

**Reflective Writing in OWI:
Gaining Self-Knowledge and Building
a Community of Care**

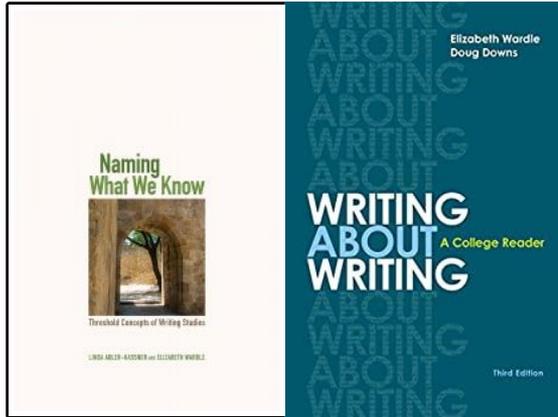
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The [Kaiser Family Foundation](#) reported:

During the pandemic,

- 56% of young adults (ages 18-24) reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder
- 25% of young adults are more likely to report substance use, compared to 13% of adults
- 26% of young adults are more likely to report having suicidal thoughts, compared to 11% of adults

Scholarship



- Adler-Kassner, L., & Wardle, E. (2015). *Naming what we know: Threshold concepts of writing studies*. Logan: Utah State University Press.
- Wardle, E., & Downs, D. (2017). *Writing about writing: A college reader* (3rd ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

WRIT 1110, Seminar in Academic Writing

- explores writing as a subject of study
- emphasizes reflective writing, focusing on these threshold concepts:
 - Writing is impacted by prior experiences
 - Writing helps people make meaning and get things done, but there are always constraints
 - “Good” writing is dependent on writers, reader, situations, technology, and use
 - Writing is a process, all writers have more to learn, and writing is not perfectible

Types of Reflection

- Reflection on prior knowledge (retrospection)
- Reflection on current practices (introspection)
- Reflection on [Habits of Mind](#)
- Reflection on progress and goal

Reflective Assignments

- Reflection via writing projects
- Reflection via Reading Response
- Reflection via Check-In/Check-Out

Reflection via Reading Response

Reading and Reflection

- a good reading -- students discern what they would perhaps never have seen in themselves
- reflection -- students learn things about themselves

Reading Response

- a path to self-realization
- choices
- change

Reflection via Reading Response

Criteria:

- write at least 250 words of an original reflection; post on Discussion Board
- no summaries

Reply to Others on Discussion Board:

- subsequently write 150-word reply to one original posting from peers

In order for you and your peers to carry on a conversation in this discussion forum, please post a reply to one initial post by your peer. Your initial post is due by **Tuesday, September 22**, 8:00 a.m., and your reply to your peer by **Thursday, September 24**, 8:00 a.m. In your reply, you may elaborate on the similarities or differences in yours and your peer's perspectives and experiences.

Read and Reflect on:

X, Malcolm. "Learning to Read." *Writing about Writing: A College Reader*, edited by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs, 3rd ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017, pp. 106-114.

Malcolm X's remarkable journey from "learning to read" to "reading to learn" makes a personal case for the transformative power of reading and writing.

- Discuss how Malcolm X might be an excellent example of a reader who "constructs" meaning. **How did you react to his "construction" of meaning for himself and others? Which of Malcolm X's experiences resonated with you? How might you "construct" meaning in your future writing experiences?**
- Explain how motivation plays an important role in literacy acquisition. **Please extend your explanation with examples from Malcolm X and from your own literacy experiences. In what ways can you increase your own motivation in literacy acquisition?**

Read and Reflect on:

Villanueva, Victor. "Excerpt from *Bootstraps: From an Academic of Color.*" *Writing about Writing: A College Reader*, edited by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs, 3rd ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017, pp. 116-118.

Consider Villanueva's discussion regarding "code switching" between

- languages,
- incomes,
- experiences, and
- cultures.

How do you identify with Villanueva's experiences?

Please extend your explanation/discussion with examples from Villanueva and from your own literacy experience.

Sample Excerpts from Student Reflections

From Reading Response:

- “Malcolm X used every second of his time in prison to do something useful – improve his literacy acquisition. From my own literacy experience, I try to build my self-confidence whenever it came reading and writing, to have goals, and to follow them. Really for me when it comes to reading and writing, I have to do these things in order to convey what I think.”
- “I can definitely relate to the Villanueva article because he is talking about being an international speaking student and explaining his struggles. I think that the more I read and listen to English my thinking in English gets better, and so is writing. Sometimes when I'm on a phone with my family, and after that I need to go to the class, I can see myself struggling to switch the language in my head. I liked reading this article because I could see myself a lot and realized that what I'm going through is completely normal.”

From Reply:

- “I am really impressed by the choice of words. Right now as we write there are constraints we must think about. Whether it be a response to this discussion board questions or the response we make out to a fellow student. But like the article explains, constraints have a middle ground in the way we write and I think you did a perfect job at making that clear. Honestly it is hard to tell the truth sometimes because it could hurt people, but I would agree that telling lies would risk even more mistrust and destroyed relationships.”
- “I am inspired and more impressed by what you have to say for this discussion. We all struggle as writers, and to really self-evaluate, we can be even better. That ability to self-evaluate is something you strongly possess and it will pull you ahead of any writer. Honestly, reading this discussion I could understand where you were coming from with every sentence. That is the power of being able to self-evaluate and not many people know how to do that effectively.”

Reflection via Check-In/Check-Out

Introductory Message to Students

Good morning, everyone!

I am very proud of the progress you are making so far. You have done a wonderful job following the direction of this course and developing your writing skills. Keep it up!

My goal has always been to help you become independent learners and writers. Through workshops, you have successfully learned to navigate Canvas--learning to utilize both the synchronous and asynchronous tools to complete the assignments. As we continue this semester, it is important that you take time to reflect on the things you have learned. Reflection often allows you to put new information into context and helps you to connect that new information to the things you already know.

Your success is important to me, and I want to support you. CHECK-INS/CHECK-OUTs will give you additional opportunities to share your thoughts/feeling/questions with me, thus allowing me to be mindful of your progress and well-being. **Please know that your submission will come directly to me, not to others in class.**

Sample Prompts

- How are you today?
- What are you most proud of this week?
- What resonated with you this week?

- It is important for all of us to remember the good things we have experienced and to look forward to good things that will come. To that end, please share something positive that has happened this week or some things that you are looking forward to.

- Reflect on your own habits of mind: what do you think you can work on for the second half of this semester?
- What unexpected insights (positive and/or negative) have you realized about yourself and your writing?
- "If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude." How do you understand this quote by General Colin Powell? How can you apply this quote to yourself as a writer/student?

Reflection toward Self-Knowledge and a Community of Care

- Develop critical thinking, reading, and writing
- Develop understanding of rhetorical situations (exigence, audience, motivation, constraints, etc.)
- Develop Habits of Mind (curiosity, openness, creativity, persistence, etc.)
- Develop courage, confidence, and resilience
- Discover oneself and one's voice
- Develop autonomy and agency
- Develop a personal relationship with writing
- Become an active member of a learning community
- Develop empathy and care for others
- Develop larger goals beyond the course

