Chapter 8. Design Into: Reflection as a Tool for Growth

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Reflect Before Reading

Think about students you have had in the past who are non-traditionally aged, who work in contexts off campus, or both. In what ways does your FYC course prompt students to think about the writing they have done in their lives or the writing they do on the job? In what ways does your course ask students to make connections between the classroom and their non-academic writing lives?

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In *The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien ruminates on the difference between story-truth and happening-truth, writing, "What stories can do, I guess, is make things present" (180). In his words, storymaking is a form. In our words, it's a method for inventing oneself. It's an intentional practice that allows the story-maker to transfer events from the past to the present to construct knowledge and understanding. Similarly, Maxine Greene in *Releasing the Imagination* writes about the impact of recalling, reflecting, and becoming present to our past experiences: "I find the very effort to shape the materials of lived experience into narrative to be a source of meaning making" (75). In both these texts, the authors are examining the inextricable link between the practice of reflection and imagination. Greene writes, "Meanings derived from previous experiences often find their way through the gateway of imagination (as Dewey saw it) to interact with present-day experience. When aspects of the present are infused by materials originating in the past, there is always a re-viewing of the past, even as the new experience (enriched now) comes to consciousness" (76). In the writing classroom, then, tethering the practice of reflection to imagination has the potential

to encourage us, as faculty and administrators, to recall, rethink, and reimagine how and why the practice of reflection is the linchpin for assessment models.[1]

In *Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing*, first drafted in 1989 and most recently revised and approved in March 2015, the leading professional organizations in writing studies assert that sound writing instruction includes "opportunities for reflection and fostering the development of metacognitive abilities that are critical for writing development. It also includes explicit attention to interactions between metacognitive awareness and writing activity" (Conference). Bolstered by the field's research and scholarship on metacognition and student reflection in the writing classroom since at least the early 1990s, like many other writing programs, we, as administrators in the Writers' Studio, a fully online first-year composition program in the College of Integrative Arts and Sciences at Arizona State University (ASU), design curriculum to engage students in constructing multimodal texts, using a portfolio model of assessment that privileges the students' practices of reflection. Equally influential in our assessment model and our development of methods for scaffolding the development of students' reflective practices is the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*. When the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Writing Project (NWP), and the Council of Writing Program Administrators (CWPA) collaboratively crafted the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, the task force focused on eight habits of mind: curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition (Council, *Framework* 1). In the Writers' Studio, we introduce these habits of mind to the students early in the semester because we believe it helps shape how they articulate *what* they imagine their writing knowledge to be, providing more in-depth and insightful moments in their reflections because these habits of mind become a sort of prism for re-seeing and understanding their writing knowledge in the present. Moreover, this reflection is then crafted in a language that is not solely written in English-ese but in a language that is transferrable to what Duane Roen et al. call the four arenas of life—the academic, professional, civic, and personal; but as Kathleen Blake Yancey notes, Moreover, this reflection is then crafted in a language that is not solely written in English-ese but in a language that is transferable to what Duane Roen et al. call the four arenas of life—the academic, professional, civic, and personal. Although we introduce all eight habits to our students and discuss their importance, Kathleen Blake Yancey notes that metacognition—"the ability to reflect on one's own thinking as well as on the individual and cultural processes used to structure knowledge"—may be the most universally useful tool for students, particularly when developing a practice of reflection tied to outcomes-based self-assessment, knowledge making that they can "carry into life outside of and beyond educational

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1.   The title of this chapter reflects Kathleen Blake Yancey's differentiation between reflection that is "expected from the student instead of designed into the curriculum" ("The Social" 189).

settings" ("Reflection and Electronic" 1). Hence, when students are given opportunities to flex and grow their metacognitive practices with a method for re-imagining the past in the present, they are more likely to transfer their learning in first-year composition to other courses and other arenas of their life, making critical and informed decisions about what they communicate, how they communicate, and to whom they communicate based on an intentional analysis of the rhetorical situation. In this way, they also have more opportunities to develop and articulate a rhetorical stance through the practice of reflection.

Working from this premise, in this chapter, we demonstrate the importance of designing curriculum that allows students to develop and grow their metacognitive practices through intentional and systematic reflection. This kind of reflection, we assert, allows students to more fully understand the rhetorical stances that they take in the course and to consider ways to imagine those stances differently in other academic, personal, professional, and civic contexts. As we hinted in the chapter opening, we situate our discussion of this practice of reflection in the Writers' Studio, illustrating how to develop curriculum that will scaffold student learning toward meaningful reflective practice. We draw on the reflective writing of eight students across ENG 101 (the first composition course in our required two course, two-semester sequence) and ENG 105 (the advanced one semester, first-year composition course): Karen, Sarah, Gina, Jennifer, Cathy, Ryan, Mandy, and Susan, all of whom are non-traditional students returning to college after a significant break. Finally, we advocate for constructing a learning space that engages students in the processes of reflective practice, values the habit of metacognition, and promotes the development of this habit over time within authentic rhetorical contexts, all of which echo Yancey's notion of "design in" ("The Social" 189). In what follows, we begin by looking at some theoretical considerations of reflection before demonstrating how we have designed curriculum to support students as they develop a practice of reflection in some of our online courses.

Conceptualizing a Practice of Reflection

Throughout his career, John Dewey did much to promote the importance of reflection, defining reflective thinking as "[a]ctive, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (9). Further, Dewey notes that reflection "impels" inquiry (7), which, in turn, enhances learning. Dewey also notes that reflecting on past activities leads to a "look into the future, a forecast, an anticipation, or a prediction" (117). That is, making predictions about the future based on past experiences helps prepare learners for the future. Dewey provides several examples of this, including the physician who makes a diagnosis and then uses past experience to make "a prognosis, a forecast, or the probable future course of the disease" (117). In the research that we discuss here, we see echoes of Dewey's foundational concepts. Therefore, when writing teachers encourage students to

compare their learning to the learning outcomes of the course, teachers emphasize the importance of metacognition. Emphasizing reflection in this way encourages students to be more deliberate, thoughtful, and effective communicators.

In this way, reflection in the writing classroom also has the potential to foster the transfer of knowledge and practices from one context to another, "generalizability," as Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak prefer to put it in *Writing Across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing* (6). These scholars point to their experiences with asking "students to tell us in their own words what they have learned about writing, how they understand writing, and how they write now" (3). Further, Yancey et al. ask students to articulate how they are able to "recontexualize [writing] for new situations" (3). These questions are integral to the practice of reflection in the writing classroom. Without the ability to imagine how the students might apply their writing knowledge and practices in contexts outside the writing classroom, the value of writing instruction and writing knowledge diminishes. As Yancey et al. find in their extensive research, successful students "tend to theorize in ways that not only show us connections across writing sites, but also how the process functions for them" (135-36). With that finding in mind, they recommend that teachers can teach for transfer more effectively if they design courses that, among other things, "build in metacognition" (139). Similarly, Elizabeth Wardle uses the apt term "repurposing" to describe students' abilities to apply writing knowledge and practices across a range of contexts. In courses that focus on honing and developing students' use of rhetorical knowledge while also providing meaningful opportunities for application, students become more proficient at using writing to act as agents in the world.

In an effort to promote reflection, Patrick Sullivan, in *A New Writing Classroom: Listening, Motivation, and Habits of Mind*, asks secondary and postsecondary writing teachers to reconsider how their writing curricula and pedagogy can focus more on reflective writing and emphasize the value of listening to peers' perspectives to allow for an opportunity for the writer to see their text through a lens informed by different sociocultural experiences. This would encourage students to participate in "an active, generative, constructive process that positions readers, writers, and thinkers in an open, collaborative, and dialogical orientation toward the world and others" (3). Sullivan's assertion, which explicitly connects listening and reflective practice, echoes a sociocultural theory of learning, a theory that defines learning as a process mediated by tools and experienced with others. As Lev Vygotksy notes, learning happens in a "zone of proximal development" constructed with and by more capable peers. These peers can aid in learning because they help to form a "distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (86). In this case, the concept of "more capable peers" is not necessarily constant. Hanna, for example, may be a more capable peer at one moment in a discussion, and her classmate Ryan could be a more capable peer

when the discussion turns a few minutes later. Among other things, peers can encourage greater reflection because they offer perspectives that may exist outside the experience of a student. Sullivan also asserts that, in addition to fostering dialogic interactions to promote reflection, such courses should place reflective writing assignments at the center of the curriculum (181) to encourage "an openness to others and to new ideas and a willingness to acknowledge complexity and uncertainty" (3). Further, teachers need to "make listening, empathy, and reflection the primary skills we value in our classrooms" (181). Being open to others' perspectives is a useful habit of mind in writing courses and in life more generally.

Despite foundational research in the field of rhetoric and composition and the field of education that demonstrates how integral a reflective practice is to student learning, many writing teachers experience uncertainty when attempting to design a curriculum focused on developing a reflective practice with students. To address this uncertainty, many writing programs and writing teachers use the *WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition* (3.0) as foundational to a curricular design that supports students as they construct a reflective practice. With the *WPA Outcomes Statement*, in particular, learning consists of four areas: (1) rhetorical knowledge, (2) critical thinking, reading, and composing, (3) processes, and (4) knowledge of conventions (Council, *WPA*). By providing students with a language for discussing their learning in relation to these four areas, teachers encourage students to think forward to future writing tasks.

Once students have a language for discussing their learning, they must be given a variety of opportunities to do so. Yancey offers an extensive analysis of reflection in *Reflection in the Writing Classroom*. Building on Donald Schön's concept of "reflection-on-action" in *Educating the Reflective Practitioner: Toward a New Design for Teaching and Learning in the Professions* (passim), Yancey focuses on three kinds of reflection: reflection-in-action, constructive reflection, and reflection-in-presentation. Reflection-in-action is "the process of reviewing and projecting and revising, which takes place within the composing event." Constructive reflection is "the process of developing a cumulative multi-selved, multi-voiced identity, which takes place between and among composing events." Reflection-in-presentation is "the process of articulating the relationships between and among the multiple variables of writing and the writer in a specific context for a specific audience" (*Reflection* 200). This range of reflective practices can enrich students' experiences in writing courses, allow for knowledge transfer across contexts, and support the potential to develop (intentionally) a rhetorical stance in civic, personal, and professional spaces.

Designing a Practice of Reflection

To enrich students' experiences in our courses, the faculty in the Writers' Studio have designed a curriculum to foster the practice of reflection we discuss in the previous section. Like other FYC programs at ASU, the Writers' Studio offers

students the option of completing their FYC requirement either through a two-course, two-semester sequence or through an advanced, one-semester course. Students have the option of 7.5-week or 15-week iterations of the courses. In these courses, students are required to complete two projects consisting of essay, multimodal, and reflection components, with the reflection component consisting of consistent engagement with the WPA outcomes and the *Framework for Success* habits of mind in conjunction with the completion of various assignments.

The Writers' Studio's curriculum design promotes an active, learner-centered approach to teaching and learning writing, where faculty support students to develop and articulate a rhetorical stance in their writing through rigorous and recursive participation in the process of writing. Reflection is a core component of the course, and we emphasize the centrality of metacognitive practices from the beginning in a number of ways. For example, in English 101, the first course in our two-course sequence, the first written assignment is essentially a metacognitive activity that encourages students to reflect on their knowledge and experiences with writing in academic as well as personal and professional contexts. After reading Chapter 1, "Writing Goals and Objectives for College and for Life," of their textbook, *The McGraw-Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life* (Roen et al.), the students consider their past experience with writing in relation to the WPA outcomes previously discussed. They then compose a discussion board post in which they share with their classmates, instructors, and writing fellows (advanced undergraduate and graduate students who respond to students' drafts) their perceived strengths and weaknesses, using the language of the *WPA Outcomes Statement*. In the following example, Gina, a Starbucks employee who has returned to school after many years, clearly discusses how "dissecting," or reflecting, on her past writing through the lens of the WPA outcomes has helped her understand how she is already engaging in the rhetorical strategies we emphasize in Writers' Studio and how she can strengthen her writing practices:

> I have discovered a writing strength that I have is Rhetorical Knowledge, as most of my writing mainly consists of work emails. When sending my emails I have to consider my audience, I have to make sure I am getting my message across to my reader in a way that makes sense, without creating anger or frustrations. I have to be mindful of my email tone and verbiage to make sure I do not cause ill feelings. I also create many different types of documents for work, mostly visual tools for my team so they are aware of up-to-date information.

> After reviewing the WPA Outcome Statement for this class, I feel I have a long way to go in order to be a well-rounded writer. My first goal for this class would be to focus on developing my writing process. I feel this is a crucial part as to what holds me back from creating the documents I envision in my head. My second

> goal, since I have not been in an English class for a very long
> time, I am VERY rusty in my knowledge of conventions. I know
> it's like riding a bike so I am confident as the weeks progress this
> will no longer be one of my goals. I would like to also develop my
> skills using critical thinking, reading, and composing.

This passage also illustrates the value of giving students a language in which to talk about their writing, a language that we argue is transferable to other contexts, while also bringing them into the larger conversation around what it means to cultivate writing practices. Beginning our courses by giving students opportunities to reflect on past experiences, current practices, and goals for future development, we attempt to foreground for students the value of metacognition and prepare them for the course-long engagement with reflection on their own composing in the context of the course learning outcomes.

In English 102, the second course in our two-course sequence, and English 105, the advanced one-semester FYC course, the instructors ask students to watch a video of students, staff, and faculty discussing rhetoric and then define rhetoric and explain how rhetoric influences participation in their daily lives. Much like the opening reflective assignment in English 101, this assignment allows students to draw on their prior knowledge to orient themselves to the learning outcomes by building from what they already know and how they already communicate differently depending on the context, the audience, and the purpose. In asking students to recall and reflect on their prior knowledge about writing and rhetoric, we are showing them that when encountering new learning in any context, they should begin with identifying what they already know about the topic, idea, or concept. Then, we ask them to evaluate these experiences against the course content and through writing and revising in the present. As a result, students are more likely to re-see these prior learning memories and construct new knowledge, such that they begin to theorize their own knowledge, imagining new possibilities for their writing practice. Once the students can reflect on their own practice, they have the language for constructing a theory of writing from their experiences inside and outside the classroom. After participating in this activity, Sarah, a registered nurse who had recently moved to Phoenix to pursue a Bachelor of Science in nursing at ASU, writes in our spring 2015 ENG 105 course,

> Before this video, I did not really understand the word rhetoric in
> a literary sense. I now realize that I use a rhetoric approach almost
> every day as a registered nurse. All too often, RN's [sic] are re-
> sponsible for communicating and sometimes persuading patients
> to complete tasks or follow physicians [sic] orders they might not
> agree with initially. For example: administering medications like
> insulin in a timely manner, performing physical therapy exercises
> to strengthen their joints, and schedule yearly physical examina-
> tions to preventively screen for diseases and disorders.

In this example, Sarah connects her new conceptual understanding of rhetoric to her practice as a nurse and, in doing so, constructs a theory of writing: rhetorical knowledge is used in everyday practice. Therefore, in both the ENG 101 assignment that asks students to assess their strengths and weaknesses and the ENG 105 assignment that asks students to articulate prior knowledge of key terms, instructors pair students' writing processes with their metacognitive practices to, as Yancey et al. describe, "aid in the understanding of writing as theory and practice" and use "reflection as a tool for learning, thinking, and writing in the course and beyond" (57). Drawing further on Yancey's "The Social Life of Reflection: Notes Toward an ePortfolio-Based Model of Reflection," we have structured our course in such a way that reflection is "designed into" the class rather than "expected from" students. For example, students reflect on their composing as they engage in it. Further, the course portfolio assignment provides a semester-long opportunity for students to hone their reflective practices.

Reflection is cultivated from the beginning of the course, and it is also built into the assignment description for both major multimodal projects. In the project assignment overviews, students are asked to review the self-assessment questions in a specific chapter of their textbook as a guide for framing their reflections. These reflections are given significant weight in the rubric used to assess both projects. After completing both projects and reflecting on how the process impacted their learning, students are asked to revisit their reflections, re-reading for patterns and themes to synthesize the meaning of their learning. All of the reflections throughout the course are archived in a digital portfolio, through Digication (an electronic portfolio system), and through the curation of this digital portfolio, students grow a practice of reflection to support their learning and their writing by collecting and referencing artifacts such as drafts, written feedback, and dialogue with peers, writing fellows, and faculty.

This digital portfolio assignment is aligned with both assessment scholarship (see Hamp-Lyons and Condon; Huot; White) in the field of rhetoric and composition and best practices put forth by the Conference on College Composition and Communication. This research supports our decision to place reflection at the center of our curriculum and assessment approach, which engages students in reflecting *toward* the learning outcomes of the course, addressing authentic audiences in a digital space, and designing and organizing artifacts and reflections digitally by honing their knowledge of both genre conventions and diverse media. To support their reflective practices, in addition to archiving their writing process artifacts and engaging in structured (and required) reflection assignments, students must also make claims about their learning, substantiating those claims with evidence from discussion board dialogues, peer-to-peer feedback, writing fellow interactions, readings, invention work, drafts, and even from writing composed outside of the class in professional, personal, and civic arenas. We also ask students to engage with one another's reflections throughout the course, teaching them to listen to their peers, prior to submitting their final drafts. This

is a method for bringing into focus what Yancey calls "the social life of reflection" and serves as a way for us as writing teachers to witness students "enact the curriculum" by "bridging process and practice" ("The Social" 191-92). The digital portfolios are then submitted at the end of the semester with "reflection as their centerpiece" ("Reflection and Electronic" 5).

To support students in sustaining a cumulative reflective practice through the course-long digital portfolio assignment, we also designed weekly reflection assignments with specific guiding questions generated from the week's course material. In the assignment guidelines, we highlight the connection between the *WPA Outcomes Statement* and the eight habits of mind stated in the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* by asking students to reflect each week on how one of the eight habits of mind is fostered through specific learning experiences and composing practices highlighted in the *WPA Outcomes Statement*.[2] For instance, an early guideline focused on the habit of curiosity as students were completing invention work and choosing their subject for their first writing project. To aid in their understanding that writers and researchers pursue opportunities that engage their curiosity, we asked students to consider how curiosity impacted their choice of interview subject for a profile piece. Mandy, a Starbucks employee who is returning to college after a 17-year hiatus, reflects on how curiosity factored into her invention work and helped her sustain her research throughout the project as follows:

> My first project was fueled by my curiosity. I genuinely wanted to know the story of my subject, and it helped drive the brainstorming process. . . . As I conducted the interview, my curiosity led me to dig deeper into researching some of the history of the time through the New York Times historical database—where many questions were answered, and even more arose.

Our courses also include a great deal of collaboration with others on discussion boards and through peer review activities; therefore, in one weekly prompt, we ask students to consider how they were open to new ideas and perspectives, engaged with their peer and their peers' topics, and persisted in their writing practices after these interactions. Many students enter our courses with little to no experience infusing collaboration into their composing practices. In their reflections, students discuss the challenges of participating in online discussions and working with peers remotely. Ryan, a returning college student with a 15-year career in information systems management who is studying global logistics, reflects on how responsibility factored into his collaboration with classmates as follows:

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2. The *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing* states, "Because this Framework is concerned primarily with foundations for college-level, credit-bearing writing courses, it is based on outcomes included in the CWPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition" (Council, *Framework* 2-3).

> Concretely this week I took responsibility to try to make the team activity happen as a Google Hangout online. It was [a] difficult experience. I initially tried to arrange a time through a quick survey of possible times, but during that process I received feedback that I was not considering enough time slots. . . . So I returned and created another survey dividing the remaining days into chunks, and then used the top two time slots to have additional votes on a particular time. At that point I felt good about the process . . . but only one person showed. We continued with the assignment and I tried again, though for the second meeting it was only the original two people plus one additional. I probably should have started the process earlier. I did have to incorporate ideas from others in the rescheduling. . . . A more responsible approach overall would have been to 1) Start the process of planning much sooner, 2) Talk up front about general preferences and 3) work to accommodate those with particular difficulties joining something at a similar time to others. While I took responsibility, I did not take responsibility in a responsible way, really I was just reacting to the fact that no one else had stepped up.

Thus, these reflections suggest that by intentionally offering students opportunities to make connections between the habits of mind, the WPA outcomes, and the specific activities they perform in the course, students develop an understanding of themselves as active participants in their own learning. These multiple avenues for engaging in reflective activity habituate students to metacognition as a core habit of mind for synthesizing learning.

Growing a Practice of Reflection

To further explore the theoretical underpinnings we describe earlier in this chapter, we will also discuss examples from student portfolios in relation to Yancey's three modes of reflective practice previously discussed: reflection-in-action, constructive reflection, and reflection in presentation (*Reflection* 200). Specifically, we have found that peers play a central role in enabling students to practice reflection-in-action, as engaging in collaborative, social writing practices such as peer review emphasizes the centrality of review, reconceptualization, and revision. The constructive reflection students engage in "between and among composing events" (Yancey, *Reflection* 200) enables students to document their learning in such a way as to explore their relationship to their own learning and their own identity as writers. Finally, we discuss the way multimodal projects support reflection-in-presentation, such that students are encouraged to reflect on how they adapt their inquiry to multiple contexts and multiple audiences.

First, we sequence activities so students can construct an active reflective practice throughout the course by promoting the importance of peer-supported learning in the writing and reflecting process. As we mentioned earlier, students interact with peers in a number of ways: through discussion board assignments in which they are required both to post and respond to peers, in writing team activities in English 101 in which students collectively discuss and offer feedback on rhetorical decisions they have made for each major project, and, of course, through peer review. These activities allow opportunities for students to engage in "reflection-in-action, the process of reviewing and projecting and revising, which takes place in a composing event" (Yancey, *Reflection* 200)—that is, reflection "as an accompaniment to any given text (and all of its instantiations)" (Yancey, "The Social" 189-90). Through these interactions, students not only receive feedback on their work but also respond to that feedback. Peers propose alternative perspectives to fellow writers to enable those writers to achieve some metacognitive distance from their own patterns of thinking that influence their rhetorical decisions.

In her portfolio reflections, Jennifer, a business sustainability student, emphasizes how important peer review was for her learning in the course. Jennifer is a returning student with a previous degree in art; she also owns her own sewing business. In Jennifer's reflections, she consistently foregrounds the way in which collaborating with others on her writing enabled her to engage in reflection-in-action through the multiple opportunities for receiving feedback, reviewing her work, and revising. Early in English 101, before engaging in the peer review process, students are asked to reflect on past experiences with peer review and discuss any concerns or apprehensions they might have. In response to this activity, Jennifer writes,

> I think that sometimes when receiving feedback on work that you've invested a considerable amount of time, heart, and possibly tears in, it's hard at first to open your mind to receive the feedback. Peer feedback is so essential because it's a fresh perspective, a new way of thinking. I think that it will be challenging at first to be open in receiving feedback, to look at my piece through the eyes of someone else. I am just going to keep in mind that the benefit of receiving this feedback and applying/considering the ideas of my peers will lead me to create a richer piece of work. I may be able to approach certain topics in ways I hadn't thought of. I was going to the Art Institute the last time I was reviewed by my peers. We were having a portfolio review in my fashion illustration class. I remember feeling very guarded about the feedback I received. The importance of peer review was not explained to me then. I just took it as criticism, instead of ideas as to how I could make my work better. Looking back I

> wish I would have understood that it takes a team of people to
> produce meaningful work.

Jennifer's initial reflection on the peer review process reveals an emerging understanding of the value of collaboration for students to re-imagine their writing and ultimately to support students in crafting more "meaningful" works. Especially compelling is her discussion of her portfolio review in a previous institution. Jennifer notes that because she did not fully understand the importance of peer review, she did not fully benefit from the process—she was not open to it as an opportunity for learning and growth. As Taczak, Robertson, and Yancey suggest in their piece in this volume, both prior knowledge and experience, as well as the development of a strong conceptual framework, play important roles in students' ability to develop writing knowledge and practice. Simply providing opportunities to collaborate with peers is not enough. More than merely offering moments for collaboration, faculty should design and sequence activities that scaffold students' learning *toward* robust collaboration, enabling students to develop an understanding of the concept or strategy, then to put into practice the concept or strategy, and finally to reflect on the experience with others.

After participating in these structured peer review activities, Jennifer reflected by comparing her experiences from the past with her experiences in the present, explaining how she enacted the habit of mind of openness to imagine the possibility that her experience with peer review in the present, in our course, did not have to be determined by her experiences in the past, and this re-imagining was significant to her growth as a writer:

> Being open to other's [sic] feedback and perspectives is an area
> I feel I have grown in. I dealt well with ambiguity by recogniz-
> ing that I obviously do not have all the answers. After receiving
> my peer's feedback I would generally read the notes then let the
> comments simmer in my head for the rest of the day. It was nec-
> essary for me to step back from my work and read it objectively.
> . . . My writing would have stayed stagnant, with little to no pro-
> gression, had I not opened up my mind and been transparent
> about my writing style.

Moreover, her reflection indicates an awareness of both the difficulty and value of attaining some distance from her own ways of thinking, both about and within her own writing. Ultimately, in discussing how she engaged with the collaborative and social aspects of the writing process in the course, Jennifer concludes, "Without the feedback from others it would have been difficult to see my piece objectively and revise appropriately. The changes I made directly correlate to my collaborations, without them my writing would not have progressed." She clearly perceives the growth—the "progression" in her writing—that has occurred as a result of "reflection-in-action" through collaborative writing opportunities within the course.

Cathy, a Spanish literature student and self-described "second-time college student, returning after a 30-year hiatus," also emphasizes the value of collaboration for generating moments of reflection-in-action. In her reflections, she discusses how collaborating with peers enabled her to reconsider the rhetorical choices she made in a multimodal composition piece:

> I was appreciative of the extra set of eyes on my paper, and always approached their peer reviews with an open mind. . . . Of course, there were times that I experimented with suggestions and chose to disregard them because of what I felt were valid reasons. I learned that, in the end, it is my responsibility for the quality of the paper. However, I always appreciated the opportunity to really examine every suggestion and choose my own path of action.

Like Jennifer, Cathy emphasizes the importance of remaining open to peer feedback. In responding to questions and comments from peers, this openness enabled her to "experiment" with alternative ideas. Her reflection enables us to glimpse a moment of reflection-in-action, as she contemplates and re-conceptualizes her reasoning for her rhetorical decisions. She was able to view her work with fresh eyes, which she asserts was instrumental in improving the design of her project. In a later reflection, Cathy remarks on the valuable lessons learned in the class from participating in peer review: "Peer review has probably been the most beneficial aspect of this entire class. I understand now why so much time is dedicated to this process, and I'm sure the lessons of peer review will serve me in every writing assignment I encounter throughout my time at ASU." Cathy notes that these lessons will help her in subsequent writing assignments. She recognizes the value her peers' suggestions had on her project as well as the larger value of peer review as a practice. Ultimately, these examples suggest the significance of "reflection-in- action" to students' growth and development as writers.

Second, the course-long digital portfolio assignment asks students to construct reflections regularly as they complete a variety of assignments and participate in various peer-to-peer and peer-to-teacher interactions. This ongoing reflection is designed to scaffold students' learning toward constructing a sustainable, reflective practice. Like the reflections they craft at the end of each major project, these more systematic reflections are also housed in their digital portfolio, but the purpose of these smaller, reflective assignments is to afford students an opportunity to approximate what Yancey refers to as "constructive reflection, the process of developing a cumulative, multi-selved, multi-voiced identity, which takes place between and among composing events" ("The Social" 189). That is, we emphasize to students that the digital portfolio is *cumulative*; it is not simply an assignment to be compiled at the end of the semester or at the end of a more substantial written project. By requiring students to engage in an ongoing reflective process, we aim to habituate them to employing metacognitive practices they can transfer to other learning and composing situations beyond our classes.

Student digital portfolios speak to students' awareness of the value of cumulative reflection for developing these metacognitive skills. For instance, Jennifer discusses her perception of the impact this reflective process had on her development as a writer in more general terms: "I view the result as an academic capsule of my time in English 101. If the portfolio was not a requirement I would not have reflected on my writing to the extent that I have and probably would not have progressed by learning from my opportunities as a writer." Her reflection indicates a clear understanding of the value of constructive reflection in enabling her to archive her learning such that she can review, reconsider, and build on her learning beyond our course.

Cathy also offers a specific illustration of how reflecting on an ongoing basis throughout the course enabled her to document changes in her attitude about the writing process, specifically peer review:

> After re-reading about my previous experience with and impression of peer review, I can clearly see that I have changed dramatically in this aspect over the course of the semester. I stated that peer review was the most difficult aspect of English 101 that I had experienced up to that point. I no longer feel that way. In the beginning, I was very uncomfortable offering advice to other students. After all, I am in English 101, too! I am by no means an expert, and disliked being put in a position of judgment. As I grew to understand that my role as a peer reviewer was to offer to the writer my perspective as only a reader and not an expert writer, I began to feel much more relaxed with this process. . . . I also grew very comfortable with receiving advice from my peers.

She notes that her feelings about giving and receiving peer feedback changed as her understanding of the process changed. Cathy became more "relaxed" with this process once she understood she could give feedback as a reader rather than as an expert. This reflection reveals the value of building a conceptual framework for students for strengthening their writing practices. In re-reading and responding to her previous reflections on the process of peer review, this student in effect witnessed her own learning and growth as a writer during the course and could articulate the shifts in her perception of herself as a student-writer.

Ryan also engages with the value of constructive reflection in his digital portfolio. He playfully yet earnestly considers the way that the reiterative, reflective nature of the course allowed him to more deliberately evaluate, reorient, and ultimately strengthen his rhetorical practices:

> Well, this is almost unbearably Meta, isn't it? A reflections piece written about reflecting on one's own thinking? But if anything, this process has been the core habit of the course. By reflecting

> on my own thinking, I have learned to also reflect on the think-
> ing of others. . . . In both major projects a significant shift in my
> focus and thinking occurred once the project had already start-
> ed. For project one the project shifted from a story of education
> to a story of racism and perseverance, and for project two the
> story shifted from one of food and diet in Egypt to one of labor
> taken for granted and feminism. Neither of these shifts would
> have occurred without the reflection that the writing process in
> the class encouraged.

The emphasis in this course on cumulative reflection allows students to construct a much more sustainable reflective practice because they begin to document and revisit previous work, beyond essay drafts, to reflect on how they can improve in all of the literacy practices they cultivate in this course.

Ryan also reflected on using technology to document his research methods for a project that required he interview someone for a profile piece, as follows:

> I also found that certain pieces of research caused me to reflect
> on my own thinking. Listening carefully to the first interview
> I conducted with James I realized that there were many times
> when quite unconsciously I interrupted James to steer his re-
> sponse to a question in a particular way. . . . I used this self-re-
> flection to try to change my approach in the second two inter-
> views, to allow James to tell his own story.

Documenting his work in such a way enabled this student, as he notes, to improve his practices and ultimately evaluate his "own thinking" by becoming present to his past practices and experiences. Thus, this type of constructive reflection allows students to record their views on writing, their understandings of their own writing processes, and their sense of identity as writers, both witnessing and archiving their learning—these small shifts—throughout the course.

Third, drawing from the core principle of the textbook we use, *The Mc-Graw-Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life* (Roen et al.), we encourage students to include evidence for their reflections from writing in all arenas of their lives: academic, professional, civic, and personal. We also ask students to compose multimodally in such a way as to support their understanding of the need for flexibility and creativity when communicating similar information to different audiences, in different genres, and across different media. This supports Yancey's concept of "reflection-in-presentation" (*Reflection* 200), which, we feel, has the effect of impelling students to inquiry such that they might reflect on how to best utilize their rhetorical knowledge in a particular writing context and for a specific audience, thinking carefully about how those decisions impact their multiple drafts. For instance, Mandy connects the flexibility she has developed in

the personal and professional areas of her life with the development of flexibility in her writing practices throughout the course:

> With my job and my home life I have learned to live a consistently flexible lifestyle. I have never had as much exposure to flexibility in writing before this course. Really analyzing the audience you are trying to reach and constructing a tone for your message are things I have subconsiously [sic] done personally, but never through a written work. When writing for my first project I was trying to reach a more informal audience than I was during my second project, and with my second projects [sic] multimodal paper I was trying to reach the same audience, but give them a different feel. In addition to these projects, peer reviews, emails, groupme [sic] chats, and general peer correspondence required even more flexibility with communication. I learned that what you are trying to communicate can be received in a much richer way when you tailor your delivery to a more specific audience and situation as necessary.

In effect, she is noting that the class gave her a conceptual framework for understanding and more deliberately implementing a practice she "subconsciously" engaged in. This deliberate focus on audience, Mandy states, enriched her writing.

Mandy also reflects on how the course enhanced her creativity (a habit of mind from the *Framework for Success*). She discusses how the practices she developed in multimodal composition have enhanced the composing she does in her professional life. Specifically, as part of her multimodal project, she created a Prezi:

> I started out creating a Tumblr blog, but learned about Prezi through a Blackboard discussion and was intrigued! . . . I was asked to make a quick ASU presentation at a large Starbucks operational meeting and I made another Prezi to use as a visual aid. I thought it would be more impactful to my audience to present this way because we are rapidly becoming a more tech savvy company and I wanted to show them an example of the things we are taught at ASU that can be used in our work. . . . I credit this course for the success of that presentation, it was the consideration of my audience and the exposure to communicating in multimodal formats that allowed it to resonate the way it did.

Mandy notes that her consideration of her audience in relation to the media she chooses is an important outcome of the learning she has done in the course. This, we suggest, is an example of Yancey's reflection-in-presentation, which in

effect enables this student to generalize her learning in this class to other rhetorical situations.

Susan, an art history major returning to college after a 20-year hiatus, also draws from writing she does in her professional life. She reflects on the way in which she integrates her own ideas with those of others while considering the needs of her audience, as follows:

> As part of my daily job description, I collect information from different sources within our school and publish this information on our Middle School website on a page called "This Week in the Middle School." Each Friday, the Principal, Assistant Principal and I collaborate to update this page. . . . I am responsible for writing most of the announcements for the page. We have to integrate all our own ideas as well as information from different sources. It is important we create a useful page for our parents and students.

Students have also reflected on how the rhetorical choices they make in certain projects will impact their families. In the following example, Karen, a self-described full-time student, stay-at-home mom, and part-time personal chef, articulates the connection between the audience, medium, and purpose of her project and how these rhetorical decisions were directly linked to the personal rationale for making an audio recording for her children of the first Christmas she spent with her husband and his family:

> Not only was this a project for my composition course, but I also created something my children can listen to when they are older. . . . My first instinct was to create something specifically for my children to enjoy when they are in their teens. . . . I feel my rhetorical understanding of the needs of this project based on my audience was pretty solid. Strangers listening to this recording (my chosen medium) will not gain as much from the way I share my experience because I left out many details that would be redundant to my kids. However, part of knowing one's audience is understanding what they already know in addition to what they don't. . . . I tried to wear the hat of a storyteller, like my Grandpa, but following my script felt forced and too constructed. I think next time I want to tackle a project with a "story" genre and a recorded medium, I think I will construct a loose storyboard.

This student is reflecting on her learning in the classroom using language from the *WPA Outcomes Statement*, but she is also predicting—using this same language—how she might extend this learning in ways that will allow her to continue this tradition for her family in the future in a much more personal arena.

All of these examples, these student voices, illustrate why the digital portfolio capstone project is vital to reaching the larger goal of enabling students to use this reflective knowledge to enhance their writing and composing in other classes and in other areas of their lives.

Transferring a Practice of Reflection

Our experience with the course suggests that students are developing habits of reflection that they can apply not only in other writing courses but also in courses across the curriculum and in their professional lives. As discussed by Taczak et al. in this collection, when a student is constructed as an agent through reflection and theory building, "they are better able to make sense of how their prior knowledge and experiences *with* writing, as well as their knowledge *about* writing, can be used to transfer successfully." But just as we ask our students to continue to generate new knowledge about writing, we too, as teacher-scholars, should continue to design, reflect on, and revise our curriculum, so we can continue to offer substantial opportunities for students to enact agency to build a practice of reflection that will transfer to these other contexts, allowing them to "deliberate about their levels of engagement, their knowledge, desires and skills, and their concerns with outcomes and expectations, to make learning choices within the structures in place"(Ryan 7). Put simply, our overarching goal is to ensure our students can use reflection as a tool for writing, reading, and learning more effectively in a variety of contexts. Further, we hope that they will take this sustainable reflective practice with them as they perform a wide range of tasks in the world—not only in the academic arena but also in the professional, civic, and personal arenas.

Greene argues that recalling literacy experiences can inspire "the reflection that may enable us to create a narrative and to start understanding imagination in our lives" (76). We assert that recalling literacy events can also ignite this type of reflection. In light of our experiences, we call on other faculty to build into their courses more opportunities for students to engage in metacognition through a reflective practice. The more students hone their reflective practices, we are convinced, the more they will understand what and how they are learning, as well as how they can apply their learning in other contexts. Like Greene, they will be able to identify patterns across these contexts while expanding their understanding of these contexts, "to imagine being something more" (86).

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Questions for Discussion and Reflection After Chapter 8

1. The pedagogy described in Chapter 8 rests on Kathleen Blake Yancey's premise that reflection and opportunities for metacognition should be an integral part of course design, not an occasional, tacked-on course component ("The Social" 189). What do you see as the distinguishing characteristics of reflection that is "designed into" curriculum? How might you rethink your FYC course to design reflection into its curriculum?
2. Chapter 8 shares stories of students who have intertwined their FYC learning with workplace writing tasks in meaningful ways. How can your FYC course connect with students' professional and workplace contexts outside of school when those contexts vary widely?

Writing Activity After Chapter 8

Think of a current or former student whose FYC work you know well. For each of the eight habits of mind discussed in the *Framework* (curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, metacognition), write one sentence about the degree to which this student did or didn't engage with the habit of mind (see *Framework* 4-5 for examples of how writers can engage with each habit). Write a few sentences about how you can use this student's example to talk with other students about engaging with the habits of mind.

Next, repeat this process by thinking about your own work in the current term or a recent term in which you taught FYC. Write about the degree to which you engaged with each habit of mind and the results of this engagement.

Further Reading

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