

Reflective Writing

Lecture 1

Practice Based Writing

Ways of Thinking

The brief

Practice-based writing: (This will be different in each strand.) Write about a design, object, or artefact you have created yourself. The intention is to explore and discover your thinking through writing. Think reflectively to develop your understanding of your process by analysing your initial reactions, and your individual responses, around the creation of this chosen piece. Use further reading to develop your understanding. Then critically summarise the results of your design process through an analysis of your work.

Use a minimum of 3 books per task. Additional research sources could be journal/newspaper articles or online sources.

- **Outcome:** 500 words + map and images. Show your research with a reference list. Submit this **in the portfolio**.

Reflection (another way of thinking)

- What do I see?
- What do I understand?
- How does this change me?
- What can I do differently next time?

As a creative practitioner, the more you reflect on your work and the world around you, the more equipped you are to challenge accepted practices, principles and ideologies. This will help make your work more profound and original. It will also help convince others of its value.

How do we practice Reflective Thinking?

- Think about the 'thing', i.e. what was/has been done
- Use different perspectives to improve the quality of your analysis
- Use personal insights, subject theory, and reflective models
- Think about what worked and importantly what did not work
- Use the critical evaluations of your own and others actions
- Apply this knowledge to future events
- Explain what you would do differently in the future and why

Why Reflection is Important

‘It is not sufficient to have an experience in order to learn. Without reflecting on this experience it may quickly be forgotten, or its learning potential lost.’ (Gibbs, 1988, p9)

Gibbs, G (1988). *Learning by doing: a guide to teaching and learning methods*. Oxford: Further Education Unit, Oxford Polytechnic.

The positive outcomes of Reflection

- Learning, knowledge and understanding
- Reflection on the process of learning
- A process of critical review
- Some form of action
- Personal and continuing professional development
- The development of an approach based on observation in practice-based situations
- The making of decisions and resolutions of uncertainty, the solving of problems, empowerment and emancipation

- Unexpected outcomes and creative activity (e.g. the creation of images and/or ideas that could be solutions to dilemmas)
- Empowering emotion, which can be an outcome or can be part of the process
- Clarification and recognition of the need for further reflection

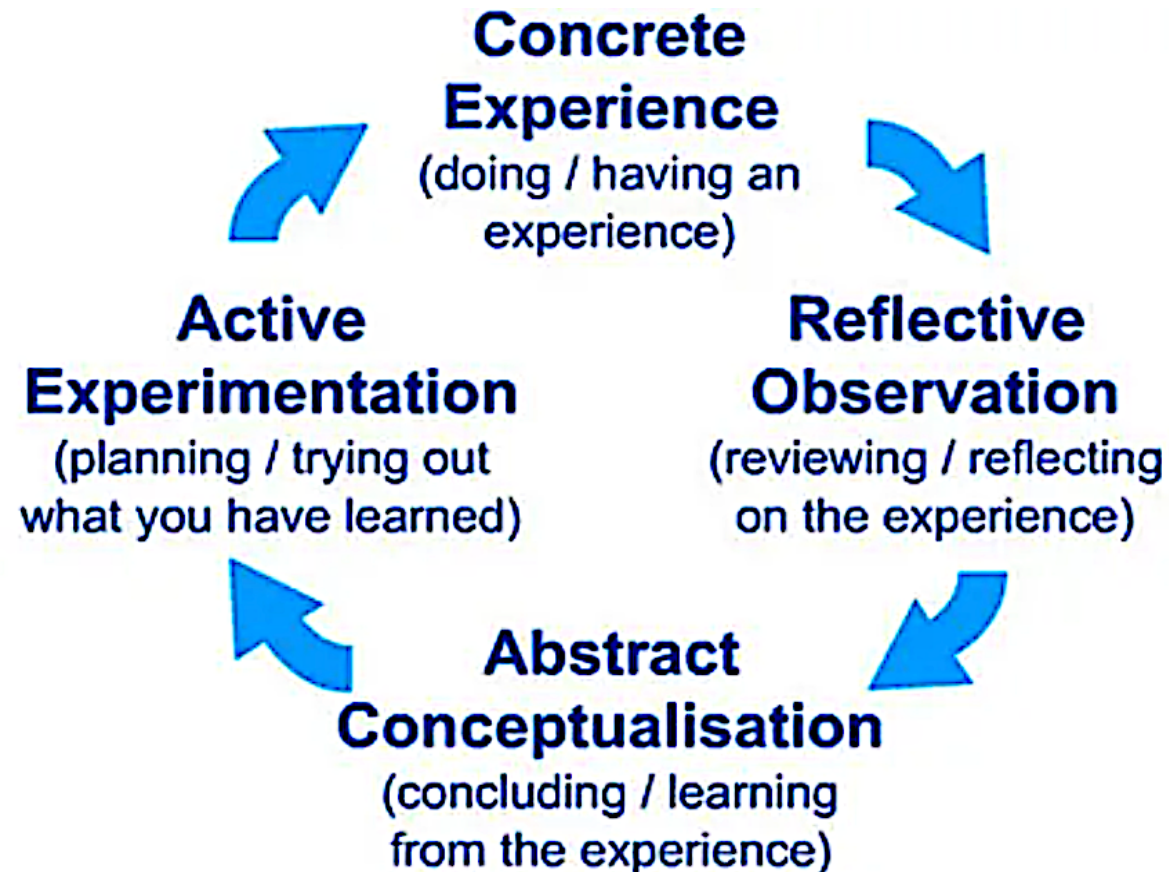
Kolb's Theory

David Kolb, an American Educational theorist, published his learning styles model in 1984. Much of Kolb's theory is concerned with the learner's internal cognitive processes. Central to the theory is that the impetus for the development of new concepts is provided by new experiences.

“Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience”

(Kolb, 1984, p. 38).

The Experiential Learning Cycle



The Experiential Learning Cycle Explained

- **1. Concrete Experience** - a new experience or situation is encountered, or a reinterpretation of existing experience.
- **2. Reflective Observation of the New Experience** - of particular importance are any inconsistencies between experience and understanding.
- **3. Abstract Conceptualization** reflection gives rise to a new idea, or a modification of an existing abstract concept (the person has learned from their experience).
- **4. Active Experimentation** - the learner applies their idea(s) to the world around them to see what happens.

What is Reflective Writing?

- Looking back on past experiences/performances/creations in order to improve experiences/performances/creations
- Exploring and explaining what happened and why
- The consideration of strengths and weaknesses through exploring your observations and emotions
- Applying self-critique, critique of others, and critique of the 'episode'
- Producing evidence and records to support your observations

Reflective writing is not simply descriptive writing

Reflective writing is not:

- a diary
- a description of the reading, making or the experience
- a list
- everything you think and feel
- private free writing
- a series of complaints or criticisms

Reflective writing is constructive

How to Structure Reflective Writing

Reflective writing usually has the following four major components:

1. Introduction: the work, event, incident or topic.
2. Description and problematisation of the event. Did it go as planned?
3. Cause and effect of the critical event, your interpretation.
What went right? What went wrong?
4. Explain and critique what happened, what are you trying to resolve here, what you have learnt and how you would improve it moving forwards, what is the outcome?

Introduction

What are we looking at, discussing or thinking about (object, event or idea)?

Description.

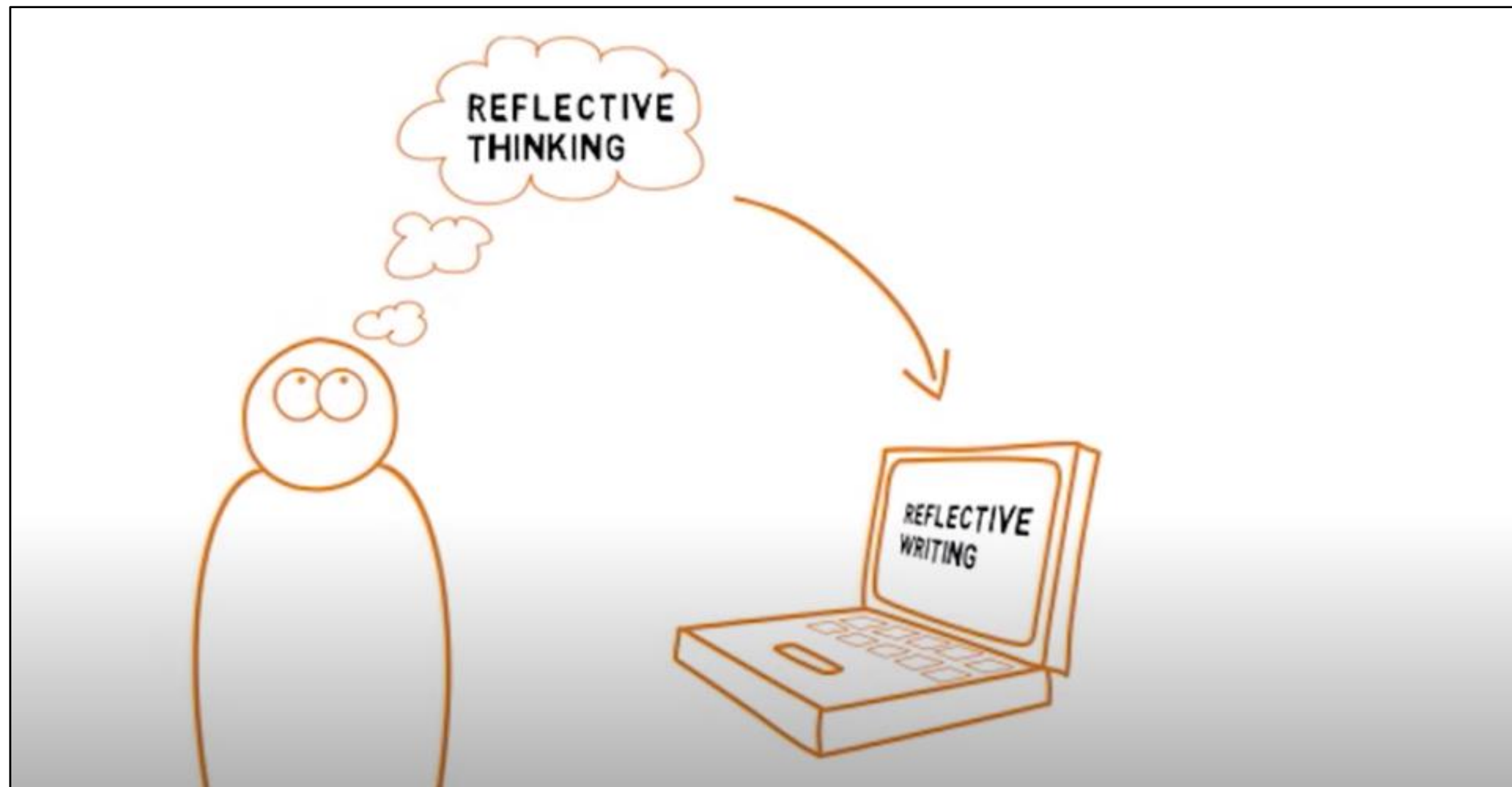
Descriptions tend to be concise. Explain what happened and what is being examined. Consider what was happening to influence the creation of the work when it was made? Did it go as planned?

Interpretation.

What went right? What went wrong? Interpretation could include what is most important, interesting, useful or relevant about the object, event or idea. It could include how it can be explained, for example with theory. What was the work about and how did it fit in or stand out at the time?

Outcome.

This should cover what you have learnt from the experience and what it means for the future. What impact did the work have, and does the work have today (including the impact upon you of course)? Can it be improved? How? How will you move forward to resolve this?



Reflective writing requires you to work out who you are.

What kind of personality do you have?

How do you encounter events?

What do you think about things?

Consider how you process information.

Do you tend to be positive? Negative? Defensive? Naive? Suspicious?
Practical? Resistant? Overly eager? Fair? Emotional? etc.

Who are you?

In order to embark on a writing task that involves self reflection and introspection, it may be a good idea to get a greater understanding of ourselves, ...

so here's a test ... strictly for FUN!

Katherine Cook Briggs and her daughter Isabel Briggs Myers, developed the MBTI test from conceptual theories of psychological types proposed by analytical psychologist, Carl Gustav Jung.

‘One of Jung’s key contributions was the development of the concept of *Introversion* and *Extraversion* – he theorized that each of us falls into one of these two categories, either focusing on the internal world (Introvert) or the outside world (Extravert). Besides Introversion and Extraversion, Jung coined the concept of so-called cognitive functions, separated into *Judging* or *Perceiving* categories. According to Jung, each person prefers one of these cognitive functions and may most naturally rely on it in everyday situations.’

[www.16personalities.com/articles/our-theory]

Free Personality Test

NERIS Type Explorer®



Complete the Test

Be yourself and answer honestly to find out your personality type.



View Detailed Results

Learn how your personality type influences many areas of your life.



Unlock Your Potential

Grow into the person you want to be with your optional Premium Profile.

You enjoy vibrant social events with lots of people.

Agree



Disagree

www.16personalities.com/free-personality-test

Personality types

ISTJ

Responsible, sincere, analytical, reserved, realistic, systematic. Hardworking and trustworthy with sound practical judgment.

ISFJ

Warm, considerate, gentle, responsible, pragmatic, thorough. Devoted caretakers who enjoy being helpful to others.

INFJ

Idealistic, organized, insightful, dependable, compassionate, gentle. Seek harmony and cooperation, enjoy intellectual stimulation.

INTJ

Innovative, independent, strategic, logical, reserved, insightful. Driven by their own original ideas to achieve improvements.

ISTP

Action-oriented, logical, analytical, spontaneous, reserved, independent. Enjoy adventure, skilled at understanding how mechanical things work.

ISFP

Gentle, sensitive, nurturing, helpful, flexible, realistic. Seek to create a personal environment that is both beautiful and practical.

INFP

Sensitive, creative, idealistic, perceptive, caring, loyal. Value inner harmony and personal growth, focus on dreams and possibilities.

INTP

Intellectual, logical, precise, reserved, flexible, imaginative. Original thinkers who enjoy speculation and creative problem solving.

ESTP

Outgoing, realistic, action-oriented, curious, versatile, spontaneous. Pragmatic problem solvers and skillful negotiators.

ESFP

Playful, enthusiastic, friendly, spontaneous, tactful, flexible. Have strong common sense, enjoy helping people in tangible ways.

ENFP

Enthusiastic, creative, spontaneous, optimistic, supportive, playful. Value inspiration, enjoy starting new projects, see potential in others.

ENTP

Inventive, enthusiastic, strategic, enterprising, inquisitive, versatile. Enjoy new ideas and challenges, value inspiration.

ESTJ

Efficient, outgoing, analytical, systematic, dependable, realistic. Like to run the show and get things done in an orderly fashion.

ESFJ

Friendly, outgoing, reliable, conscientious, organized, practical. Seek to be helpful and please others, enjoy being active and productive.

ENFJ

Caring, enthusiastic, idealistic, organized, diplomatic, responsible. Skilled communicators who value connection with people.

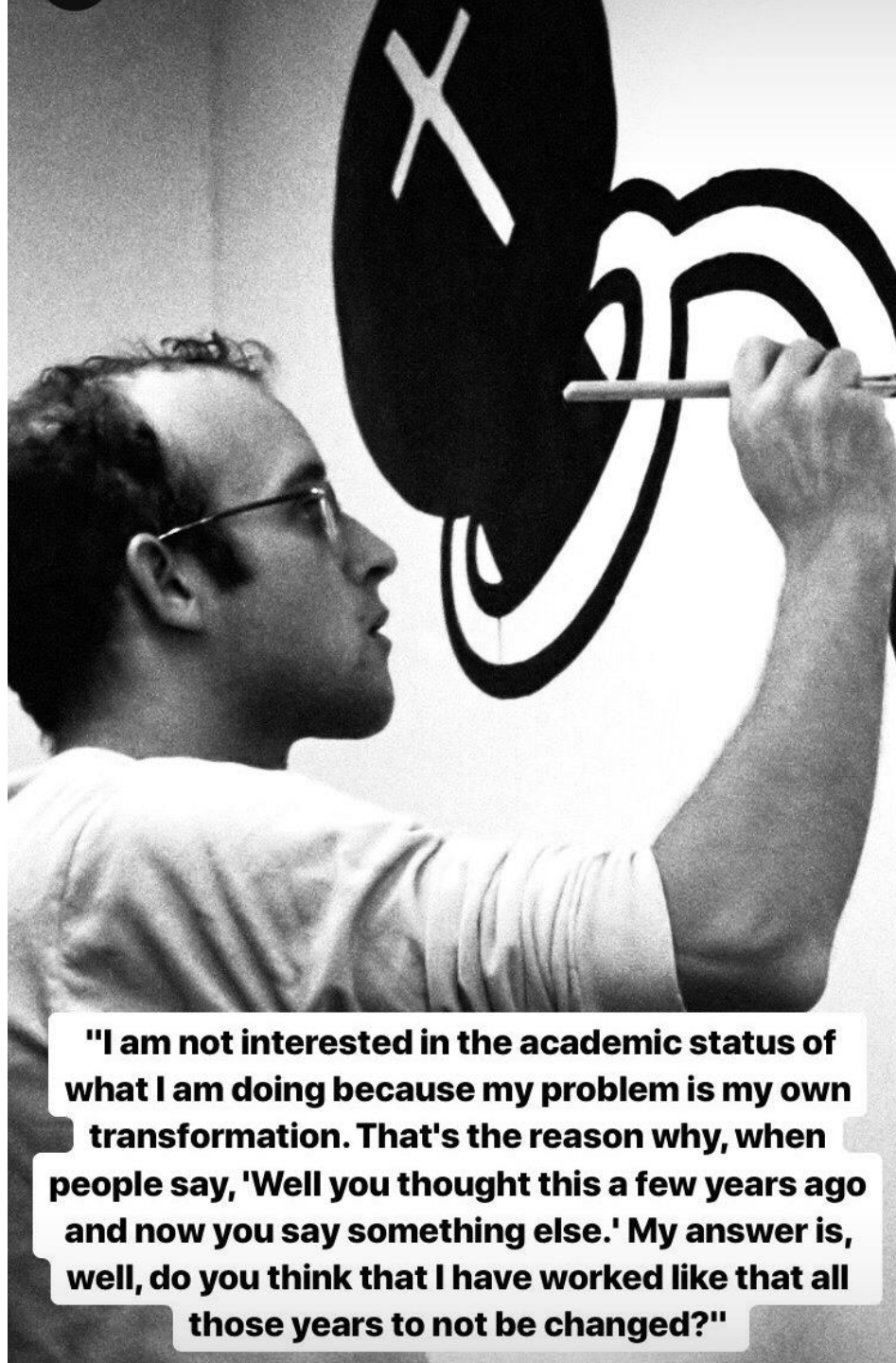
ENTJ

Strategic, logical, efficient, outgoing, ambitious, independent. Effective organizers of people and long-range planners.

We all change

The personality test is just a bit of fun, it does not mean that you are, and always will be, a particular personality type. It's just right now! We all change through self reflection, which is why it is such an invaluable tool as a creative and as a designer.

Keith Haring



"I am not interested in the academic status of what I am doing because my problem is my own transformation. That's the reason why, when people say, 'Well you thought this a few years ago and now you say something else.' My answer is, well, do you think that I have worked like that all those years to not be changed?"

It is true to say:
If you change your mind,
it shows you've got one.

Jeff Bezos (founder of Amazon):

"the smartest people are constantly revising their understanding, reconsidering a problem they thought they'd already solved. They're open to new points of view, new information, new ideas, contradictions, and challenges to their own way of thinking,"

[www.inc.com/jessica-stillman/this-is-number-1-sign-of-high-intelligence-according-to-jeff-bezos]

Next steps

Choose a piece of your own work for the Reflective Writing Task.
Start making your own notes (these do not need to be shared).

Introduce your piece of work (context).

Describe what you done, what was successful, and what was a problem.

Analyse why this was a problem, and then critique how this happened.

**Explain how you would try to resolve this if you were to do it again.
Explain what you would do differently in the future, based on what you have learnt through reflection.**

Use references to support your views.

Next Week

The value of Reflective Writing.

Uploading to Moodle.

Checking drafts for plagiarism.

Final submissions.

Questions?