

Know Thyself... Explore, Assess, Reflect & Rethink

If we don't learn from what we do, we learn little of real value. If we don't make the time to explore, reflect and rethink our ways of doing things, we will never grow, evolve and reach our greatest potential or tap into the possibilities in our lives. Writing metacognition's is our way to explore our experiences as students and teachers, and then to honestly assess our strengths and weaknesses, to willfully and wisely reflect on what we did—and did not—do, and to rethink how to move forward in a positive and more enlightened way towards a better and more applicable and capable future.

There are many sides to every experience, so when I ask you to “explore” an experience and write a metacognition, I am not looking for a simple summary of what you did. I expect you to write like you are walking the rocky and jumbled coastline of what you just went through. Recount and relive your experience in a stream of deliberate, dreamlike consciousness. This recounting and reliving can be as scrambled and unkempt as your emotions and memories; there is no “Fitz Rubric” to follow; there are no specific “details” to the assignment—there is only you and your own heart that you can follow with your own iconoclastic bent, will and resolve. You do not have to worry about being understood by your reader. You are only trying to understand and know yourself.

When you assess, there is no way around the need for a bit of cold and reptilian critique. Looking with clear eyes upon yourself is a hell of a hard task, but it is part and parcel of a thinking person's package. Sure enough, the assignment might be so flawed as to be undoable, but that is, I hope, fairly rare. More likely the great flaw (or the great promise) starts with you, your attitude, and your way of tackling the work. And it ends with you. Pull out a scale and a measuring tape and tally what you produced; weigh it against the scale of time you stole from your life to complete the work, and ask yourself: do you feel like saying, “Check it out,” or do you feel like sighing, “Chuck it out.” To assess is to figure that out.

Once “that” is figured out, your head should kick into full reflection mode. A reflection scours the deeper trenches for whatever insights can be culled from the briny mud of experience. Pull these thoughts and splay them on the deck as they come, for they are all gifts from the sea of the mind, and their true value can be discerned later and kept or cast as wanted or needed. There is no such thing as unwanted catch in a reflection.

If you are unwilling to rethink your actions you are, to use an old adage, condemned to repeat that action. By rethinking approaches you can retool the machine of your being, and in that sense you are continually reborn as a better you. You make sense of yourself and are now clad in a stronger armor with a shield, pike and sword better suited to turn the tide and win the day in any future battle.

Sometimes a metacognition ends up as a disjointed ramble of thoughts and feels (and maybe is) a jumbled expurgation of contradicting thoughts. But that is fine. It is what it is.... Other times, it may flow together so cleanly and fluidly that it comes out as a pure and unified essay that reeks of the nuanced wisdom and strong wine of distilled thought, which is just as

fine, yet infinitely more rewarding, more refreshing, and more fit to be shared—if that is the bent of your indefatigable genius.

Do this. Give a damn and figure yourself out.

Be that genius...