

Journal Writing

A few guidelines for
maintaining a successful
journal and folio.

Your Journal is the repository of your experiences. It becomes a guide, a mirror ... a confidant and friend. It is important to have a Journal that is a statement of who you are.



Journal

Student metacognition is a term used to describe a student's ability to analyze his or her own learning and progress. Instead of having students who repeatedly ask the teacher, "How am I doing?" the use of folios trains students to ask the question of themselves.

What to write about in your reflective journal

Expectations Goals and ambitions Ideas for projects Actions taken Events Problems encountered	Accomplishments Connections with other areas Observations Questions Responses Comparisons	Contrasts Reactions/feelings Changes needed New beliefs, knowledge, behaviours, understandings, skills
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When to write in your reflective journal

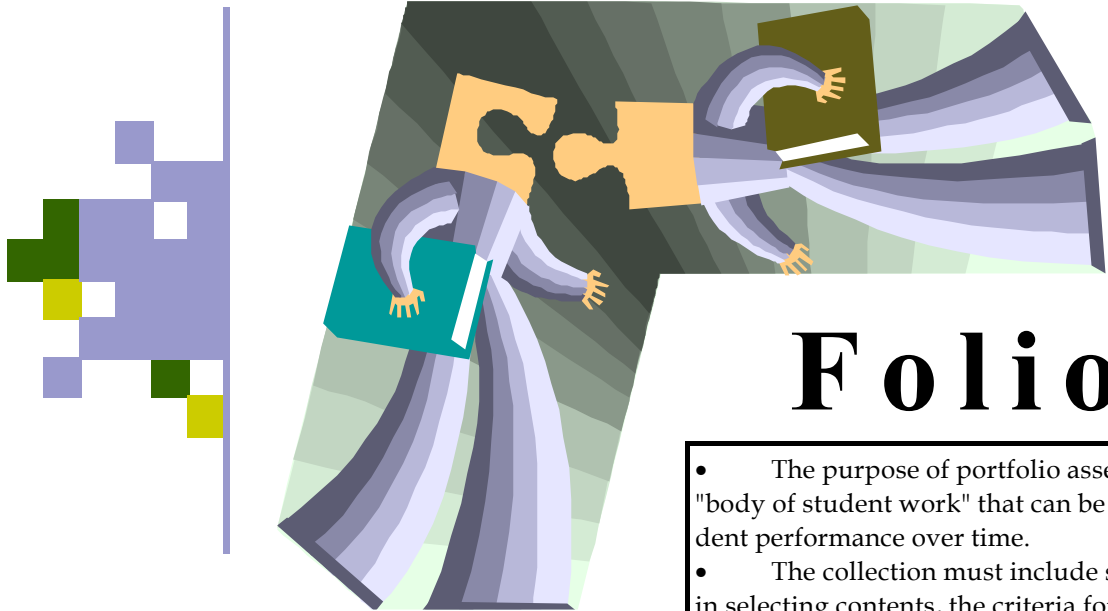
At the beginning or end of sessions When beginning or ending a project or course of action When organising thoughts and ideas while working on a project When it feels good to do so.	When something surprising or significant occurs In role: especially for developing performance work and characterisations.
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Why write in your reflective journal

Clarify ideas Record events Assist recall of new ideas, skills and information Document progress Record personal reactions Assess and evaluate what works or not	Celebrate accomplishments Demonstrate thought processes to another Outline goals and action plans Discuss your learning Communicate to other people Take charge of your own learning
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Starters

I (dis) like the way... I (don't) believe... I (don't) understand... I (dis) agree with... I found it easy / difficult to... What if... What I need to do now is...	I hope to... I intend to... I can now... I felt... The purpose of this was to... I have learned... I can now do...	I want to know more about... This connects to... I was reminded of... A question I now ask is... Because I have done this I can... Other contexts I can use this... I remembered...
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Folio

- The purpose of portfolio assessment is to provide a "body of student work" that can be used to appraise student performance over time.
- The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection.
- . . . a purposeful, collaborative, self-reflective collection of student work

Your folio will contain the following:

1. a process journal;
2. all written assignments;
3. all resource materials and scripts used in the course;
4. all assessment sheets; and
5. any other relevant documentation that you collect through the year.

The Journal

Is not a personal diary, a collection of attacks or otherwise on the value of other people in the class or a record of your personal angst, however some of these elements may enter into your discussions. It is intended to be a record of all you do in Drama and a record of the learning, reflection and evaluation of that work.

Workshop Descriptions

Write a lesson by lesson account of the work you do in Drama. This is especially important for major workshops such as the Scripted Production, improvisations and the Group Devised Drama. Date all entries. Include the following:

- a brief description of what was done;
- some personal evaluation of your experience;
- what you learned.

Self-assessment

For all tasks describe what you intend to do, explain how you hope to achieve and assess how successfully you achieved your aims. Evidence of planning is very important.

Observations

Record your own personal reactions, observations and opinions of the work you do. This should be honest and relate to your learning process. Explain how and why situations worked or not.

Resources

Keep everything you are given in class, materials you discover for yourself and any that you create. Relate them directly to the undertaking, i.e. which task they were for.

Assignments

All written assessments, reviews, essays and projects should be kept formally filed.

Assessments

Keep all assessments and feedback from both the teacher and other students about the work you have done.

Background Material

Any literary or historical material used to develop your performance pieces. Any research material from your project work.

Scripts

All scripts both original and extant should be included, along with blocking diagrams, role scoring, performance and technical notes.



Journal Writing

The journal and folio are particularly important as documents of your learning. In drama you are expected to demonstrate learning in 4 major strands (*see table below*). The journal is one way for you to demonstrate that you are engaging in all areas.

In each area, especially Strands 3 and 4, there are opportunities to deliberately use your journal to address these outcomes.

1. Drama Ideas

Students:

- ◆ create drama work that communicates ideas
- ◆ interpret drama work
- ◆ explore ideas using direct experience, observation, curiosity, research, imagination and emotions
- ◆ develop their drama ideas
- ◆ present and perform their drama work to a variety of audiences.

3. Drama Responses

Students:

- ◆ respond to drama experiences
- ◆ reflect on the creative and thinking processes of their drama experiences
- ◆ evaluate drama work (own and others) and make judgements about them
- ◆ analyse ideas and forms used in drama presentations

2. Drama Skills and processes

Students:

- ◆ use a range of drama skills and techniques
- ◆ use drama practices appropriately
- ◆ use and adapt existing drama technologies to create, explore, develop and communicate ideas

4. Drama in Society

Students:

- ◆ value drama and show positive attitudes towards using drama in their learning, expression, communication and understanding
- ◆ understand how drama fits into the development of their society
- ◆ recognise the range of traditions that contribute to Australian drama
- ◆ understand how drama changes over time and apply this understanding in creating and responding to drama work
- ◆ recognise the contribution of drama to the Australian economy and how the economy affects drama activities.



Outcome/Goal Setting

Outcomes/Goals

In order to learn effectively it is useful to know where you are headed. Goals or ambitions need to be stated in terms of where you are heading, i.e. they must have direction. In relation to learning, you will learn many things quite deliberately, other learning will take place as a result of experience and will be affected by your own understanding of events.

It is useful to have a framework in order to know **What, When, Why, Where and How** you will learn something. With an effective framework all the “accidental” learning has a chance to be built into your development.

Stating Goals

Goals should be **S.M.A.R.T.**

S PECIFIC	Goals should be very clearly stated – what exactly do you want to learn, achieve, create, improve, etc
M EASURABLE	Goals should be able to be measured - How much do you want to achieve, how quickly, how often, etc What evidence will there be that you have achieved the goal.
A CCCEPTABLE	Goals should also be within your own control. Make sure that your goals are not dependent on the actions of others. Be 100% responsible for your own learning. Make sure that you are firmly committed to the goals you set.
R EALISTIC	Goals should be possible and should take into account existing conditions - Can it actually be done within the constraints you have set?
T IME-AWARE	Goals should have a time frame – When do you want to have achieved the goal – will it still have relevance before/after that time? How long will it take?



Journal Writing

Outcomes/Goals

What I am expected to learn from this course:

What I want to achieve by the end of this course:

What other people may want from the course:

Answer these questions to decide your outcomes.

What do I really want from this course?

- (What are my expectations - how do I want them to be different?)

What will that mean to me?

What is the benefit of this outcome?

- What will that benefit mean to me?
- Is this what I am really trying to achieve?

How will I know when I have achieved the outcome? What evidence will I have?

- How will anyone else know?

When do I want this outcome?

- When don't I want it?
- How soon do I want?

What do I need (knowledge, skill, material) to achieve the outcome?

- What stops me from achieving it now?

How will this affect my life?

- What will I gain?
- What will I lose?
- What will happen if I don't achieve it?
- Is it worthwhile?

Ask these questions on Day 1.

What are my expectations?

When I think of similar classes in the past; how do I think I have done?

When I think of myself in this class now; how do I think I will do?

When I think of myself in a class like this in 3 months; how do I think I will be?



Ask these after each learning opportunity.

Content: What was covered? What did I/we do? How did we do it?

What did I experience as difficult?

What did I learn from this difficulty?

What did I experience as easy?

What did I learn from my easiness?

What learnings have I discovered about myself? What new beliefs, skills, understandings, knowledge, etc?

Where in my life can I add this learning to my choice of behaviour? When and where can I apply these new beliefs, skills, understandings, knowledge, etc?

What are my new choices in beliefs or behaviour?

Where does any/all of the above connect with or meet my outcomes?

In what ways have I assisted others to achieve their outcomes?

In what ways have I assisted the teacher meet their outcomes?

What feedback have I noticed today, given to me by;

- my self;
- my classmates;
- my teacher.

What feedback have I given to;

- my self;
- my classmates;
- my teacher.



Journal Writing

Ask these questions each week.

1. What have **I thought about** this week?
2. What have **I learned** so far in this course?
3. What have I learned about **myself** so far?
4. Where in my life **can I add this learning** to my choices of behaviour and/or belief?
5. What are my **new choices** of behaviours or beliefs?

Answer these as appropriate.

1. Have I met any of my outcomes?
2. Do I want to change any outcomes?
3. Do I want to add any outcomes?
4. What **am I doing** to **limit** my success?
5. What **am I doing** to **maximise** my success?

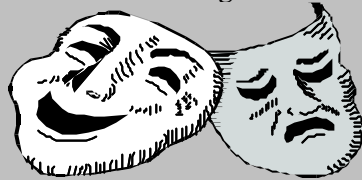
Steps in Group Problem Solving

1. Decide on a problem
2. Discuss what it means to everyone involved
3. Define the problem
4. Brainstorm possible solutions
5. Choose one solution that everyone is willing to implement
6. Plan the implementation
7. Enact the plan
8. Evaluate (Move on or return to step any step that is useful)



Journal Writing

John Curtin College of the Arts



Reflection Framework: Drama

INTRODUCTION

What have you done in this module of work? What was done for assessment?
What were you expected/expecting to learn?

PROCESS

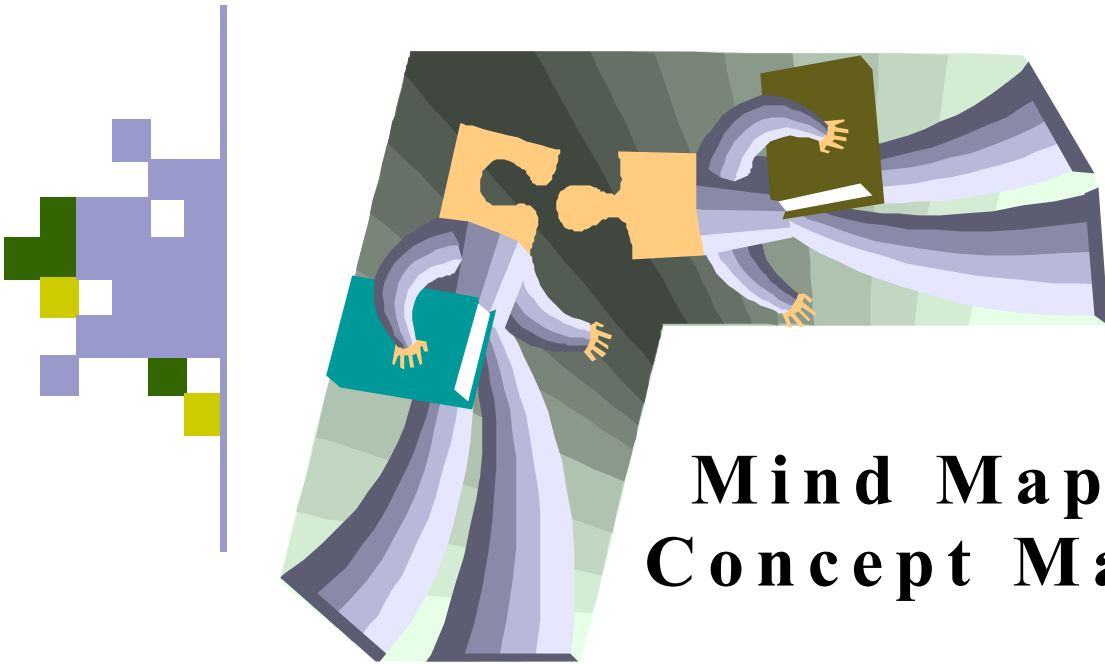
Describe the steps you went through to complete your task. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your process. Discuss your own contributions

TECHNIQUES AND UNDERSTANDINGS

Discuss any new skills, techniques, vocabulary, you have learned through this module. How has your understanding of the material changed?

EVALUATION - Product

Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your product. Discuss your own performance – make sure you justify your opinions – what specifically made it strong/weak ?

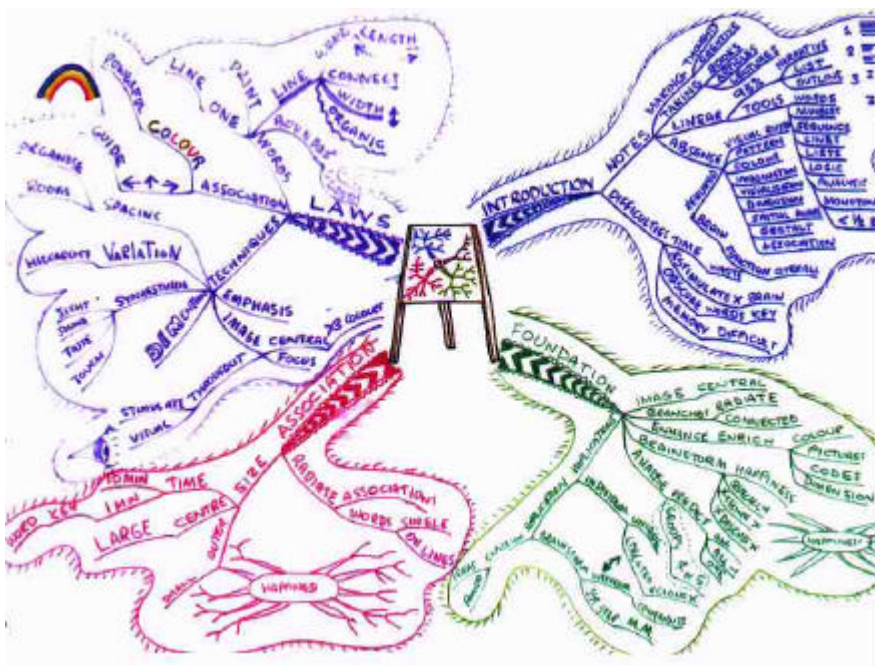


Mind Mapping/ Concept Mapping

There are many links between **mind-mapping** and the maintenance of an effective and useful journal.

Mind maps, developed by Tony Buzan are an effective method of note-taking and useful for the generation of ideas by associations. To make a mind map, one starts in the centre of the page with the main idea, and works outward in all directions, producing a growing and organised structure composed of key words and key images.

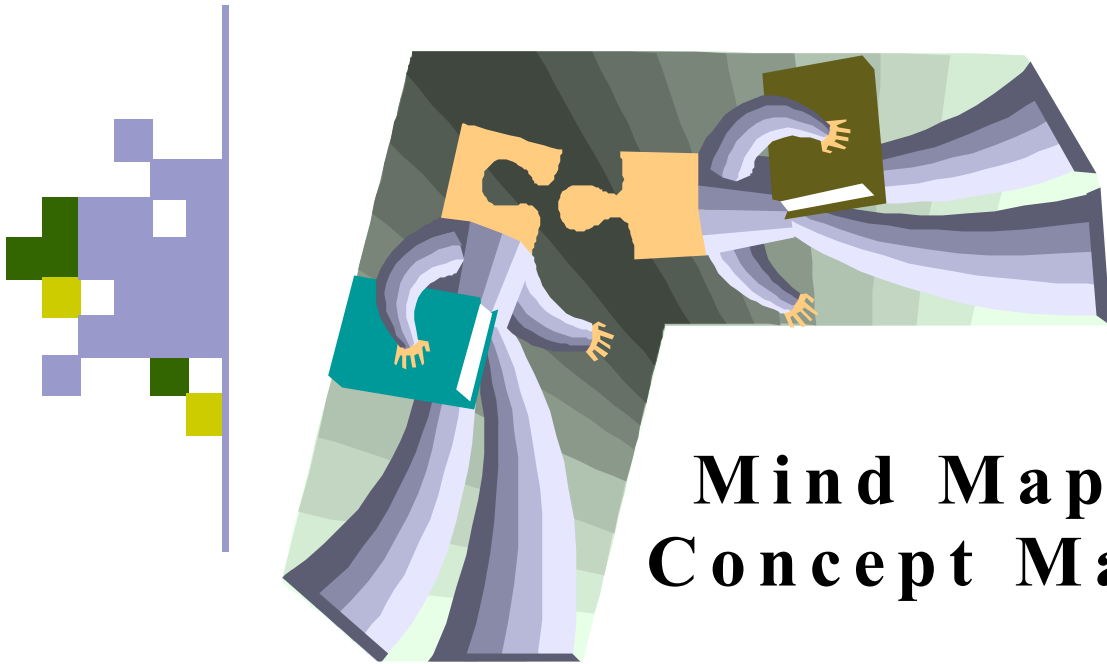
- A Mind Map is a way of organizing something, an area of information.
- It is typically an organic multi-colored chart laid out on a large sheet of paper. It contains words and drawings that are connected in various ways.
- A Mind Map can be used for keeping notes, or for developing a concept, or for getting an overview of an activity.
- It is both rational and artistic, both logically ordered and spontaneously expressive.
- Mind Maps use and stimulate the visual abilities of the mind. If represented visually, a bigger subject can be understood and remembered much more efficiently.



An example of a mindmap – this one is about mindmapping, but they can be used for any subject, educational, personal or professional. They are a great way to organise your thoughts.

Once a mind map is drawn, it seldom needs to be referred to again.

Mind Maps help organise information.



Mind Mapping/ Concept Mapping

Uses of Mind Maps

Notes. Whenever information is being taken in, mind maps help organize it into a form that is easily assimilated by the brain and easily remembered. They can be used for noting anything - books, lectures, meetings, interviews, phone conversations.

Recall. Whenever information is being retrieved from memory, mind maps allow ideas to be quickly noted as they occur, in an organized manner. There's no need to form sentences and write them out in full. They serve as quick and efficient means of review and so keep recall at a high level.

Creativity. Whenever you want to encourage creativity, mind maps liberate the mind from linear thinking, allowing new ideas to flow more rapidly. Think of every item in a mind map as the center of another mind map.

Problem solving. Whenever you are confronted by a problem -- professional or personal -- mind maps help you see all the issues and how they relate to each other. They also help others quickly get an overview of how you see different aspects of the situation, and their relative importance.

Planning. Whenever you are planning something, mind maps help you get all the relevant information down in one place and organize it easily. They can be used for planning any piece of writing from a letter to a screenplay to a book (I use a master map for the whole book, and a detailed sub-map for each chapter), or for planning a meeting, a day or a vacation.

Presentations. Whenever I speak I prepare a mind map for myself of the topic and its flow. This not only helps me organize the ideas coherently; the visual nature of the map means that I can read the whole thing in my head as I talk, without ever having to look at a sheet of paper.



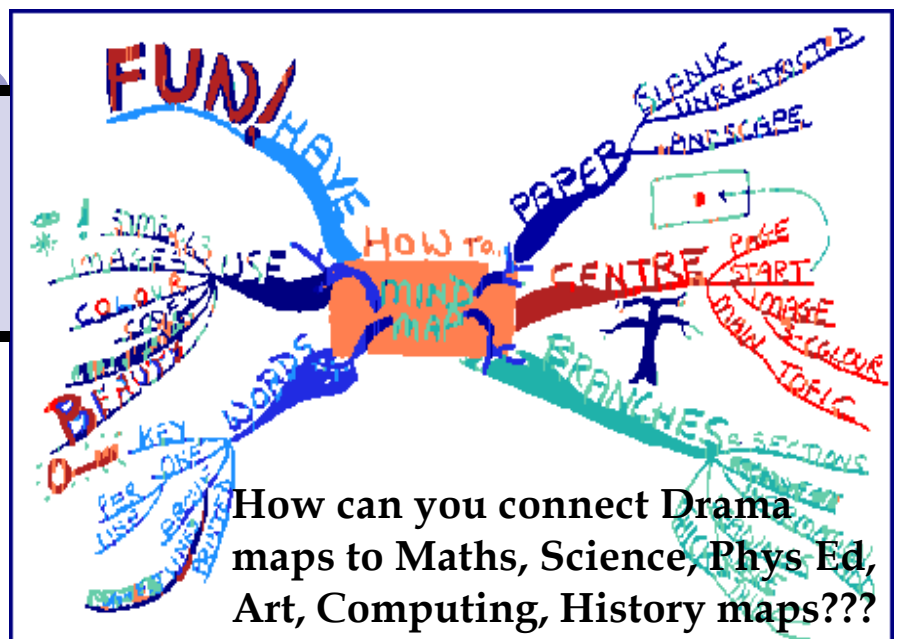
How to Mind Map

- Use just **key words**, or wherever possible **images**.
- Start from the **centre of the page** and work out.
- Start with a clear and **strong visual image** that depicts the general theme of the map.
- **Create sub-centres** for sub-themes.
- Put key words on lines. This reinforces structure of notes.
- **Print** rather than write in script. It makes them more readable and memorable. Lower case is more visually distinctive (and better remembered) than upper case.
- **Use color** to depict themes, associations and to make things stand out. Anything that stands out on the page will stand out in your mind.
- Think **three-dimensionally**.
- Use **arrows, icons or other visual aids to show links** between different elements.
- Don't get stuck in one area. If you dry up in one area go to another branch.
- Put ideas down as they occur, wherever they fit. Don't judge or hold back.
- Break boundaries. If you run out of space, don't start a new sheet; paste more paper onto the map. (Break the A4 mentality.)
- **Be creative**. Creativity aids memory.
- *Get involved. Have fun.*



The sign of a great thinker is the ability to connect all thoughts and ideas.

How then can you build connections between your various mind maps?



How can you connect Drama maps to Maths, Science, Phys Ed, Art, Computing, History maps???