

Writing is an Interactive Process

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Introduction

Writing is a bridge that connects our minds to the world. **Zhuoxin Wang** explores how writing promotes interaction with life in general and with audiences in particular. This metacognitive reflection assignment asked students to reflect on what they had learned in WRS 101. Zhuoxin's piece reflects how writing is a social act—a lesson that we always hope to convey in Writing Studies courses.

Keywords: Aristotle, audience, feedback, writing process.



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¹ *Writing across the University of Alberta* (WAUA) publishes undergraduate student writing from writing studies courses and courses focused on writing studies practices and scholarship at the University of Alberta. You can find WAUA online at <https://writingacrossuofa.ca/>.

Writing is the interaction between individual life, the objective world, and the process of constant interaction between self-mind. Interaction is the starting point of writing. Nowadays, with the internet and mobile phones, people compose text all the time, but they are getting away from actual writing. Writing isn't random posts on Twitter or Instagram that follow your mood; it is a process that needs to interact with life and initial and primary audiences.

Writing requires interaction with life. Most of our writing inspiration comes from life. When we interact with society, we also engage in the process of collecting writing content. According to Murray (2005), "Writers see the universal in the particular; they delight in anecdote and parable that reveals a larger story." In life, I find many gestures touching, such as the warm care of my family, the warm-hearted help from friends, and the kind smiles from passers-by. Many of these have been applied to my writing. As long as you have an optimistic attitude as you actively interact with life, inspiration for writing will be endless.

Writing requires interaction with an initial audience. Ami et al. (2020) say, "Writing is complex work, and the best writers rely on others for constructive feedback." Seeking feedback on your writing through peer review, course instructor comments, and writing centre appointments draws you into a writing practice community. This is because we may forget our readers as we write. We write from inside our heads and know what we mean, but the reader may find gaps in content or have difficulty following the logic or order of the ideas (Ami et al.). For an undergraduate student, the initial audience is professors and classmates. Feedback from your professors and classmates is indispensable as they show different perspectives and dimensions. Specifically, feedback from your classmates reveals their understanding and feelings about your draft. They can comment on your writing from their intuitive senses. As a course gets more in-depth, the professor's feedback will become more professional and comprehensive, especially when you sometimes make mistakes that your peers miss.

Writing requires interaction with a primary audience, which is beyond the initial audience of a single course. Aristotle advised that good rhetoricians will appeal to emotions to stir the audience to create the right kind of emotional conditions so that the audience will be persuaded by the speaker's argument (Ami et al., 2020). When you want to publish a final draft, your readership extends beyond your course professor and classmates; now, all teachers and students of the whole school may be primary readers. Interaction with primary readers becomes significant as the scope of readers increases. You need to consider the cultural background of the primary readers, that is, their understanding of technical terms,

and this will affect the depth of your writing. You also need to know the topics that the primary readers are interested in and sensitive issues, which will reduce the difficulty of your paper publishing. Therefore, it is essential to increase the interaction with primary readers.

Interaction is not always pretty because sometimes the feedback is harmful, and you will face a lot of criticism. This can hurt your motivation to write. As Ami et al. (2020) say, “Remembering that feedback is a gift that helps reduce that sting. Respond to feedback by thanking the person who gave it to you and carefully listening to (or reading) the advice.” When you get feedback, good or bad, be optimistic and increase your interaction with the person giving it to you. You can ask questions to the people who are providing your feedback or offer your ideas. It’s easy to have sparks of thought when discussing a problem, which can help you improve your writing. Still, if the feedback does not make sense or does not meet your course instructor's expectations, you may want to disregard it. You, as the author, are in control and can decide whether or not to implement the advice you get (Ami et al.). Don’t worry about feedback that is unhelpful; instead, enjoy interacting with your readers.

Writing is a process that requires constant interaction with life and readers. In this process, you can meet different people who can inspire you to spark new ideas. It is an exciting and meaningful process. Being grateful for positive interactions and being reflective when receiving negative feedback will improve your writing.

References

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