

Art Therapy Online: ATOL

Once more, but with feeling: Further thoughts on writing about art therapy¹

'There is no way of writing well and also of writing easily'. Anthony Trollope,
Barchester Towers

David Edwards

Abstract

Art therapists often experience considerable difficulty writing about their work. The anxieties these difficulties generate may overshadow the individual and collective aspirations of art therapists to write about and publish accounts of their clinical work. This article seeks to shed some light on these difficulties and offers some suggestions for overcoming them.

Keywords: Art therapy, writer's block, perfectionism, procrastination, publication anxiety

Introduction: Once more, but with feeling!

In an earlier article, *Writing about Art Therapy* (Edwards, 1996), I argued that notwithstanding the difficulties involved, the ability to write clearly and competently about our practice is an important, and potentially rewarding, aspect of the continuing professional development of all art therapists. I also put forward the view

¹Discerning readers will be aware that the title I have given this article is taken an episode of the television series *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*; more specifically the musical episode in shown in season six in which a mysterious force compels Sunnydale residents to sing songs that reveal their deepest secrets http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Once_More,_with_Feeling_%28Buffy_the_Vampire_Slayer%29 I chose this as the title for my article because I believe this theme – the revelation of the personal - provides an apt metaphor for many of the issues addressed in it.

that when writing about art therapy it was essential we 'create our own language'; meaning 'we should be free to use the kind of language we feel most comfortable with in order to convey our ideas' (Edwards, 1996:50). At the time of writing, I was particularly concerned that in the search for professional credibility art therapists avoided the temptation to write and publish articles that, for the majority of the profession, were irrelevant, incomprehensible, inaccessible and/or devoid of any meaningful emotional engagement with their subject matter.

Although I was aware from my own struggles just how difficult articulating my thoughts and feelings in a written form could be, what I had not anticipated was just how difficult so many other art therapists evidently found the process of writing. Reflecting on this in 1996 I confided,

Experience has taught me that it would be very much of a mistake to assume that writing is an emotionally neutral activity. Each of us comes to the task of writing with a personal history, with hopes and fears, which the process of writing obliges us to confront (Edwards, 1996:50).

With the benefit of hindsight, and having run a number of workshops for students and clinicians wishing to develop their writing skills over the past few years, this observation was something of an understatement. It would appear to be the case that at all levels of the profession - from students at the beginning of their training through to very experienced practitioners - art therapists experience considerable difficulty, sometimes technical, sometimes psychological, when writing about their work. All too often our anxieties about writing and publishing overshadow our individual and collective aspirations to articulate and disseminate our observations and ideas.

Why write?

For thousands of years human beings have used marks, symbols, drawings and signs to converse with one another. We use written symbols to express and communicate all kinds of information, 'to share stories, note financial transactions, record history, imagine the future, to express love, hatred, humour or melancholy'

(British Library, 2010). But why might anyone go to the trouble of writing about art therapy?

In higher education, the pressure on academics to write and publish is as intense now as it was fifteen years ago when I first addressed this topic (Edwards, 1996). Indeed for many academics, as Antoniou and Moriarty (2008) observe,

Not writing is rarely an option. Lecturers must undertake a variety of writing tasks in their daily work, including authoring course materials, drafting assessment feedback writing reports, meeting notes, and emails (2008: 158).

Most academics are also expected to publish books and journal articles, in addition to writing conference papers, research reports and funding bids, amongst other things. All of which is time consuming and all of which assumes, erroneously in my view, that 'academics are naturally able and willing to write' (Antoniou and Moriarty, 2008: 158). Nevertheless, for many academics, professional status and career progression are almost entirely dependent on the number of publications listed in their CV's.

While the pressure to publish in order to establish or retain professional credibility, particularly in the world of academia, remains the most obvious reason why art therapists might write, there are other reasons. We may write in order to find meaning or in order to make a point. We may also write because we take particular pleasure in it. In our personal lives we may enjoy writing letters and emails to family, friends or those 'others' to whom we wish to convey our views such as the local Council or our bank manager. We may even keep a diary, journal or 'blog'.² And if time is short we can always resort to sharing our thoughts and opinions with the rest of humanity through social networking sites such as Twitter (<http://twitter.com/>) or Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/>).

² According to the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blogs>), 'A blog (a contraction of the term "weblog") is a type of website, usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order'. See, for example, <http://www.arttherapyblog.com/> and <http://www.josieaston.co.uk/blog/>

In the workplace the genres of writing we engage in may be more restricted in terms of what can be said and how it can be said, but they are no less varied and embrace such diverse forms as case notes, assessments, discharge letters, court and other expert reports and so on. The drafting of these documents might provide a source of considerable professional satisfaction, particularly if they have a positive impact on the lives of those we seek to help.

Beyond this, going public through writing conference papers or publishing articles offers therapists a number of important opportunities; including the opportunity 'to develop a degree of authority, to demonstrate a degree of potency and, above all, to share and to create' (Barwick, 2003: 60).

The motives underlying the desire to write may not, of course, be necessarily dignified or pragmatic. Following George Orwell (1968), we might also admit (to ourselves at least) to less altruistic motives, including egotism, vanity and the need for love or affirmation.

Nevertheless, whatever our personal feelings and motives may be, the fact remains that the ability to write about our practice is – and always has been - vitally important for the development of art therapy. Indeed it might well be argued that the very survival and future development of the profession depends upon it. As Larcombe et al (2010: 120) observe, 'we need to share and explain therapeutic work partly in order to spread awareness of good practice and also to attract official recognition and funding'.

If we wish to advance our understanding of art therapy, and to share this understanding with others, we need to be able to write about what we do, and the better we become at doing this the more likely it is that we will succeed in meeting this ambition. As I have previously argued,

We cannot have a body of knowledge about art therapy, we cannot build a theory of art therapy to support and sustain our clinical practice, without at least some art therapists having first of all sat down with pen, pencil,

typewriter or word processor, begun writing, and seen this process through to its conclusion (Edwards, 1996: 46).

It is through the act of writing that our fleeting ideas, thoughts, feelings and intuitions are transformed into something more substantial; something that while being our creation also has an independent existence and can be shared with others.

Unfortunately, for all too many trainee and qualified art therapists the process of writing is one characterised by varying degrees of anxiety which, in its most chronic form, can be experienced as 'writer's block' (Flaherty, 2005; Hjortshoj, 2001; Leader, 1991; Mack, & Skjei, 1979) and what (Britton, 1999) terms 'publication anxiety'. When we open the door to the confidential spaces in which we work and share aspects of this with our readers we are also, inevitably, revealing some of our own hitherto private thoughts and feelings. The challenges presented when going public can certainly be daunting ones. I shall return to this issue later in this article.

Beginnings

Whatever our motives for writing might be, the most difficult part of the writing process is often simply getting started. The desire to write may be prompted by a feeling, a question, or by something that has been read or experienced, but rarely do the words, sentences and paragraphs leap forth, fully formed, onto the page. Before we can begin to write about our work, time needs to be spent looking, reading, assimilating and reflecting on our experiences in order for fresh insights and understanding to emerge. Writing takes time, but so too does the process of finding a suitable subject to write about. That is to say, finding something one really wants to write about; something that matters and will sustain our attention and inquisitiveness over time. It is important to allow time for this 'digestive' process and not to rush this initial step.

My own approach to finding a subject is, in effect, to allow it find me. In practice this involves rummaging around in libraries, searching the internet, downloading or photocopying articles that for one reason or another attract my attention, making notes and collecting all this miscellaneous material together in various manila

folders. While I still use actual files, stuffed full of actual pieces of paper, nowadays these files also take the virtual form of word, pdf or image files stored on a memory stick or on my lap top.

I look upon these files as the equivalent of sketchbooks. They contain the raw material for what may, at a later date, become more polished pieces of work, and at any one time I may have a number of these files on the go each containing material at various stages of development. Whether any of this material, this 'stuff', ever meets the light of day ultimately depends upon the emergence of a coherent and sufficiently interesting subject. Needless to say, much of what might once have been a promising line of enquiry is, over time, abandoned or superseded by more pressing issues and interests.

Background reading

Having found a suitable topic, theme or subject to write about it is important to become familiar with it by doing as much background reading as time and opportunity allow. Another way of saying this is that you are conducting a search and review of the relevant literature. Not all journals require this, but many do, and a literature review is often a standard requirement for research based articles submitted for publication.

Unfortunately, when art therapists submitting articles for publication are asked to search and review the relevant literature the request tends to generate a considerable amount of anxiety quite disproportionate to the nature of the task itself.

Simply put, a literature review is an account of what has previously been published on any given topic. It is through the literature review we have the opportunity to distinguish what has been said or done from what needs to be said or done. In so doing, the literature review serves the useful functions of, amongst other things, placing your ideas in context by providing an overview of what has previously been said on a particular topic, and by which key writers, identifying divergent views and discovering what is missing from the relevant literature. A literature review may be

purely descriptive or it may provide a critical or systematic assessment of the literature published on a particular topic.³

When searching the literature it is important not to limit this to paper based sources and that good use is made of the vast literature now available online. By using an Athens NHS login, for example, art therapists employed in the NHS can access a range of online resources – including the MEDLINE and PsycINFO databases - via the Health Information Resources website (formerly known as the NHS National Library for Health).⁴

Even if you don't have access to a health or university library, it is remarkable what you can find on just about any subject you care to mention – including art therapy – if you make use of Google Scholar and Google Books.⁵

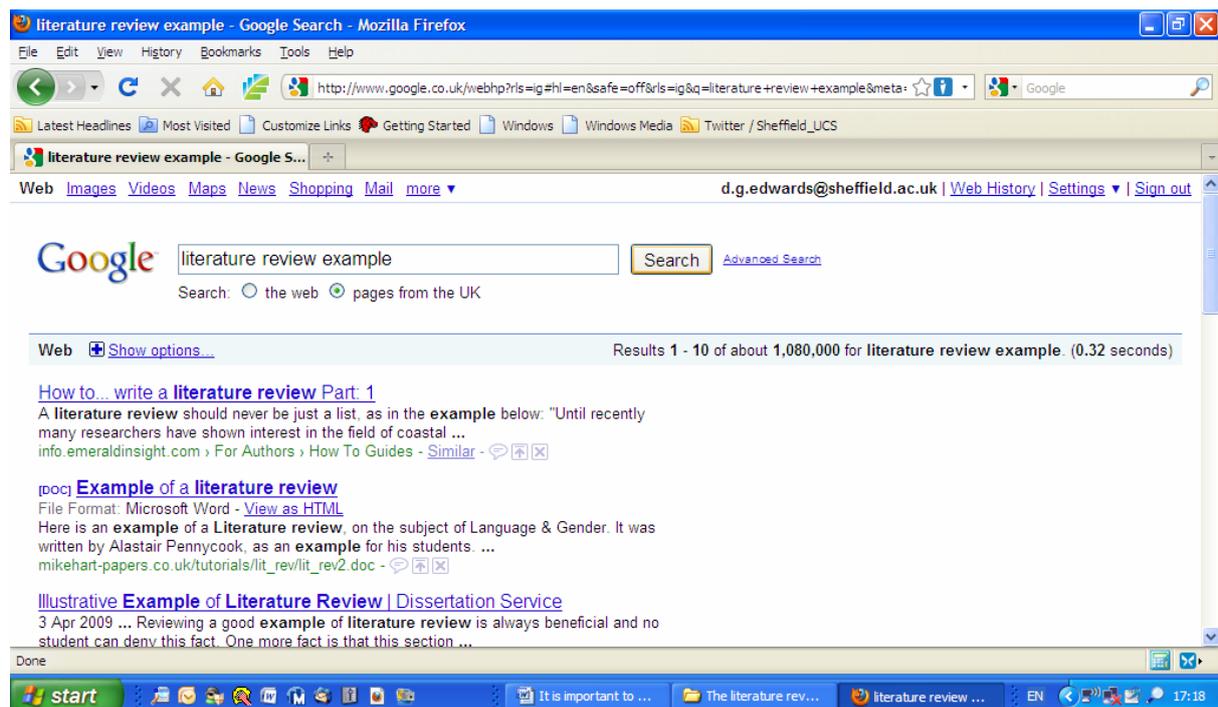


Fig. 1

³ The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy have published a useful guide on how to conduct a literature search (Brettell, 2006) which is available online at http://www.bacp.co.uk/members/info_sheets/R1.html

⁴ To register for access or to find out if you're eligible to use Athens, visit <https://register.athensams.net/nhs/nhseng/>

⁵ The British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy have published a useful guide on how to conduct a literature search (Brettell, 2006) which is available online at http://www.bacp.co.uk/members/info_sheets/R1.html

The background reading you undertake will help you find a focus for your subject and give it credibility. The less there has been written on your particular area of interest, the more relevant, and publishable, it becomes.

Finding the words to say it

While it is important to choose a subject or topic you are interested in and care about, it is also necessary to acknowledge that there are potential dangers in adopting this approach. If the chosen subject is too personal it may be difficult to gain the necessary critical distance in order to write about it clearly and objectively. If the emotional investment is too great, receiving critical feedback may be experienced as an unbearable personal attack. On the other hand, without some emotional investment in your subject it will be difficult to keep the process of writing going or to retain your reader's interest.

In fact most writing, at least most academic and/or published writing, involves a compromise between the writer's aspirations to share, to persuade, to inform, and externally imposed restrictions regarding the form that writing should take. Most obviously this touches upon matters of presentation such as page layout, spelling, grammar and referencing. More subtly the form within which one is writing influences both what is said and how it is said. This extends well beyond the issue of whether or not the stylistic conventions specified in the journal's submission guidelines have been followed.

Commenting on this issue in relation to writing about social work practice Goldstein (1998) observes,

The unquestioned standards of scholarly writing tend to effect an elitist form of authorship that may dampen the inspiration of writers who have something worthwhile to add to our knowledge but cannot or do not wish to adapt their message to fit the existing rules and boundaries (1998: 453).

Finding one's own words, one's own authorial voice within the existing rules and boundaries is no easy achievement. What I mean by 'voice' here is 'the kind of words

you like to use, the rhythm of your "natural" writing [style], the way you use metaphor and images to convey ideas' (Veroff, 1992: 160).

Regrettably, a distinctive characteristic of academic writing in its more traditional forms is the elimination of any form of writing that might be described as 'personal'. This may have the effect of stifling a lively and engaging approach to writing about art therapy.

According to Murray (2006:8) 'academic writing is a 'game' for which the rules – including, implicitly, suppressing the voice of your non-academic or personal self – can be learnt'. This stance is not without consequences for writers or their readers. As Gergen (1997) remarks,

We are invited to an understanding of 'voice' within the scholarly spheres as owing to community, to negotiated understandings among interlocutors as to what counts as insightful, rational, objective, or moral discourse - in effect, whose voice shall be accorded significance in the affairs of the community (Gergen, 1997: 151).

Gergen continues,

Are there particular institutionalized roles or positions to which status or significance is accorded, and are there characteristic forms of discourse or rhetoric associated with (expected from, appropriate for) those who occupy these positions? To frame the issue in this way also leads us to inquire into appropriate postures of response to those who are given voice. If we do accord significance to the words of those of certain rank or status and who speak in a manner appropriate to these positions, what are the conventions of reply? (Gergen, 1997: 151).⁶

⁶ Gergen identifies four modes of traditional voice in his paper, 'the mystical, the prophetic, the mythic, and the civil' (Gergen, 1997: 153). The writings of both Freud and Jung are seen as belonging to the mystical tradition, as are those of R.D. Laing and Jacques Lacan (Gergen, 1997: 155). For Gergen the primary form of address in mystical writing is that of revelation; 'such discourses establish a hierarchy between the writer and the audience. The writer is one who possesses words of profound significance; the audience, in contrast, is presumed ignorant or unaware' (Gergen, 1997: 156).

This assessment of the writer reader relationship within academic discourse opens up the possibility for further debate within the profession concerning what form or forms writing about art therapy could or should take. At the very least it might encourage editors and peer reviewers to be more circumspect in their comments and more accepting of articles that do not assume the traditional form of academic writing. Writers, even experienced ones, can be wounded by the tone and quality of the criticism their writing may receive. This can act as a barrier, rather than a spur, to improving the quality of their work. There is a delicate balance to be struck between telling it as we see it and nurturing the emergence of new 'voices' and or ways of writing about art therapy. I shall have more to say on this matter later in this paper.

On not being able to write

Some art therapists clearly find that writing comes easily to them. Indeed as one of the anonymous peer reviewers who read an earlier draft of this paper commented, 'There has been something of a boom in art therapy publications in the last decade and a half'. While 'boom' might, in my view, be to over state the argument, more art therapists do indeed appear to be willing and sufficiently able to commit their thoughts to paper and see these in print.

However, for other art therapists writing is evidently a struggle, even for those who do eventually come to see their work published. I would include myself in this group. There may be a number of reasons for this. The barriers or obstacles we encounter when writing might, for example, be due to the fear of exposure, a lack of basic writing skills, uncertainty regarding what is required or some other reason such as dyslexia.⁷

When faced with the prospect of producing a piece of writing many people experience feelings of panic, emptiness or paralysis. We simply cannot make the pen move across the page or type the correct words at the keyboard. This is what is

⁷ The British Dyslexia Association defines dyslexia as 'a specific learning difficulty which mainly affects the development of literacy and language related skills' (<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about-dyslexia/fags.html>). About 10% of the population have some form of dyslexia, and about 4% of the population are severely dyslexic, including some 375,000 schoolchildren.

generally referred to as 'writer's block'; 'the condition of being unable to think of what to write or how to proceed with writing'.⁸

Even experienced and accomplished writers experience writing related anxiety from time to time. Here, for example, is Stephen Fry on the subject.

I have a ten-ton deadline hanging over me suspended by a single human hair. If I don't stay and stare at my screen all day every day until I have bled out a screenplay I will have my nipples torn from me like medals from the tunic of a disgraced officer and Shame will know me for her own.

Douglas Adams liked deadlines: "I love the loud whooshing noise they make as they go past," he said. My deadline has whooshed past four times and this is now IT. I deliver or ELSE.

I remember putting the final full stop to the last essay of my final exam at university and thinking to myself, "There! That's that. I shall never have that awful exam feeling ever again."

Ha!

How was I to know that not only would I have it always but that it would seem to get progressively worse?... Most of us in the world of work have these horrors looming over us. Reports to be written. Shelves to be stacked. Orders to be completed. Calls to be made. Duties to be done. Many of us wake in the mornings with a deep terrible feeling of foreboding inside us: hot lead seems to leak into our stomachs as we contemplate the day. When I'm in acting or presenter or comic prancer mode it isn't so bad – but writing. Writing is bloody. (Fry, 2009).

Two of the more common reasons an individual might experience difficulty writing are due to procrastination and perfectionism.

⁸ http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/writersblock?view=uk

Procrastination

Procrastination, very simply, involves putting off or postponing until tomorrow (or sometime thereafter!) what could or should be done today; e.g. writing that talk or article.⁹ I would suggest, however, that what distinguishes procrastination from simply delaying or postponing an action are its consequences, and these may, regrettably, be quite serious for some people. Not only might deadlines be missed, but the tendency to procrastinate may have significant emotional and physical consequences, including feelings of guilt, depression, irritability and tiredness (Perry, 2002: 9).

There are many reasons why we might procrastinate, but some of the more common ones are a low tolerance of discomfort, anxiety and/or excitement, an inability to prioritise and poor time management, often associated with a distorted sense of the time available; See also, Burka & Yuen, 1983; Knaus, 1998; Perry, 2002.

One of the key things to understand about procrastination is that it is often regarded as helpful by the procrastinator. It serves a protective function and that is why it can be so difficult to give up. Procrastinating provides a way of avoiding discomfort, be this anxiety about success or failure or about the consequences of engaging with the task of writing itself, such as loneliness. In seeking to overcome the tendency to procrastinate it is helpful to identify what we might gain from it.

Quite often procrastination is connected to anxieties about the quality of the writing a person fears they will produce. This leads us to the problem of perfectionism.

Perfectionism

Perfectionism refers to self-defeating thoughts and behaviours associated with having unrealistically high aspirations. Perfectionists have generally learned early in life that they were accepted, valued, loved or respected mainly for their

⁹ The word 'procrastination' has its origins in the Latin 'procrastinare', meaning defer till the morning.

achievements. As a result their self-esteem tends to be dependent on other people's approval. This can leave a person vulnerable and over-sensitive to the opinions of others. Striving for perfection may be understood as a way of coping with this and is often associated with the fear of failure, the fear of making mistakes and all-or-nothing thinking.

Perfectionists have difficulty seeing situations in perspective. A critical comment from a peer reviewer or journal editor is not evidence of personal failure, although it may well be experienced as such. Perfectionists also tend to see others as achieving success with a minimum of effort, few errors, little emotional stress and maximum self-confidence. At the same time, perfectionists view their own efforts as unending and forever inadequate (See Antony & Swinson, 1998 and Basco, 2000 for a more extensive discussion of this issue).

The 'inner critic'

The tendency to procrastinate, together with the (usually) fruitless quest for perfection, emphasizes our perceived sense of inadequacy or incompetence and may tap in to our deepest fears.

Our ability to write is, then, undoubtedly helped or hindered by the quality of the relationship we have with our 'Inner Critic'; by which I mean that part of us which, fearing failure, humiliation, rejection or abandonment, anxiously tells us we have nothing worth saying and that everything we write is rubbish.

At its most helpful, the 'Inner Critic' enables us to gain the 'objectivity' or critical distance from which we can see what is flawed or fine about our writing. This aspect of our inner world can help us see more clearly what works and what doesn't, what makes sense, and what doesn't. We might think of this as an 'Inner Muse'; as a benign inner source of support and inspiration.

Unfortunately, and all too often, our 'Inner Critic' can be less than helpful. When anxious our 'Inner Critic' can begin pulling our words and ideas to pieces before

we've even begun writing. Every time we try to write we can hear a nagging inner voice drawing our attention to everything we believe to be wrong with our work.

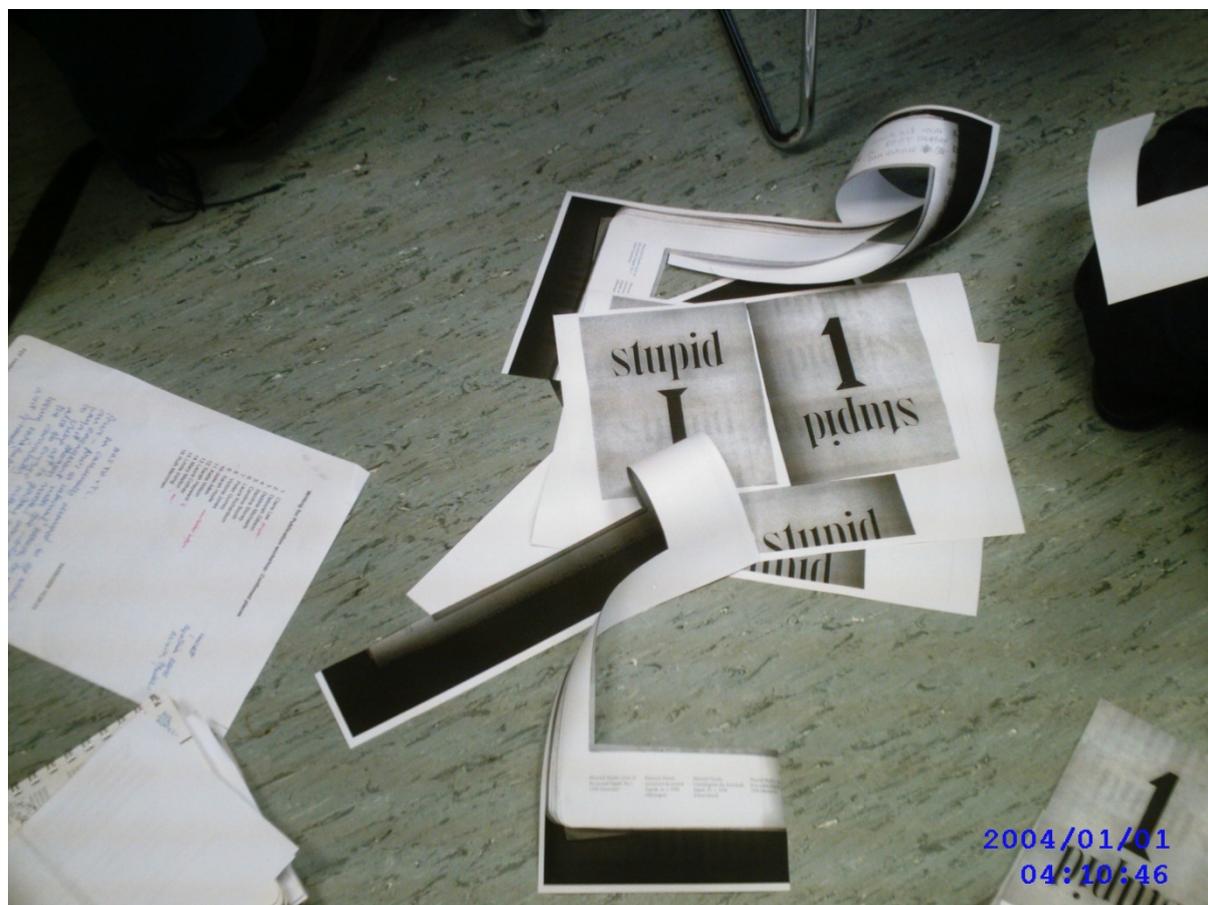


Fig. 2
Writing for publication

When it comes to writing for publication, perhaps the single most important thing you need is a belief that you have something interesting, important or useful to say. As well as having an original angle or approach to your subject matter, this also means being prepared to put in whatever work is required to successfully negotiate the usually lengthy publication process.

The first step in this process is identifying the journal most appropriate for the content of for your article. This is especially important if you are aiming to reach a readership beyond your peers.

Once you have submitted your copy for publication (having first of all ensured it conforms to the relevant editorial guidelines concerning content, formatting, referencing and so on) expect to make alterations. Writing almost always means re-writing, so accept that whatever you write will probably need to be revised. This is not necessarily because your ideas are flawed or your writing is bad. More often than not it is because journal editors need to re-shape articles in order to meet the needs of their particular readership. See Nailburg (2003) and Overholser (2008) for a thoughtful discussion on the role of editors and peer reviews in relation to this.

engaging approach to writing about art therapy. Commenting on this issue in relation to writing about social work practice Goldstein (1998) observes,

The unquestioned standards of scholarly writing tend to effect an elitist form of authorship that may dampen the inspiration of writers who have something worthwhile to add to our knowledge but cannot or do not wish to adapt their message to fit the existing rules and boundaries (1998: 453).

Finding one's own words, one's own authorial voice within the existing rules and boundaries as set out in a publisher or journals guidelines for authors is no easy achievement. What I mean by 'voice' here is 'the kind of words you like to use, the rhythm of your "natural" writing [style], the way you use metaphor and images to convey ideas' (Veroff, 1992: 160). The process of finding and developing a writing style that is uniquely one's own, and which carries the authenticity and authority of personal experience, vitally important though it is, inevitably takes time.

Some art therapists find that writing comes easily to them. For others it is evidently a struggle. There may be a number of reasons for this. The obstacles we encounter when writing might, for example be due to the fear of exposure, a lack of basic writing skills, or some other reason such as Dyslexia. All these difficulties can lead to a sense of inadequacy, while also generating a considerable amount of anxiety that itself might inhibit our ability to write clearly and write well. In my experience all too many art therapists - be they trainees or experienced practitioners - feel ashamed, embarrassed and fearful their perceived deficiencies as writers will be uncovered.

When it comes to writing about art therapy, Dyslexia presents a particular problem. The term dyslexia is used to describe a range of specific learning difficulties. Difficulties are most commonly associated with reading and writing, but can also occur with spatial orientation and hand to eye coordination. The British Dyslexia Association defines dyslexia as follows:

Dyslexia is primarily a difficulty with the automatic processing of language based information, especially the written word. It is important to understand that evidence points to a constitutional origin, possibly genetic, and that it is not related to intelligence.⁴

About 10% of the population have some form of dyslexia, and about 4% of the population are severely dyslexic, including some 375,000 schoolchildren.

Most of the literature on dyslexia focuses on the difficulties associated with reading, writing and memory tasks. However dyslexic people diagnosed with dyslexia often have particular strengths in the following areas:

⁴ <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

Scan of insert

physical school hand written notes

Comment [NDS4]: This seems to resonate with findings ones own style in regard to image making

Comment [NDS5]: Does this also mirror the experience of being told you cant draw... Highlights peoples experiences at school or in training when someone is judged on their ability to write... I seem to be thinking more about a "writing therapy" you seem to be exploring the blocks involved in writing which also resonate with those involved in image making.

After thoughts

Fig. 3

Finally, but crucially, don't be put off by rejection. It is your article that is being evaluated, not you! Build upon reviewer comments. This can be difficult, but learn to make positive use of the comments provided by editor's and peer reviewers. Believe it or not, this feedback can enhance your writing ability.

Or does it?

In the draft I initially submitted to ATOL, the section on writing for publication concluded at this point almost exactly as written. What happened next, however, forced me to re-think the forgoing comments. My words came to assume a very different (less distant, more personal) meaning when I received the peer review feedback on my paper. Here, is one example,

I'm somewhat concerned as to whether the tone and emphasis – perhaps the genre? - of this paper fits with AToL's aim of critical engagement. A substantial section of the paper is in the style of a 'guide' and is presumably pitched for beginning writers. The author skilfully offsets the instructive style of the paper through humour, transparency and self-disclosure and also normalises the difficulties of writing with apt quotations

I guess that depends on how one defines 'critical engagement'!

from some well known writers. Nevertheless, I found myself wondering if the majority of AToL readers need this kind of instruction and even whether there is a danger of readers and potential contributors feeling a little bit patronised. Given that Masters level training for art therapists has been widely established for some years now, I am surprised that the author considers it necessary, for instance, to tell the reader what a literature review is and how to do one.

My other anonymous peer reviewer offered the following observation,

The basis of the argument outlined at the beginning (that art therapists experience considerable difficulty when writing about their work) needs

supporting evidence and an accompanying literature review clearly demonstrating and critiquing the ideas of other people. This would demonstrate some of the advice that is given by setting a clear example. This foundation argument also needs elaborating as there are currently sweeping generalisations throughout the paper which are not convincing or rigorous. Literature relating explicitly to the social, political and visual context of the topic could be very effectively included in the paper, for instance, feminist and [REDACTED] postmodern debates.

On receipt of such, (how shall I put this?) 'robust' feedback, my exhortation to remain undeterred by rejection, to hold to belief that it is your article that is being evaluated not you, and that feedback can enhance your writing ability felt more than a little hypocritical.

In response to this I wrote, in my journal,

As for feeling enraged, the fact that I'm writing this at 3am says something about how I'm currently feeling. It's all to do with the feedback [REDACTED] sent me regarding the paper I'd submitted to ATOL. It was intended to be helpful, but felt anything but. OK! Some of this rage is, I'm embarrassed to admit, probably 'narcissistic'.¹⁰ My pride has certainly been wounded and I feel myself to have been unfairly treated. I definitely feel misunderstood and 'put down'. Perhaps I mean put in my place? So earlier I found myself wide awake and preoccupied with fantasies of revenge... But now that the intensity of my feelings has subsided a little I feel/think I should be more adult, more mature and grown up than this. I will, eventually, get there, but doing so is undoubtedly painfully difficult. For now, I think it would be best if I just put the feedback to one side and got on with my life.

There were, of course, some aspects of my paper the peer reviewers did like or found interesting and it would be ungracious of me not to acknowledge this.

¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narcissistic_rage

This particular 'discourse' is usually hidden from readers by being edited out of the writing and publication process. I have included it here because it seems to me that the peer review feedback I received is as much a part of the article this has become as any other element in its construction.

Afterthoughts

All writers need an audience to respond to and help shape their ideas. The difficult question is at what stage of the writing process do we choose to engage with this audience? Having finished the first draft of this article by early March (2010) I sent it to a number of friends and colleagues for comment. I don't usually do this, but on this occasion, partly due to my own perfectionism and partly because I had been living with my material for so long, I felt I'd lost the objectivity required to accurately assess whether or not it was in a fit state to submit for publication.

Helpful though the feedback I received undoubtedly was, it also pricked my vanity and brought me face to face with some of my own anxieties about writing and publishing, as, clearly, did the peer review feedback I later received. And as readers almost invariably find things to criticise or comment on, when writing for publication we must learn to develop the capacity to surrender our sense of omnipotence sufficiently to be able to bear the loss of perfection. As those who know me will attest, this is not something that comes easily to me. Nevertheless, I believe the article you are now reading has, despite my bruised ego, been improved by incorporating at least some of the suggestions I received.

Going public

In his book of collected papers '*Belief and Imagination*', the psychoanalyst Ronald Britton (1999) draws a useful distinction between what he terms 'publication anxiety' and the more general anxieties associated with writing. It is perhaps important to note here that 'publication anxiety' applies to any form of going public, be this through presenting our work and ideas to colleagues when delivering a conference paper or through publishing articles or books.

Obviously, if someone cannot write they cannot publish... [and] if they cannot satisfy themselves that it is ethical to publish what they have written they will not feel free to do so (Britton, 1999: 197).

Britton then continues,

I have found, however, that protecting the patient from recognition and also securing the informed consent of the patient does not relieve me... of a sense of guilt... We may not feel that we are betraying a confidence, but we are left feeling we are betraying an affiliation (Britton, 1999: 197).

The affiliation Britton is referring to is the private, inter-subjective experience at the heart of any therapeutic relationship. However, in making the personal public, Britton is acutely aware that 'the communications internal to one relationship have become the means of furthering the development of another relationship' (Britton, 1999: 197); that is to say, the relationship between writer and reader. Despite this awareness, completely refraining from writing about his clinical experience is, for Britton, not a viable option, for in doing so he believes he would be betraying something else; 'a commitment to an objectivity shared with professional colleagues, past and present and with psychoanalysis itself' (Britton, 1999: 198).

This article is not explicitly concerned with exposing clients or the potential betraying of confidences through the publication of clinical material. Indeed the ethics of this issue are so complicated I have quite deliberately avoided addressing them in this article, although I hope to do so in a separate paper currently in the process of being written. It is, however, exposing in another sense. To publish anything is inevitably revealing of the author's hitherto private thoughts and feelings and placing them in the public domain where they are available for the scrutiny of others is understandably anxiety provoking.

In Britton's assessment, 'publication anxiety is ubiquitous and has two sources. One is the fear of rejection by the primary intended audience. The other is fear of recrimination by affiliated colleagues' (Britton, 1999: 198). In retrospect, I believe my

decision to send a draft of my paper to trusted friends and colleagues was an attempt to manage these not uncommon fears. When seeking to share and legitimise our work and ideas through publication we may fear the criticism and rejection of authority figures such as tutors during training, or editors, peer reviewers and colleagues whose opinions we value.

Our fear of disapproval, rejection, retaliation or annihilation – of being ‘ripped to shreds’ - can give rise to powerful emotional responses. As (Barwick, 2003) observes, the ‘aggressive nature’ of the feeding and digestive metaphors used to describe our experience of reading and, of course, of being read, need little elaboration. We often speak of ‘getting our teeth into’, of ‘entering’ and ‘devouring’ a text (Barwick, 2003: 61). We should certainly not underestimate the inhibiting effect these phantasies may have on those art therapists who wish to publish accounts of their work and the ideas which sustain this.

If these fears do not lead to a total inability to write, they may find expression in other ways, including omitting all inconvenient facts in the service of telling a convincing story through to excessive deference to our professional elders and ancestors. Acknowledging that this may lead to the sort of ‘genuflection’ to be found in many clinical papers, including his own, Britton adds,

There are more serious distortions that can occur in texts, where affirmation of shared ideas, attacks on shared enemies or declarations of shared origins can be felt necessary to satisfy a wish for affiliation... Sometimes this simply corrupts the language, sometimes it changes the meaning of the discourse (Britton, 1999: 210).

Much of the deference to be found in writing about art therapy, particularly by students, is, I believe, largely unconscious, but not all of it is. This is, perhaps, most evident in our self-conscious referencing of our professional elders and in our anxious search for the approval of sceptical colleagues through the wholesale importing of terms and idioms drawn from disciplines such as psychiatry and clinical psychology. I hope this article establishes reasonable grounds for doing otherwise.

The metaphorical nature of writing and story-telling

It seems to me that a major difficulty art therapists have in relation to the written word is that they are inclined to think of writing and image/object making as very different kinds of activity. In the remainder of this article I intend to challenge that assumption.

In 2008, at the suggestion of my partner, an enthusiastic quilter, I went to see what turned out to be a very interesting and thought provoking exhibition entitled *The Fabric of Myth* at Compton Verney in Warwickshire.¹¹ At the heart of the exhibition was an exploration of the past and present relationship between the world of textiles and classical myth. Think of the Moirae, the three Fates in Greek mythology, one to spin the yarn, one to draw out the thread and one to cut it.¹² Think of *Sleeping Beauty* pricking her finger on a spindle and of the *Lady of Shalott* entwined in thread.

Wandering around this exhibition, and thinking about it later, I was enchanted by the connection between these two forms of making; the making of cloth and the telling of stories. As Kathryn Kruger observes in the exhibition catalogue,

In English many words exist that connect cloth-making with storytelling, testifying to centuries of our experience at the loom. Like a piece of fabric, a written or spoken story may be spun, woven, knitted, quilted, sewn, or pieced together. We talk about the 'fabric' of our society when characterising our collective ideas. Our thoughts and emotions can 'unravel', 'tangle', or 'fray'. Sometimes our ideas have too many 'loose ends'... Although attesting to the importance of cloth-making in human history, these terms no longer have any explicit reference to cloth but are now used almost exclusively to describe the realm of human emotions and mental activity. (Kruger, 2008:12).

¹¹ http://eprints.gold.ac.uk/2951/1/fabricofmyth_guide.pdf

¹² THE MOIRAI (or Moirae) were the goddesses of fate who personified the inescapable destiny of man. They assigned to every person his or her fate or share in the scheme of things. Their name means "Parts." "Shares" or "Allotted Portions." Zeus, the god of fate, was their leader, Klotho, whose name meant 'Spinner', spun the thread of life. Lakhesis, whose name meant 'Apportioner of Lots'--being derived from a word meaning to receive by lot--, measured the thread of life. Atropos (or Aisa), whose name meant 'She who cannot be turned', cut the thread of life (<http://www.theoi.com/Daimon/Moirai.html>).

These terms, like so many others, have become metaphors.¹³ It seems quite natural nowadays to ‘think of our lives – and of stories – as spun threads, extended, and knitted or interwoven with others into the fabric of communities, or history, or texts’ (Byatt, 2008). And so it is that we might describe someone as ‘embroidering’ the truth or ‘fabricating’ a story, while we ourselves might lose the ‘thread’ of our thoughts.

Our use of metaphor, however, represents more than ‘colourful’ or even clichéd speech. As Knights (1995: 59) observes, ‘Metaphors shape the way we think; they are not confined to the dressing up of truth, but reach deep into our conceptions of things’. Metaphor affects the way we think and feel, and how we express or communicate our thoughts and feelings to others (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003). Indeed metaphorical thinking is so pervasive that we are often barely conscious of its influence.

The metaphor of painting

We might, therefore, extend the metaphorical nature of story-telling to encompass the writing process itself. In an essay on the way academics approach the task of writing, Daniel Chandler (1993) identifies a number of strategies including what he terms the ‘oil painting strategy’ and the ‘water-colour strategy’.

Watercolourists were defined as those who indicated frequent use of single drafts with minimal revision.

Oil Painters were defined as those whose initial strategy was frequently that of writing down thoughts as they occur to them, organizing and revising them only later (Chandler, 1993: 33).

Describing the difference between the two strategies Chandler states,

¹³ The online Concise Oxford English Dictionary (<http://www.askoxford.com/>) defines the word ‘metaphor’ as, ‘A figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to something to which it is not literally applicable (e.g. food for thought); a thing symbolic of something else... from the Greek metapherein ‘to transfer’”.

The initial approach of Oil Painters involves jotting ideas down and organizing them later, reworking the text repeatedly. This is a strategy involving minimal pre-planning (quite unlike the Architectural Strategy) (Chandler, 1993: 33).

Architects were defined as those who indicated frequent use of the 3-stage approach to writing (planning, writing and revising).

The novelist Kurt Vonnegut uses the [oil painting] metaphor in describing his own composing style: Usually I begin with several ideas, start playing with them. They are authentic concerns about things in life that bother me. One way of my dealing with them is in writing. I play with these ideas until they start to feel right. It's something like oil painting. You lay on paint and lay on paint. Suddenly you have something and you frame it (Chandler, 1993: 34-35).

With respect to the water-colour strategy Chandler continues,

As in painting in watercolours, the Watercolour Strategy involves an attempt to produce a complete version relatively rapidly at the first attempt, with minimal revision. Such a precipitative approach (in contrast to writing which is more planned, and/or more extensively revised) is often associated with novice writers. Apart from inexperience, situational factors (such as deadlines or lack of motivation) can of course lead to the first draft being the final one. However, the Watercolour Strategy is also the preferred method of many accomplished writers. For literary writers this may reflect an attempt to retain 'spontaneity', 'truth to feeling', or descriptive accuracy. Other writers may simply feel a need to maintain momentum (Chandler, 1993: 35).

I have quoted Chandler at length because I believe these metaphors help expose the myth that there is only one way to write. An important property of oil paint, for example, is that it dries slowly and may be re-worked over time without becoming 'muddy' in a way that painting with water-colours cannot. Moreover, the surface of an oil painting typically has what is referred to as a 'painterly' texture, revealing the marks of the making. Paintings made using watercolours, by way of contrast, are typically characterized by a sense of freshness and lightness of touch.

While we may be more suited temperamentally to one or the other approach to painting we would not, surely, say that either approach was the wrong one? Each has its problems and advantages.

Writing is a visual medium

Finally, there is no shortage of material evidence to support the idea that writing is a visual medium. Writing is, after all, the representation of language through graphic means.¹⁴ As Drucker (1997:1) observes,

Writing embodies language in an unlimited variety of distinctive forms. History and culture reside in these material means: the chiselled line of the Roman majuscules¹⁵, the worried hand of a remade will, the bureaucratic regularity of a cuneiform account... and the bold sweep of an authoritative pen. In these and an infinitude of other cases, it is clear that significance inheres in the written form of language as much on account of the properties of physical materials as through a text's linguistic content.

There are several aspects of the relationship between word and image to consider in relation to this.

Firstly, writing can be both looked at and read. As a painting such as Rene Magritte's *The Treachery of Images* (*La trahison des images*, 1928–29) ably demonstrates, there is a complex connection between the acts of reading and writing and between looking and reading in much modern art in particular. Morley (2003) provides a comprehensive exploration of this relationship.¹⁶

Secondly, there is also the physical relationship between writing and drawing or painting to consider. By which I mean the sheer physical and mental energy often

¹⁴ <http://www.ancientscripts.com/ws.html>

¹⁵ A large letter used in writing or printing, e.g. a capital letter or any of the large rounded letters uncial used in ancient manuscripts.

¹⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Treachery_of_Images

required for both activities. Should we ever need a reminder of this all we need do is observe the intense concentration of effort demonstrated by a child learning to write.

Much of what might be said about the struggle to write also applies to the struggle to make images, and vice versa. We jot, scrawl, scribble or trace ideas in the form of words as easily, or with as much difficulty, as we might an image. I am sometimes surprised that so little attention is paid to the type of pen or quality of paper used by writers. As in the act of drawing, so too in the act of writing, it seems to me essential 'to be able to feel the connection and texture of the pen [or pencil] on paper' (Goldberg, 1986:5).

Might we then not approach writing in much the same way we approach painting or drawing? Might we not incorporate the use of visual methods into the way we approach the task of writing, not only through the use of such techniques as mind-mapping (see Appendix), but also through making art works in order to stimulate our creativity and overcome writers block?

If, when image /object making, we are unafraid and willing to jump in and make a mess why should our approach to writing be any different? If we can work through our fear of the blank canvas in the studio what is it that prevents us overcoming of fear of the empty page when we sit down to write?

Once more, but with feeling: A refrain

I began this article by returning to concerns raised in an earlier article (Edwards, 1996), wherein I argued that if we are to convey to others the power and sophistication of our clinical practice art therapists need to cultivate their/our own 'voice'. I then addressed some of the difficulties art therapists appear to experience when attempting to articulate their thoughts and feelings in written form along with some of the means for overcoming these; see Appendix. In doing so I drew upon my own struggles to write, in addition to my awareness of the problems experienced by others acquired through my work as an academic, former member of the Editorial Board of *Inscape* and the *International Journal of Art Therapy* and through running writing workshops for students and art therapists.

Finding and developing a 'voice', a style of writing that is uniquely one's own and which carries the authenticity and authority of personal experience requires time. This is not dissimilar to finding one's own style of image or object making. There is a craft element to the process of writing, just as there is in image or object making, and there are skills to be acquired and practiced.

Nor can we just invent an entirely novel argot. So far as going public with our ideas is concerned, clearly there are rules, as well as expectations and personal preferences, that govern what can be said and how it can or should be said. As previously discussed, within the world of academia and publishing whether or not one's 'voice' is accorded significance depends very largely upon the views and rhetorical traditions of those with power or authority (Gergen, 1997). To be heard, and more specifically to be published, more often than not requires accepting these rhetorical traditions and re-shaping one's words accordingly.

Nevertheless, I wish to suggest that these realities should not deter us from developing more creative, reflexive and feeling based ways of writing about art therapy. That is to say, forms of writing that take account of the nature of our emotional engagement with the process of writing, as well as its subject matter. The need to develop forms of writing that are truly capable of conveying our ideas to others, be these employers, colleagues or potential clients, is as pressing today as it ever was.

The question with which I propose to end this article is simply this, Do the rules and traditions of academic writing promote or circumscribe the needs and aspirations of art therapists who wish to write about their? It is to be hope that this article goes some way to answering this.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my thanks to all those students and art therapists who have attended my writing workshops and who, in so doing, have helped me develop my own thinking and writing. Particular thanks are also due to Michael Atkins, Barrie

Damarell, Julie Leeson, Nick Stein and Dr Chris Wood, each of whom read and commented various drafts of this article and to Dr Andrea Gilroy for drawing my attention to the work of Kenneth Gergen.

Biography

David Edwards qualified as an art therapist in 1982, having trained at Goldsmiths College, University of London. In addition to being employed by the University of Sheffield Counselling Service, David works privately as a clinical supervisor. He is also an Associate Lecturer with the Northern Programme for Art Psychotherapy in Sheffield. His book *Art Therapy* was published by Sage in 2004.

Appendix: 29 suggestions to help ease the pain of writing

The best way to learn about the craft of writing is through doing it. However, it is important to remember that our approach to writing is shaped by many factors, including our life experiences and the nature of our own personality (Ditiberio & Jensen, 2007). What works for one person may not work for another.

The suggestions outlined below are not exclusive, nor are they intended to provide a universal panacea to the kinds of difficulty beginning and/or more experienced writers might encounter at various points in the writing process. Nevertheless, some of the following suggestions might help ease the pain.

1. Make a plan or outline of the article you want to write: Try to keep this simple, which is not the same as saying it should be simplistic. Don't try to include too many themes or ideas. These plans do not, of course, need to be linear and may take the form of a mind-map (Buzan, 2006).

A **mind map** is a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea. Mind maps are used to generate, visualize, structure, and classify ideas, and as an aid in

study, organization, problem solving, decision making, and writing (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mind_map).¹⁷

2. Learn to say "no" (when appropriate) to other demands upon your time.
3. Set short term and long term goals: Identify what you want to accomplish; e.g. 500 words by the end of the day, 3,500 by the end of the week.
4. Organise your time: Use time management tools such as 'to do' lists and a filing system that works for you.¹⁸
5. Be flexible: The unexpected happens (sickness, computer malfunctions, car breakdowns, etc.); you will need to be able to adapt to these unscheduled life events.
6. Organize your workplace so that you have everything you need to hand.
7. Relax, get comfortable: It may be obvious to say so, but it is easy to forget that the more relaxed we are the more productive and pleasurable the act of writing is likely to be. As professional writers will confirm, the spaces we write in may have a crucial role to play in this.¹⁹

¹⁷ <http://www.thinkbuzan.com/uk> & <http://www.mind-mapping.co.uk/>

¹⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tickler_file

¹⁹ For a fascinating insight into the variety of spaces in which professional writer's work go to <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/series/writersrooms>

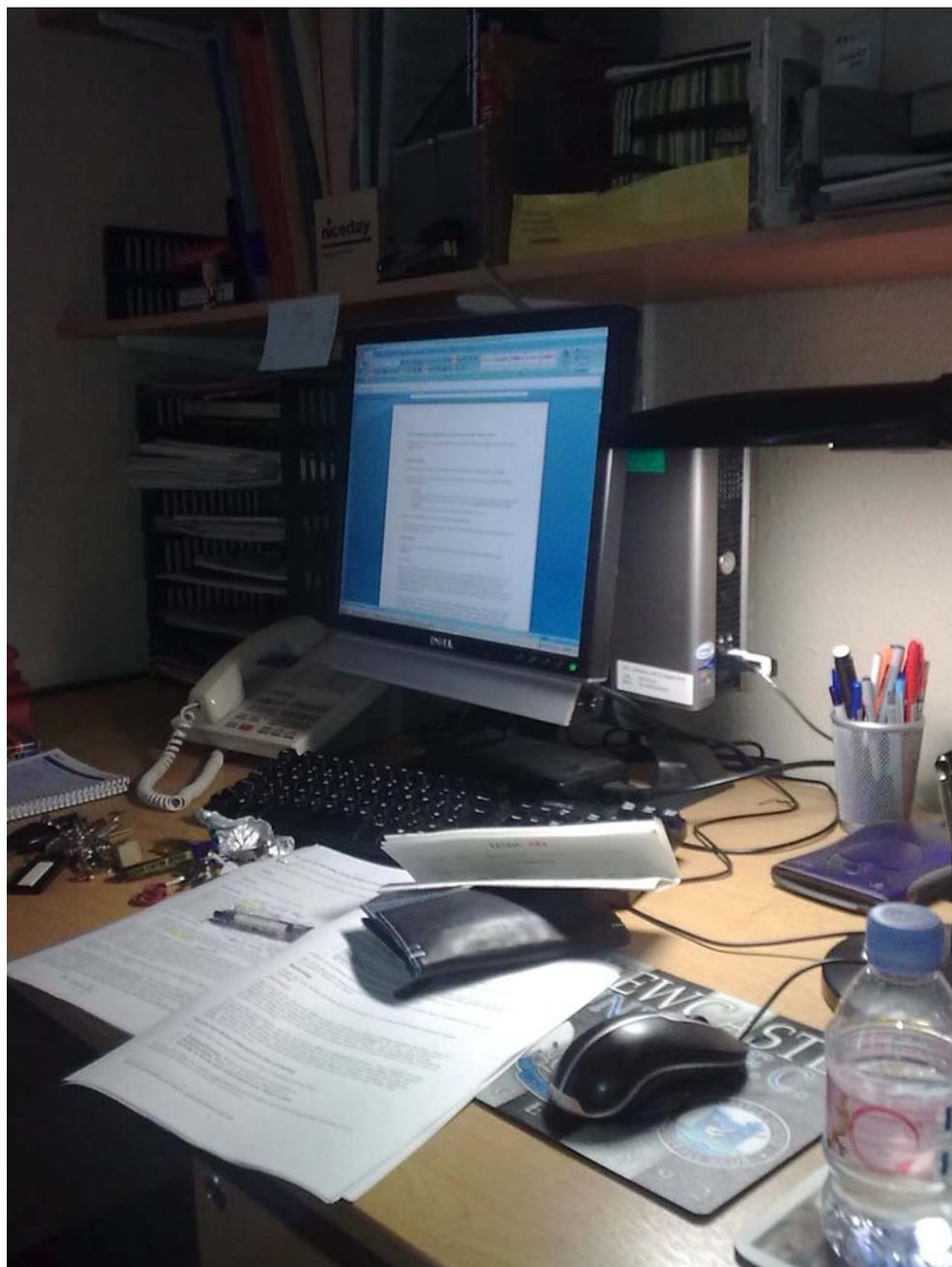


Fig. 4

8. Avoid emotional overload: Include time for rest, relaxation, sleep, eating, exercise and socializing in your writing schedule.

- 9 Take a break: Even a short walk around the block can help us feel more purposeful and energised.

- 12 Let it go: To begin with at least, don't think too much about what you have to say. Say what you want to say without bothering too much about what others might think. Avoid playing it safe. You can always delete or edit what you've written later if it doesn't feel right in the cold light of day.
- 11 Read around your subject and make notes: Always keep a note book to hand when reading or for recording your thoughts at other times.
- 12 Read for pleasure and inspiration as well as for information: Literature gives form to feeling. Great writing grabs our attention, engages our emotions, and is memorable. When you find something you have particularly enjoyed reading, or have been moved by, try to work out how the writer did this.

Reading is also a creative act. As Winston (2000) notes,

Literature, like all art is in effect an adult form of play. Just as a young child can become 'lost in play' so can an adult or an older child become 'lost in a book'. The reader enters an imaginative space in which together with the author they jointly create meaning. (2000: 39)

Reading provides us with an opportunity to experience the mind of another (Knights, 1995). Doing so deepens our capacity to understand others and ourselves, a human quality not without value in the therapeutic setting or in our writing.

- 13 Think about your reader: Obvious though it may be to say so, before you can be in a position to inform, persuade, educate or instruct your reader, you must first of all gain and hold their attention. So be sure to cut out anything you write that you find boring or uninteresting!
- 14 Free writing: One area in which writing and the visual arts overlap is in the use of what the Surrealists referred to as 'pure psychic automatism'. Andre Breton, the founder of the movement, defined Surrealism as,

Pure psychic automatism, by which it is intended to express, verbally, in writing, or by other means, the real process of thought. Thought's dictation in the absence of all control exercised by the reason outside all aesthetic or moral preoccupations. (Breton in Chipp, 1973: 412)

Here, at the very heart of one of the Twentieth Century's most influential forms of artistic practice, we have in all but name Freud's concept of 'free association'. Free association is the mode of spontaneous thinking encouraged in the patient by the analyst's injunction that they obey the basic rule of psychoanalysis and report all thoughts without self-censorship.²⁰

Linked to the notion of writing without self-censorship is free writing, also called stream-of-consciousness writing. In free writing a person writes continuously for a set period of time without regard to spelling, grammar or topic.

In *Writing Down the Bones*, Natalie Goldberg (Goldberg, 1986) offers the following six rules for this approach.

1. *Keep your hand moving.* (Don't pause to reread the line you have just written. That's stalling and trying to get control of what you're saying.)
2. *Don't cross out.* (That is editing as you write. Even if you write something you didn't mean to write, leave it.)
3. *Don't worry about spelling, punctuation, grammar.* (Don't even care about staying within the margins and lines on the page.)
4. *Lose control.*
5. *Don't think. Don't get logical.*

²⁰ Laplanche and Pontalis (1988:169) define free association as the 'Method according to which voice must be given to all thoughts without exception which enter the mind, whether such thoughts are based upon a specific element (word, number dream-image or any kind of idea at all) or produced spontaneously'.

6. *Go for the jugular.* (If something comes up in your writing that is scary or naked, dive right into it. It probably has lots of energy.) (Goldberg, 1986: 8).

Free writing produces raw, disjointed, 'messy' material, but can be useful in helping writers overcome blocks of apathy and self-criticism.

Some writers use the technique to collect initial thoughts and ideas on a topic, often as a preliminary to formal writing (see Elbow, 1998).

- 15 Consider keeping a journal: Doing so can provide you with a private space in which to write about and reflect upon all aspects of your learning and/or clinical experience; whether this is in response to a talk, or to something that happened in a session with a client.

There is no right or wrong way of keeping a journal and people journal in different ways and for different reasons. A journal can be a vehicle for self-discovery, a place to generate and capture ideas, a place to let off steam, a space in which confess and more (see, for example, Bolton, 2001; Bolton et al, 2004; Hunt, 2000; Milner, 1989, 1990).

A journal can also provide a training ground for the writer; a safe – 'transitional' – space in which, free from the demands (real or imagined) of others (peers, course tutors, journal editors) we are free (potentially) to develop or sharpen up our writing skills. As Barwick (2003) suggests,

The temporary withdrawal to the space that the journal represents... is not so much a defensive manoeuvre as a tactical one: a chance to re-gather, to re-form before returning to the fray (2003: 69).

Phyllis Creme (2008: 62), like Barwick (2003), also argues the case for the use of journal writing as a means of creating a 'potential' or 'transitional space' (Winnicott, 1980) in which 'different kinds of writing, knowing and

experiencing' might take place. Her central argument is that in form and function what she terms the 'learning journal' affords a space for creative play.

Spaces for learning need to allow participants to feel that their ideas are respected and treated with interest... So we look for spaces that are safe, yet challenging and encouraging of risk... wherein the learner can be engaged and challenged but also feel free to play with ideas. Within such a psychological and social space, which needs time and the right setting, we may sort out and develop our ideas as we bring them together with those of others (Creme, 2008: 50).

According to Hunt (2000: 174),

Free, un-crafted writing, which is closer to speaking, may be used as a means of getting in touch with the raw material of the self. This might be done in the form of a journal or diary and might be a person's first attempt to place herself on the page... instead of a chaotic and anxiety-provoking muddle of feelings 'in here', the words on the page bring a sense of order and control, a basis on which to build'.

In stating this, Hunt is referring primarily to the use of writing for therapeutic ends. It seems to me, however, that free writing of the kind of advocated by Barwick (2003), Creme (2008) and Hunt (2000), amongst others, might also help art therapists contain and reflect upon their encounters with clients and their images. See, for example, Sugg (2008) for a thoughtful discussion on writing in relation to supervision. In adopting such an approach to writing about aspects of our work we may, perhaps, liberate it from the demands of the 'Inner Critic' and from the fear of judgement by others, especially, perhaps, from the judgement of editors and peer reviewers.

- 16 Don't waste words: Always ask yourself if you could put what you are saying more succinctly. In his 10 Rules of Writing, the American writer Elmore

Leonard advises would be authors to 'leave out the part that readers tend to skip'.²¹ It is advice I consider to be worth following.

- 17 Avoid using clichés: Or any form of language that is elitist (in the sense of being wilfully exclusive), sexist, racist or deliberately offensive for some other reason.
- 18 Give your article or paper an interesting title: All too often these tend to be blandly descriptive or downright dull. This doesn't, of course, have to be the case. Two of the more memorable titles for articles published in *Inscape* have been provided by Helen Greenwood with her co-written paper *Taking the Piss* (Greenwood and Layton, 1991) and *Cracked Pots: Art Therapy and Psychosis* (Greenwood, 1994). In addition to being informative and conveying something of the content of each article, these titles also grab the reader's attention.
- 19 Use headings and sub-headings: To break up large areas of text and, more importantly to help guide and orientate your reader.
- 20 Be selective in your use of quotations: No one will be overly impressed by the excessive use of quotations, particularly if they are familiar ones. Only use quotations that are sufficient for the intended purpose, which is usually to provide supporting evidence for what you are saying. Don't use a quotation to state the obvious. And if you do quote the work of others, take care to reference this correctly. The ability to reference accurately is important not simply in order to establish the ownership and integrity of the writing being undertaken, but because a failure to do so can be regarded as an act of plagiarism. So, with this in mind...
- 21 Beware acts of engaging in deliberate or inadvertent acts of plagiarism: Plagiarism is a term used to describe passing off other people's ideas as your own. As such plagiarism encompasses both including word for word extracts from another person's work in your own work without the appropriate use of

²¹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2010/feb/20/ten-rules-for-writing-fiction-part-one>

quotation marks and summarising or paraphrasing another person's work without due acknowledgement.

At a time when the available technology allows us to copy and paste extracts of any given text with just a couple of clicks of a mouse the act of plagiarism, whether inadvertent or deliberate, is one that it is extremely easy to commit. Nevertheless, plagiarism is regarded as serious professional misconduct. In 2008, for example, the celebrity psychiatrist Raj Persaud was suspended from practising medicine for copying the work of other academics in a book and in articles without due acknowledgement.²²

- 22 Don't be afraid to use footnotes and/or endnotes: Although they are sometimes unpopular with publishers and editors, both have their practical uses and creative potential.²³
- 23 Writing is a form of thinking: You don't have to work out everything you want to say before you start writing, start writing before your head feels too full.
- 24 Writing can be difficult and lonely too, so get as much help from others as you can: Some of this help may be found in the form of the many books currently available on how to write. Six books I have found particularly helpful are those by Brande (1996), Ditiberio and Jensen (2007), Elbow (1998); Gardner and Coombs (2010), Geraghty (2006), and MacMillan and Clark (1998).
- 25 Writing also takes time: So if you are working to a deadline, don't leave everything to the last possible minute.

²² <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article4179597.ece> & <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/7452877.stm>

²³ Formally, footnotes tend to be used for two main purposes. Firstly to direct reader's to additional or alternative sources of information, as in,¹ See American Psychological Association (2009) for detailed guidance on the use of footnotes and endnotes (<http://www.apa.org/pubs/books/4200068.aspx>) and Grafton (1997) and Zerby (2003) for discussions on the history of its usage; and secondly to explain or elaborate a particular point. The literary work of the American novelist and essayist David Foster Wallace (2007), brilliantly illustrates how footnotes can be used to creative, and humorous, effect; see also <http://www.charlierose.com/view/clip/9540>

- 26 If you get stuck, start work on another section or even another piece of writing. Alternatively, try writing in another room or possibly in another building.
- 27 Try to keep yourself motivated: Writing can be tedious, so it is important to remember why you are writing this paper, article, chapter or book and why having it published is important to you and, hopefully, to others.
- 28 From time to time read aloud what you have written: Doing so will almost certainly reveal those passages that do not flow smoothly or logically.
- 29 Finally, write regularly and keep on writing: Try to get into a rhythm. Write for a set time (however long feels comfortable) without stopping. Leave the task of tidying up your prose and punctuation, or correcting your spelling, until after you have stopped writing. As previously stated, the best way to learn how to write is through doing it.

References

- Antoniou, M. & Moriarty, J. (2008) What can academic writers learn from creative writers? Developing guidance and support for lecturers in Higher Education, *Teaching in Higher Education*, 13 (2) April: 157-167.
- Antony, M.M. & Swinson, R.P. (1998) *When Perfect Isn't Good Enough*, Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications
- American Psychological Association (2009) *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Revised edition*, Washington: American Psychological Association
- Barwick, N. (2003) Mad Desire and Feverish melancholy: Reflections on the Psychodynamics of Writing and Presenting, *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, 20 (1): 59-71
- Basco, M.R. (2000) *Never Good Enough*, New York: Simon & Schuster.

Bolton, G. (2001) *Reflective Practice*, London: Paul Chapman Publishing

Bolton, G., Howlett, S., Lago, C. & Wright, J.K. (eds.) (2004) *Writing Cures*, London: Brunner Routledge

Brande, D (1996) *Becoming a Writer*, London: Macmillan

Brettle, A. (2006) *How to do a literature search*, Information Sheet R1, Lutterworth, British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy

British Library (2010) why Write? Available at <http://www.bl.uk/learning/artimages/why/whywrite.html> [Accessed, 7 November 2010]

Britton, R. (1999) *Belief and Imagination*, Chapter 15, London: Routledge

Burka, J. B. & Yuen, L.M. (1983) *Procrastination*, Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press

Buzan, T. (2006) *The Ultimate Book of Mind Maps*, London: Harper Thorsons

Byatt, A.S. (2008) Twisted yarns, *The Guardian*, Saturday 21 June 2008, Available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/jun/21/saturdayreviewsfeatres.guardianreview9> [Accessed, 18 October 2010]

Chandler, D. (1993): 'Writing Strategies and Writers' Tools', *English Today*, 9(2): 32-8

Creme, P. (2008) A Space for Academic Play: Student learning journals as transitional writing, *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education*, 7(1) 49–64

Chipp, H.B. (1973) *Theories of Modern Art*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ditiberio, J.K. & Jensen, G.H. (2007) *Writing and Personality*, London: Karnac Books

Drucker, J. (1997) *Figuring the Word*. Available at http://www.technekai.com/ewriting/media/drucker_TheArtOfTheWrittenImage.doc [Accessed, 7 November 2010]

Edwards, D. G. (1996) Writing about Art Therapy, *Inscape* (Journal of the British Association of Art Therapists) 1(2): 46-51.

Elbow, P. (1998), *Writing without Teachers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Flaherty, A.W. (2005) *The Midnight Disease: The Drive to Write, Writer's Block, and the Creative Brain*, New York: Mariner Books.

Fry, S. (2009) Damn, damn, damn, damn, damn. Available at <http://www.stephenfry.com/2009/08/28/damn-damn-damn-damn-damn/> [Accessed, 7 November 2010]

Gardner, F. & Coombs, S.J. (Eds) (2010) *Researching, Reflecting and Writing about Work*, London: Routledge.

Geraghty, M. (2006) *The five-minute writer*, Oxford: How to Books.

Grafton, A. (1997) *The footnote: A curious history*, London: Faber

Gergen, K. J. (1997) Who Speaks and Who Replies in Human Science Scholarship? *History of the Human Sciences*, 10(3): 151-173.

Goldberg, N. (1986) *Writing Down the Bones*, London: Shambhala

Goldstein, H. (1998). On writing for publication. *Families in Society*, 79(5): 451–454.

Greenwood, H. (1994) Cracked Pots: Art Therapy and Psychosis, *Inscape* (Journal of the British Association of Art Therapists) 1(2): 11-14.

Greenwood, H. & Layton, G. (1991) Taking the Piss, *Inscape* (Journal of the British Association of Art Therapists) Winter: 7-17.

Hjortshoj, K. (2001) *Understanding Writing Blocks*, New York Oxford University Press, Inc.

Hunt, C. (2000) *The Therapeutic Dimensions of Autobiography in Creative Writing*, London: Jessica Kingsley

Knaus, W.J. (1998) *Do It Now!* New York: Wiley.

Knights, B. (1995) *The Listening Reader*, London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Kruger, K.S. (2008) Clues and Cloth: Seeking Ourselves in 'The Fabric of Myth', *The Fabric of Myth* (Exhibition Catalogue), Compton Verney.

Laplanche, J. and Pontalis, J.B. (1988) *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. London: Karnac & The Institute of Psycho-Analysis.

Larcombe, A. Gardner, F. & Coombs, S.J. (2010) Going public – getting your work out to a wider audience, Chapter 10 in F. Gardner & S. J. Coombs (Eds) *Researching, Reflecting and Writing about Work*, London: Routledge.

Leader, Z. (1991) *Writer's Block*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

MacMillan, M. & Clack, D. (1998) *Learning and Writing in Counselling*, London: Sage.

Milner, M. (1989) *Eternity's Sunrise: A Way of Keeping a Diary*, London: Virago.

Milner, M. (1990) *A Life of One's Own*, London: Virago

Morley, S. (2003) *Writing on the Wall: Word and Image in Modern Art*, London: Thames and Hudson

Murray (2006) Reconfiguring academic writing. Paper presented at the Society for Research into Higher Education conference, December, Brighton.

Nailburg, S. (2003) Mentors at the Gate: Editors Talk about Clinical Writing for Journal Publication, *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 31(3): 295-313.

Overholser, J. C. (2008) Advancing the Field of Psychotherapy Through Innovation and Integration in Scholarly Works, *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 38: 97-104.

Orwell, G. (1968) Why I Write, in *Decline of the English Murder and other essays*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Perry, A. (2002) *Isn't It About Time?* London: Worth Publishing

Sugg, S. (2008) Playful on paper, *Therapy Today*, February: 37-39.

Mack, K & Skjei, E. (1979) *Overcoming Writing Blocks*, Los Angeles, CA: J.P. Tarcher

Wallace, D.F. (2007) *Consider the Lobster and Other Essays*, London: Abacus

Winnicott, D.W. (1980) *Playing and Reality*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books

Winston, T. (2000) Reading and Playing in the 'potential space', *Changes*, 18(1): 35-41

Veroff, J. (1992) Writing, in K.E. Rudestam & R.R. Newton (eds), *Surviving Your Dissertation*, London: Sage

Zerby, C. (2003) *The Devil's Detail: A History of Footnotes*, New York: Simon & Schuster