Introduction

The writing process is circular; it does not end when you submit the paper to your instructor. In order to make progress with each assignment, you will need to optimize feedback, reflect on your strengths and weaknesses, and plan for improvement. Review the sections below for more guidance on evaluating and improving your own writing.

Reflecting on Strengths & Weaknesses

To reflect is to think deeply about something. The activity of reflection does not need to be formal in nature. Simply sit down with a copy of your paper and consider the last week or so you spent writing it.

Areas to consider:

- Time management (Did I plan out time to complete this assignment effectively? What steps should I devote more to in the future?)
- Research skills and use of sources (What great research resources did I discover? Where can I look for help?)
- Critical reading and note taking (Did I read the assignment closely to make sure I addressed every component? What prewriting strategies seemed to work for me?)
- Organization (Was there an introduction and a conclusion? Did each paragraph have a topic sentence?)
- Argument and analysis (Was my thesis statement clear and specific? Did I explain the evidence for the reader by integrating analysis with summary?)
Rhythm and flow of the language (*Did I use transitions to show relationships? Were my sentences a variety of long and short?*)

In-text citation and references (*Did I cite sources appropriately? What aspects of citation or references are still confusing to me?*)

Grammar and punctuation (*Were all sentences complete, with a subject and verb? What punctuation was problematic for me?*)

**Actions to consider:**

- Take notes on what difficulties you encountered during the writing process and brainstorm solutions for the future.
- Record your instructor’s comments and track these for each assignment.
- Read through the paper, highlighting problem areas in one color and successful areas in another.
- Jot down these strengths and weaknesses and keep them by your writing desk.
- Compare an earlier paper to the one you just completed. Do you see positive change?
Planning for Improvement

Reflection can help you identify the areas for improvement, but in order to actually move forward, you will need to make a plan and remind yourself of your goals. After identifying your writing strengths and weaknesses:

- Celebrate your strengths by congratulating yourself on what you did well.
- Browse the Writing Center website for material on the particular skills you would like to acquire.
- Attend a live webinar or view past lessons on anything from academic argument to engaging sentence structure.
- Sign up for a writing course to supplement your other courses and elevate your writing.
- Use the automated grammar checker Grammarly, free for Walden students.
- Practice new writing techniques in discussion post assignments, where there is less pressure to perform well.
- Take one of the Writing Center's interactive quizzes to test your knowledge as you learn.
- Create a checklist for your next writing assignment. The most important thing to remember is that becoming a better writer takes time.

Related Resources

- Self-Reflection: Getting to Know All About You(r Writing) (blog post)
- Life Cycle of a Paper (webinar)
Reflecting & Improving

Introduction

Reflecting on Strengths & Weaknesses

Planning for Improvement

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