

Reflection in Online Writing Courses

Michelle Stuckey, PhD
Arizona State University





Challenges for Online Learners

- Underestimate time commitment and workload
- Competing family, work, and school responsibilities
- Motivational issues
- Overestimating technological knowledge and preparation

Value of Reflection

“Deep-learning pedagogical approaches supporting student learning as articulated in reflective writing have now been documented as fundamental to students’ learning” (Kathleen Yancey, “Introduction,” *A Rhetoric of Reflection* 9)





 **national
writing
project**



National Council of
Teachers of English®

Habits of Mind

- Curiosity
- Openness
- Engagement
- Creativity
- Persistence
- Responsibility
- Flexibility
- Metacognition

**Framework for Success
in Postsecondary Writing**

Outcomes-Based Reflection

**Increase knowledge of
their own learning
behaviors**

**Understand what
habits they need to
practice to reach
learning goals**



A journey into self-awareness.

Multiple Reflective Moments

**Pre-Course
Reflection**

**Mid-Course
Reflection**

**Post-Course
Reflection**

Pre-Course Reflection

**Strengths and
Challenges**

Goal Setting

Pre-Course Reflection

- Choose 2-3 Habits of Mind that you feel most confident in.
- Choose 2-3 Habits of Mind that you feel most challenged by (or that you think you need the most practice in).
- Think about and explain what specific habits you will most need to draw on in order to improve in the WPA Outcomes you identified as needing the most work.

Examples!

- written or multimedia work in other courses
- written or multimedia work for a professional situation (e.g., emails to supervisors or coworkers, PowerPoint presentations, reports)
- written communication with family members, including on social media sites, texts, and emails
- writing you do for fun or as a creative outlet
- composing you do in your community, for instance, a letter to the editor or a comment on a political blog

Mid-Course and Post-Course Reflection

**Explain which 2-3 Habits of Mind
most contributed to your Project success.**

Mid-Course and Post-Course Reflection

**Were any of these HoM the ones you identified as needing to strengthen in your Pre-Course Reflection?
If so, how has the process of composing Project helped strengthen these HoM?**

Mid-Course and Post-Course Reflection

**Explain which 2-3 HoM challenged you
the most during the Project process**

More Examples!

- excerpts from your rough or revised drafts of projects
- excerpts from your invention and revision assignments and discussion board posts
- excerpts from your portfolio's content
- feedback from your instructor, writing mentor, and/or peers

PERSISTENCE

My attention-span can only last for so long, I have come to realize. Recently, I noticed that I tend to get side-tracked more often, only staying focused when I know that I am on a time crunch. Sometimes I get so stressed that I lose all motivation completely and just leave it for the next day! What's up with that?! This can definitely hinder my writing via writers' block if I am not careful!



Referring to my most challenging practices for the WPA Outcomes, I believe that being able to reflect on my own thinking processes will help me strengthen those weaker learning skills mentioned before. Becoming aware of how I think and learn can help me adapt to new information using the methods I already know. I also think it will do me good to learn more about the objectives and how I can achieve them. To do this, however, I must learn to be persistent and engage in practice.

Persistence – the ability to sustain interest in and attention to short- and long-term projects.

Responsibility – the ability to take ownership of one's actions and understand the consequences of those actions for oneself and others.

These two habits continue to be the biggest challenge for me. I am afraid this may be a permanent condition for me. As much as I like learning, many aspects of school have never come naturally to me. I am a slow writer, for instance, and I have a lot of trouble getting started on big projects like this one. In the past, when faced with these difficulties I may have shrugged my shoulders and said, "well, this just isn't for me." That's how I felt when I originally walked away from school. But now, I realize that nobody is magically good at anything. And it is only through tenacity and hard work that people become better versions of themselves. I also have ambitions and a sense of purpose in way now, that I did not then. This helps me to power through and complete my tasks. Even though it remains a struggle. In particular, the graphic design elements of this course have not come naturally to me, but through persistence I was able to create a PSA Ad that I was happy with.

In the Post-Course Reflection, does the WPA Outcomes section meet all expectations by... view longer description	Comments Yes
In the Post-Course Reflection, does the Habits of Mind section meet all expectations by... view longer description	Comments It is not filled out yet
In the Post-Course Reflection, does the Transfer section meet all expectations by... view longer description	Comments It is not filled out yet
In the Post-	

FLEXIBILITY/RESPONSIBILITY

Yet another example from my work life: This upcoming Sunday was supposed to be my day off, and at first I was relieved, for I had a test to complete that day and a number of other assignments, as well. But the other day, I was approached by my shift asking if I could go in for two hours, just to help close. I ended up accepting because it was only two hours...but I knew having to work a day that I planned to complete a big chunk of assignments on would compel me to try and finish as much as I could beforehand so I would not be stressed about it. But giving up a day off (even for only two hours!) does take some willpower. However, I must take responsibility and work around it!

Persistence

As mentioned in both my Pre-Course Reflection and Mid-Course Reflection, this is an HoM trait that I have continually struggled with. The amount of time to complete Project 2 seemed to be shorter than Project 1, and it allowed me to stay focused on it a little better, however. Although I have become better at staying focused, I still feel behind in some areas that I should have been working on. During the last couple of weeks, I should have been focusing on completing this Post-Course Reflection but fell behind and did not complete it in time to give my peers the opportunity to review it for me.

HERE IS MY WORK SCHEDULE FOR THIS WEEK. IT HURTS TO SEE A "NO SHIFT" DAY LEAVE WITHOUT SAYING GOODBYE... :(

Tue 28	05:00 AM - 12:00 PM Coverage [REDACTED]	6.50 hrs
Wed 29	05:00 AM - 12:30 PM Coverage [REDACTED]	7.00 hrs
Thu 30	06:30 AM - 01:00 PM Coverage [REDACTED]	6.00 hrs
Fri 1	- No Shift -	
Sat 2	05:00 AM - 12:00 PM Coverage [REDACTED]	6.50 hrs
Sun 3	03:00 PM - 05:00 PM Coverage [REDACTED]	2.00 hrs

“Since ENG 101, those skills helped me to be more responsible and flexible with my work for other classes, such as turning in assignments on time, making sure I had enough time to complete writing assignments or quizzes, and more eager to learn more about the materials being taught.”

I have stayed engaged far more in my ENG102 class than I was in ENG101, thanks to the habits I learned in ENG101. I'm persistently updating my portfolio throughout the semester so that I'm not rushing to do it in the end.”

Even though I have only taken 1 other English class thus far, my honed skills have helped me earn an A in the class and have instilled in me confidence within my writing. Since ENG 102 I have questioned ideas and concepts more and have tried thinking 'outside of the box' when it comes to my writing.



**IT'S A BOLD STRATEGY, COTTON.
LET'S SEE IF IT PAYS OFF FOR 'EM.**