

18 THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSFER IN YOUR FIRST YEAR WRITING COURSE

Kara Taczak

OVERVIEW

This essay explores the importance of transfer in first year writing.* Transfer is the ability to take writing knowledge and practices from one context and use it to repurpose or reframe it in a new/different writing context. To help students better understand how to effectively transfer, this essay examines three common misconceptions about writing—(1) writing is natural; (2) writing is a one size fits all model; and (3) there is nothing more to learn about writing—and then revises them into “truths” about writing—(1) writing is a process; (2) purpose, genre, and audience inform the writing situation; and (3) there’s always something more to learn about writing in order to help explain how to effectively and successfully transfer knowledge and practices from past and current writing experiences forward.

Growing up, a thought that haunted me was fading into the fashion cracks of Steubenville High School. I never wanted to fit in with my fashion choices necessarily, but I never wanted to *not* fit in either, so it was about finding the balance in my outfits. My mama encouraged me to mix my patterns and to wear bold colors. I’d scour the pages of *Vogue* and *Glamour* for the latest trends; I’d try on outfits in front of the mirror for an hour or more attempting to perfect the look of the day. Now, years later, there is still a part of me reaching for the neon green Sketchers to pair with the floral romper; the style I started to hone as a high schooler continues to be a part of my style today. Style tends to be something that you develop the more you learn about fashion, which comes from reading

* This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) and is subject to the Writing Spaces Terms of Use. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>, email info@creativecommons.org, or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA. To view the Writing Spaces Terms of Use, visit <http://writingspaces.org/terms-of-use>.

through magazines, following influencers on social media, practicing different looks for different events and occasions, and so on. In short, style comes about much like any learning does—through practice, experiences, knowledge, and reflection, and an understanding of what to “transfer” forward into each situation.

Similarly, honing your writing practices are much like honing your style; just as you figure out what outfit matches what occasion, you have to figure out what and how to frame each writing situation based on what you know about the situation. So similar to how you assess what to wear based on the occasion—certain occasions call for cozy loungewear and others call for sparkly, glamorous dresses—you assess each writing situation to understand what it’s asking of you about how to approach it. For example, if you email your professor with the same tone and attitude as you might your bestie and get an angry response, you will determine that you shouldn’t email your professor as you would your bestie.

Style takes time to develop, much like your writing practices take time to develop, and with each new occasion, you understand more about your individual style and you understand more about what can be appropriate, when, and where. Such as, if an occasion calls for a three-piece suit, you assess the situation. You decide what part of your style you can “transfer” in appropriately—a pop of color with a tie, a whimsical pair of socks, or something that shows *your* style while also dressing for the occasion. By “transferring” a part of your style into this specific occasion, you moved it forward. The same is true with writing—you can “transfer” writing practices forward into different writing situations to help you figure out what to do. But what does “transfer” actually mean? And why is it important for you and your writing?

Let’s break it down: *transfer* is the ability to take knowledge and practices learned about writing in one context and repurpose or reframe that knowledge and practice to help you in another context. This can happen at the same time—concurrently—or it can happen in the future.

So, for example, you might have transferred writing knowledge and practices you learned in your high school English course (one context) to your college entrance exam (a new, different context). Understanding transfer and its relationship to writing is particularly important in college. Why? For a couple reasons: first, writing is arguably one of the most important practices to engage with and learn more about in college, and second, so much of what we do nowadays is done in the written form. You will write in your future whether it’s in another college class, for a co-curricular club, for a job or your future career, or even for social media. In one way

or another, you *will* write. But, like some unique style choices, writing can be misunderstood and misconceptions about it can be formed. And these misconceptions impact your ability to successfully and effectively transfer writing knowledge and practices forward.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSFER IN FIRST YEAR WRITING

First year writing tends to be one or two courses that you take during your first or second semester as a first year student in college. The goal of any first year writing course should be to teach for transfer; in other words, to teach you writing concepts, knowledge(s), and practices to carry forward and help you repurpose or reframe other writing contexts (basically, to help you understand other/future writing situations). Doing so helps you to become a more effective writer, able to assess a writing situation and understand what it's asking of you. First year writing, simply put, teaches you *about* writing and attempts to prepare you for in-school and out-of-school writing tasks. Thus, transfer is so important in first year writing because it's attempting to teach you to be a more effective writer for your future (and this future could be the near future, as in another class, or the distant future, as in your career).

When we think of transfer, we hope it's successful or effective at moving writing practices forward. The example I gave in the introduction of using knowledge and practices from your high school English course to write your college entrance essay could be an example of what's called "positive transfer" and since you are reading this essay, chances are you effectively transferred that knowledge and practice from one context to another—in other words, you positively moved knowledge and practices forward. But there can also be two less-positive types of transfer:

1. Negative transfer, when the knowledge or practice used negatively impacts your ability to effectively perform in the new context (Perkins and Salomon). For example, if you've been used to writing the 5-paragraph essay for most of your life, this is your default response to any and all academic writing situations, so when your philosophy professor asks you to write a reflective letter, you write her a 5-paragraph essay without giving it much thought. You receive a C- on the assignment and are crushed and angry. You did what you always have done; how could it be "wrong?" It's "wrong" because the writing you provided doesn't match what the situation asked of you. This is an example of negative transfer.

2. Resistance transfer, when the writer's past experiences with writing encourage a resistance to new learning often resulting in a roadblock (Robertson et al.; Yancey et al.). This roadblock can manifest in many ways from general types of resistances to fear of failure—different types of students harness the roadblock in different ways depending upon what their prior experiences with writing looked like.

You might find yourself in one or both of these categories without even realizing it. So how can you build upon these and move forward? The first step is simple: acknowledge them. When you actively acknowledge something—whether by saying it out loud in a discussion or by writing about it in a reflection—it becomes real in a way that it was not before. You acknowledge the need to learn more. The next steps include developing that learning and first year writing can help you with that.

Our lives revolve around writing; writing for social media, writing for school, writing for a job; in short, writing allows us to communicate with any number of specific audiences. And we know from research that the ability to effectively respond to writing situations determines success in college and beyond. In the next sections, we'll walk through some of the bigger misconceptions about writing and how they encourage negative or resistance transfer. We'll also look at how to flip or revise the misconceptions into "truths" about writing—certainties about writing that help you further develop your ability as a writer so that you may be able to successfully and effectively transfer.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT WRITING AND THEIR REVISED TRUTHS

Much like your style, writing can get a bad rap, and thus, there are some common misconceptions about it. These misconceptions can hinder your ability as a writer to effectively respond to a writing situation, and these misconceptions closely connect to your prior experiences with writing: "prior" experiences are experiences or learning(s) you've had in the past that have helped shape your understanding and awareness on/about a topic. And because misconceptions are so closely connected to your prior experiences with writing, they can lead to negative and/or resistance transfer because both impede your ability to learn.

Below, I outline three common misconceptions (there are, of course, many more misconceptions about writing, but these are the three that

come up the most in my own research on transfer and with my first year students). Then, following each misconception, are what I call “(revised) ‘truths,’” or ways to push back on the misconceptions and build upon them, allowing you the opportunity to more readily transfer.

MISCONCEPTION #1: WRITING IS NATURAL

Before you begin any writing task, what do you think about? What do you actually *do* before you start writing? How do you understand what’s being asked of you as the writer?

You may be thinking: “Well, I don’t really think about anything” or “Hm. I don’t actually do anything except just start writing” and you wouldn’t be alone in these assumptions. Many students believe that their writing happens naturally or without a process (or as many students have said: “Unconsciously”). In other words, a lot of students believe that they don’t need to think about the writing task before they actually begin writing it. They believe that writing is a natural process. But recent research in composition studies, or the study of writing and the practices of it, argues that writing is *not* natural: “It’s useful to remember that writing is not natural because writers tend to judge their writing processes too harshly—comparing them to the ease with which they usually speak” (Dryer 29). Thus, if writing is not natural, then a writer *must* think about their writing before beginning to help them understand what’s even being asked of them and then how to effectively respond to the situation. And, as I explain below, we know from years of research that writing is a process. This process is non-linear and complicated. It looks different for everyone and to create an effective piece of writing, and as my mentor once taught me, you have to trust that process. In other words, you have to follow that process all the way through from messy start to complex finish.

(REVISED) TRUTH #1: WRITING IS A PROCESS

Since writing is not natural, this means you need to develop a process in which you respond to the various writing situations. The process you develop helps you figure out how to frame or reframe various writing tasks. For example, the process might include doing a quick audience profile (depending upon the audience), asking questions about purpose, googling the conventions of the genre, drafting the genre, and reflecting upon what worked and didn’t work. Everybody’s writing process looks a little different because we all have different writerly identities (who you are as a writer and how you understand how to *be* a writer); a writerly identity helps make

your writing yours, and it should transcend all writing situations. For example, no matter what genre Stephen King writes in, you always know it's Stephen King because his writerly identity includes using a specific type of tone, phrasing, and other things that are unique to him as a writer.

We know from decades' worth of research that writing is a process, and you have to learn to trust that process. This means that you start to trust yourself as a writer. The process helps you to better understand what's being asked of you and how you might effectively respond to that writing situation. Part of this includes drafting—from brainstorming ideas to generating rough, working drafts to digging into who your audience is and what they expect—and often peer review or having your peers look over and review your writing to help you figure out what to do in revision. Most writers' process(es) includes drafting, some form of peer review, and editing. But really, your process is yours to figure out what works best for you.

So, what does your writing process look like? Take a moment and try two things:

1. Reflect back on a writing situation where you felt most proud of the writing. What did you do to create it? Why did that particular piece of writing make you proud? What do you wish you could have done differently and/or changed?
2. Draw out your writing process. Yes, literally draw it out. What does it look like for you to create a piece of writing that you are proud of? What do you need? What space are you in? Who helps you? Respond to these questions by drawing them out so you can visually see what your writing process looks like.

Figuring out what your process is and what it looks like helps you to become a more effective writer, and over time, the more you begin to trust your process, the more you'll understand who you are as a writer (and develop your writerly identity). Then, it's this process (or processes) that can transfer into other writing contexts, informing them and helping you better understand how to approach them.

MISCONCEPTION #2: WRITING IS ONE SIZE FITS ALL

How do you respond to a text message from your bestie? How do you compose an Instagram post? How do you figure out what kind of caption and hashtags to use for your TikTok video? How do you write a 1000-word essay?

High school teaches you how to write in a specific genre: the 5-paragraph essay (or 5-paragraph theme) because it can be helpful for the type of writing that you do while in high school. However, the 5-paragraph essay cannot be used as a blanket genre or a one size fits all model. Why? Because not all writing situations are one and the same. All writing situations ask something different of you. For example, in the four questions above, each one has a different purpose, a different audience, and a different genre, which means to effectively respond to each one, you need to understand what each purpose is, who your audience is, and what the genre conventions are. This can be difficult because “people act in multiple, interacting systems of activity where writing that seems the ‘same’ as what one has read or written before is in practice very different—and not only in the formal features, the ‘how’ of writing” (Russell and Yañez 359). What this means is, because you are being asked to write in multiple situations at the same time, it might appear that you should respond to them all in the same way as you’ve previously done before, when, really, each writing situation is unique and requires its own individual and specific response.

When you practice one type of writing for so long, it can be difficult to build onto that existing, prior knowledge, since up to that point the one size fits all model has worked so well (whether it worked well to get a good grade, to pass the test, or simply to get you through). And when something has worked well, it can be difficult to build upon because you are unsure of how to revise those practices. To do so requires an understanding that there is more to learn.

(REVISED) TRUTH #2: PURPOSE, GENRE, AND AUDIENCE INFORM THE WRITING SITUATION

As the Russell and Yañez quote suggests, one of the biggest problems with Misconception #2 is that it doesn’t account for the different specifics that make each writing situation its own. All writing situations ask different things of you, the writer. An easy way to break it down is to ask yourself:

- What is the *purpose* of the writing situation? What is the situation asking you specifically to do?
- What is the *genre*? And what are the specific conventions of that genre (what makes an email different from a rhetorical analysis and different from a text message)?
- Who is the *audience*? What do you know about the audience?

In short, there are different types of writing situations and each one has a specific *purpose* with a specific *genre* and a specific *audience*. These are considered “key terms” or terms that help you better comprehend how to respond to a writing situation. These terms also start to give you a vocabulary to help you articulate an understanding of writing. Research from writing studies shows that when students don’t have a vocabulary to explain their writing practices, they have a difficult time transferring knowledge or practices forward (Jarratt et al.). The vocabulary, or key terms, provide you with a way to talk (and write) about writing.

Building on the two activities above, take a minute to respond to these questions:

1. What are your key terms for writing—terms that help you define what writing is and how you understand it?
2. Define the terms.
3. Where did each term come from? Where did you learn it? What terms do you need to add from this course?
4. Where/how do these terms fit into your writing process drawing from above? Do you need to revise your drawing?

Key terms, such as purpose, audience, and genre, help provide a way for you to better understand the writing situation and to articulate that understanding. Before you begin to write, think through how to define each key term in response to the writing situation, thereby allowing yourself a chance to dig into the expectations of the situation and more effectively respond. These key terms become part of your process; thus, by having a set of key terms, you create a framework that you can transfer forward.

MISCONCEPTION #3: THERE’S NOTHING MORE TO LEARN

What classes were you most excited to take your first year in college? What classes were you dreading?

You might be thinking, “Well, I didn’t exactly want to take first year writing...” and many others would probably agree with you. Even though first year writing is a class that the majority of students across the country (no matter the institution that they are at) *have* to take, it is also one that many of students do not *want* to take. Why? Because a lot of students believe that there’s nothing more to learn with writing—that the knowledge and practices learned during their K-12 education is all they need to be successful and effective writers. Some also believe that every writing class

and every academic writing opportunity only presents them with the exact same type of material over and over again so that they are merely relearning the same thing they learned previously.

These perceptions about writing lead to some pretty deep-rooted emotional responses to first year writing courses, from anger to indifference to bitterness. As a result, out of these three misconceptions about writing, this one is the hardest to work on and move past. Why? Because if you enter into a class believing you don't have anything to learn or you'll only be learning the same thing you already know, you've already set yourself up to not learn anything. Belief is a very powerful tool, and the ways in which it's ingrained in prior experiences with writing affect the way a writer responds to a writing task. For example, and as many writing scholars have argued, if a writer approaches a writing situation as "something they already know how to produce" (i.e. a 5-paragraph essay) without giving it much attention or thought, then their prior experiences have impacted their ability to truly look at and assess what the writing situation is asking of them and then they simply respond with a 5-paragraph essay.

Pushing past and building onto these prior experiences can be incredibly difficult, especially if the belief is also connected to value (i.e. grades). I've seen students respond to a new writing situation like, "Eh, whaddaya know? I've gotten As up to this! My writing works." Writing then is connected to a grade instead of being connected to the actual situation. The thinking is more "how do I receive a 'good' grade" as opposed to "how to do I effectively respond to what's being asked of me?" This may work for a moment or even longer in college, but what happens when you graduate? What happens when you no longer receive a letter grade for your writing? These prior experiences and learning(s)—especially the ones rooted in beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions—negatively affect your ability to transfer (Driscoll and Wells). So, it's important to try and challenge them and to build upon them, but doing so requires feeling a little uncomfortable, which means you have to open yourself up to learning more about writing.

(REVISED) TRUTH #3: THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING MORE TO LEARN ABOUT WRITING

There's always more to learn about writing but many students assume that once writing is "learned," it's learned for always and forever. But as a writing scholar explains, "Writers never cease learning to write, never completely perfect their writing ability, as long as they encounter new or unfamiliar life experiences that require or inspire writing" (Rose 61). This

suggests you are going to continue to evolve as a writer (the more you learn) and that life will continue to bring about new writing experiences.

A good example of this is in your first year writing course. You are going to be presented with new and different terms, concepts, and practices about writing and, in order to understand them more fully, you will be asked to write about them. Writing about writing (which is very meta and requires reflection) encourages you to mindfully engage with your learning because it puts the learning back on you, the writer, to figure out what it all means. This, of course, is not easy, and it requires you (a) to trust the process (see above) and (b) to have the right attitude, that, yes, there is more to learn about writing. Dispositions, just like beliefs, are incredibly powerful and having a positive engaging attitude sets yourself up to not only learn more but to also successfully transfer what you learn in your first year writing course to other writing contexts and experiences (Driscoll and Wells).

To become a more competent, effective writer requires a commitment to learning more and a commitment to writing more. Writing is not going away; just because you pass through a first year writing course (or set of courses), writing doesn't magically cease to exist. In fact, writing will span your lifetime in various ways and through a variety of modes, mediums, and genres; allowing yourself to learn more about it helps you to become a better, more effective writer and teaches you how to transfer knowledge and practices forward to help repurpose and reframe different writing situations and contexts. In short, by learning more about writing, you set yourself up for success in the future both in college and beyond.

DON'T FADE INTO THE [TRANSFER] CRACKS: A CONCLUSION

I never faded into the fashion cracks of Steubenville High School, and I definitely don't fade into any fashion cracks today—you wanna know why? Because I know that style evolves and continues to take time to develop, and I know there's more for me to learn about fashion by watching influencers, browsing magazines, and taking risks at various occasions. That's my process for honing my style; it's evolved a bit as I've grown older (as it should), but it's still my process. It helps me to understand each occasion and to know what from my style to transfer into that occasion.

The same is true about you and writing: you don't want to fade into the transfer cracks. What does that mean? For example, believing there's nothing left to learn with writing—there is always more to learn about yourself as a writer and about writing more generally. Like I continue to evolve with my style, you will continue to evolve as a writer the more you

learn and the more you write. You will also learn how to hone your writing process(es), which in turn will help you be able to figure out what's being asked of you in the writing situation and more effectively transfer writing knowledge and practices. Acknowledging and building on the common misconceptions about writing allows you to bridge your prior with your current experiences and learning(s) so that transfer is possible.

First year writing is an important part of your college career—it offers you valuable writing knowledge and practices that can transfer forward into other college classes and beyond.

WORKS CITED

- Dryer, Dylan. "Writing is not Natural." *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts in Writing Studies*, edited by Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle, Utah State UP, 2015, pp. 29-31.
- Driscoll, Dana, and Jennifer Wells. "Beyond Knowledge and Skills: Writing Transfer and the Role of Student Dispositions in and Beyond the Writing Classroom." *Composition Forum*, vol. 26, 2012.
- Jarratt, Susan, et al. "Retrospective Writing Histories." *Writing Research Across Borders*, 6 Feb. 2005, University of Santa Barbara.
- Perkins, David, and Gavriel Salomon. "Teaching for Transfer." *Educational Leadership* vol. 46 no. 1, 1988, pp. 22-32.
- Robertson, Liane, et al. "Notes Toward A Theory of Prior Knowledge and Its Role in College Composers' Transfer of Knowledge and Practice." *Composition Forum* vol. 26, 2012.
- Rose, Shirley K. "All Writers have More to Learn." *Naming What We Know: Threshold Concepts in Writing Studies*, edited by Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle, Utah State UP, 2015, pp. 59-61.
- Russell, David, and Arturo Yañez. "'Big Picture People Rarely Become Historians': Genre Systems and the Contradictions of General Education." *Writing Selves/Writing Societies: Research From Activity Perspectives*, edited by Charles Bazerman and David Russell, WAC Clearinghouse, 2002, doi: 10.37514/PER-B.2003.2317.2.10
- Yancey, Kathleen Blake, et al. *Writing across Contexts: Transfer, Composition, and Sites of Writing*. Utah State UP, 2014.

TEACHING RESOURCES FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSFER IN YOUR FIRST YEAR WRITING COURSE

OVERVIEW AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

The goal of this essay is to introduce students to the transfer of writing knowledge and practices by offering some very common misconceptions about writing, ways to possibly overcome them, and revised “truths” about writing. As transfer research shows, one of the most important things we teachers can do for students in a first year writing course is to introduce the concept of transfer early on and to keep circling back so that students are aware that what they are learning is important for their future (whether that’s a current future, such as another class where they have a writing assignment, or the far off future, such as for a job). It’s also important to call it “transfer” so that students understand that what they are learning does and can move forward with them. Terminology gives them a way to verbalize their understanding. The assignments shared are examples of ways to reiteratively build upon students’ prior experiences, knowledge(s), dispositions, attitudes, etc. Because many students enter our classrooms with a “prior” understanding that conflicts with what they are currently learning, it’s important to keep returning to questions and having students reflect on those questions so that they begin to develop an awareness that there *is* more to learn about writing. This in turn helps them to understand more about what writing is and how they might go about framing a writing situation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to “transfer” writing knowledge and/or practices forward?
2. What are some common misconceptions about writing?
3. How might a writer overcome some of these misconceptions?
4. Why is transfer important in a first year writing course?
5. What was/is your biggest misconception about writing? How has it helped/hindered your ability to learn more about writing?

6. Building on what the article suggests, what would be a revised truth about writing that you've learned in college?

ACTIVITIES

The assignments below are meant to be scaffolded so that they build upon one another.

REFLECTION ACTIVITY (COMPLETED DURING WEEK 1 OF THE SEMESTER/QUARTER):

In this introductory reflection to the course, to each other, and to your professor, please explore what's called "the prior": your previous relationship with writing, your understanding about writing, how you identify as a writer, and any previous attitudes and/or dispositions that you may have towards writing. Discuss in detail what writing is to you, what makes writing successful for you, and how it functions in your life by pulling from your prior experiences with it.

Some Questions to Help with Your Thinking

- What are some readings that have really helped define what writing is to you?
- What are some key terms by which you understand writing?
- What are some moments that have helped define who you are as a writer?
- What is writing to you in day-to-day activities?
- What type of writer do you see yourself as?

CONCEPTUAL MAP ON WRITING (COMPLETED WITHIN THE FIRST MONTH OF THE SEMESTER/QUARTER):

In this iteration of your map, you'll be creating an actual map—the literal definition of "map." Some examples: a road map; a world map; a map of a building; a treasure map; etc.

The questions that are guiding your map are also guiding this course:

1. What is (good) writing?
2. How have your prior experiences impacted your understanding of good writing?
3. What set of key terms do you think about before writing?

As you can see, you've already thought about most of these questions in some way or another with some of our readings and activities. To create this iteration of your map, begin by pulling out your key terms for writing. They will serve as your "getting-from-one-point-to-another-point" (i.e. the type of map you are creating serves the purpose of getting someone or something to a particular point). Right now, it doesn't matter what terms you use, so long as they stem from terms that *you* think about before you begin to write and/or that guide your writing practices; they'll serve as your starting point for the course and for your mapping projects.

Plot the Key Terms on a Map

The goal is to show the connections between, among, and around the key terms for you (the *for you* part is important!).

Then please respond to these reflection questions:

1. Defend your map. How does what you created represent a conceptual map of writing, specifically how you understand writing (at this point in the quarter)? Feel free to pull from readings, class discussions, and/or your writing activities to aid your defense.
2. Discuss how your prior experiences with writing are/continue to impact how you understand good writing. Be specific—what prior experiences most influence your set of key terms and why?
3. Come to one conclusion after completing this mapping activity; what that conclusion is can be anything—perhaps you learned that you don't really think enough about writing before you actually write; perhaps you are still influenced heavily by your prior experiences with writing; perhaps you are confused and need more time to think.

THEORIZING ABOUT WRITING (COMPLETED A MONTH AFTER THE MAP ABOVE):

Key Terms for Writing

Building on your first reflective writing activity and your first map, what are your key terms for writing? How have they changed and/or evolved since the first week of the semester/quarter? How does understanding these key terms expand your writing practices? How do these terms help you to understand what writing is and how it functions within your own life?

Writerly Identity

Who are you as a writer? How would you define your writerly identity? What does that look like to you? How does considering key terms contribute to the development of your writerly identity?

Moments

Please conclude this reflective activity by generating three “moments.” These moments can be anything that helped you achieve active learning, an “a-ha!” moment, and/or connections you’ve made in/outside the classroom. Within these three moments, you are going to describe, explain, explore, and/or create a response to what you are learning in this course that helps you understand writing in a broader context and that helps you understand yourself as a writer and thinker.

THE WRITERLY IDENTITY (COMPLETED TOWARDS THE CONCLUSION OF THE SEMESTER/QUARTER):

Throughout the past semester/quarter, you have been thinking and theorizing about your understanding of writing and your identity as a writer. For this reflective writing activity, please discuss who you believe you are as a writer. You have to do this in a non-traditional way so that you are not merely responding to questions. Begin by thinking about some characteristics that define who you are as a writer. What are they? Then decide how you want to represent this.

Some Suggestions for What You Could Create to Get Your Point Across

- a job wanted ad or a personal
- an obituary
- a short short (a piece of fiction that is super short)
- a song
- a narrative poem (shorter poems will not count)

The possibilities are very open, but the end result must be representative of who you are as a writer.

ONCE YOU COMPLETE THIS, PLEASE DO A QUICK REFLECTION

Why did you pick the characteristics that you did? What has influenced your writerly identity (include both past experiences and current experiences)? What’s been a memorable college writing experience that has impacted your writerly identity and why this experience? Sum up how you view yourself as a writer.