” it. Discuss your experience writing the pieces for the book as well as reading the pieces of your peers. What was hard? easy? unexpected? exciting? In terms of a project for starting out the semester, how has it made you feel as a writer and a student?
 - ❑ We have been doing quite a bit of peer response. Discuss your feelings so far about peer response. What do you gain out of doing peer response? What do you gain by receiving peer response? Cite an example from peer response we have already done. How do you think it is valuable to you as a writer? What do you think are the things that make an ideal peer response?
 - ❑ Write about your experience preparing for and writing the Illustrative Essay. Describe what you found hard or easy about finding your “message” (your Illustrative Truth or thesis), deciding on an audience, and targeting a purpose toward this audience. How did the invention exercise help? Did you feel like the use of stories to help show and prove worked well for you? Describe your essays strengths and weaknesses?
 - ❑ Write about your experience with revision. Talk about your views and past experience with revision in general. Then discuss your experience with revising the Family Story. What is hard? What do you think is important about revision. What helps you with revision? Often revision involves receiving feedback from a reader--how does it make you feel to receive this kind of feedback? How is this feedback helpful for reworking your piece.
 - ❑ Write about our current focus on writing descriptively. What is hard about writing descriptively for you? What surprises you? Which specific techniques have you found to be new for you and how have you used them? What is the relationship between observation and description? What is the relationship between imagination and description?
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Short Bibliography on Reflection

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