

writing as a process

by sandy yannone

The Writing Center dedicates its work to exploring the many ways writers write. Our tutors have thousands of appointments each year, and each represents a different approach to writing. The Center considers its most important work to empower you to write in your own voice, in your style, and with your individual process. To do this, we urge you to examine and track your writing process with each important piece of writing you do.

The following grid gives you space to answer three important questions related to each stage of your writing process. After each stage of the process on the grid ask yourself:

- 1) What is your desired "product"? What will you have when you complete this stage of the writing process? For example, after brainstorming, you may be the type of writer who will have a list of all the possible ideas you are considering before you commit to a draft.
- 2) What strategies do you use to create the product for this stage? For example, in the drafting stage, you may create the first draft by taking your list from brainstorming and making an outline. The product is the first draft; your strategy is to create the draft is outlining.
- 3) Who/what are your best and most realistic sources for feedback during each stage? Most people seek out intentional feedback with writing that matters. For instance, I had one of the Writing Center tutors read this article over after my first draft and after I completed a revision to help me consider further revisions.

I like to think of the writing process as an open hand, each finger extending to represent a different stage of the writing process. Some writers collapse all stages into one, creating a closed, tight fist. The tight fist doesn't encourage thoughtful development; the tight fist doesn't allow the writer to witness the distinct stages of the writing process.



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33

the writing grid

	product	strategies	feedback
brainstorming			
drafting			
revision			
editing			
proofreading			

In this issue of Inkwell, we've dedicated an article to defining each "finger" of the process. Once you begin to learn to articulate your process, you begin to create a guide you can use as a tool for any piece of writing. Seeing your process, what you do and don't do, allows you to make informed decisions about how to approach writing your first seminar paper and your final self-evaluation. Keep in mind that this is your process, not a generic template. Also, the writing process is fluid, dynamic. It is not always linear, often folding back on itself time and time again: to revise a particular idea, I might need to brainstorm. Many strategies find themselves listed in multiple stages.

Using the grid in conjunction with an author's note (see the text box in "Redefining Authority") can further empower you during conversations with peer writers, with writing tutors, and with your faculty. Knowing your writing process like the back and front of your open hand can help you eliminate some of the struggle that can accompany writing and leave you more time to grapple with your ideas and your imagination.