



ABOUT WAC WRITING & RESEARCH WORKSHOPS (FIRST- & SECOND-YEAR COURSES)

Students at OCAD University are asked to bring together studio, research, and writing. They must also consider the culture of their discipline, visual culture, and context in relation to their own creative production and then bring it all together in a range of visual and written texts. The facilitated workshops below support students in accomplishing communication and writing endeavors in first and second year. These workshops are 30 to 40 minutes long.

For third- and fourth-year WAC courses, there are also [longer workshops available](#) addressing writing skills and strategies specific to upper-year **studio research**, **presentation**, and **workshop courses**.

TIPS for Faculty:

1. These in-class workshops are most effective when in sync with an upcoming assignment; you are encouraged to discuss timing of workshop delivery so that it may best support students in their coursework.
2. Please send in a booking request by following [this link](#).
3. You can contact Rebecca Diederichs (rdiederichs@ocadu.ca) to discuss which workshop might best support your students' coursework.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS:

1. Understanding the role(s) of context in making

Students consider the *significance and relevance of context* in the making of art and design work and writing about art and design. In pairs or small groups, students respond to documentation of an art or design project presented in disparate contexts and explore context, research, and engage in discussion about their findings. They will be guided through a strategy of analysis focusing on what they *see*, what is *implied* by visual cues, and what are the *intentions and implications* of visual information within an art or design context.

2. Generating and expanding a concept

This session offers a hands-on overview of idea-generating strategies and effective ways to get started both in the studio as well as on writing assignments. Working in groups, students will consider a sample assignment. They will be invited to practice brainstorming exercises to generate key words and themes and compile focused research together. Students discuss ways they might apply these strategies to their practice at various levels of study.

3. Tracking, documenting, and citing information

Students share how they collect and document information as part of their working process. This will lead to a focused introduction to ways to harness and mine critical research inquiries from early in their creative practice. Working in pairs or small groups, students critically evaluate a resource and offer ways that this resource might further the conceptual



development of an art or design project: effective notetaking; record explorations and queries in a variety of ways through research journals, use of online applications and programs, personal blogs, etc.; discuss research as a tool for expanding a concept, responding to an art or design challenge.

4. Strategies for reading and engaging with visual and written texts and critical inquiry

In art and design production and through writing, deliberate rhetorical and vocabulary choices emphasize the intentions of the maker. Students work in small groups to critically analyze a visual text by a practicing artist or designer. Students assess how context and intention inform visual and written process, presentation, and analysis; consider engagement with a variety of sources; discuss the value of discipline-specific articulation; and evaluate the value, context, and relevance of varied research for analyzing and discussing art, design, or theory.

5. Vocabulary building

Students engage in generative activities for identifying and applying discipline-specific vocabulary. They will be introduced to tools for locating, tracking, and defining the terms they encounter in their coursework or readings and begin to start, build, and maintain their own personal lexicon/glossary of terms and definitions. Through discussion, students assess vocabulary as part of their creative and academic practice and how it enhances their communication skills as well as their articulation of intentions in their own work. Upper-level students analyze and apply discipline-specific vocabulary in ways that extend discussion out into the broader professional community.

6. Description and analysis

How are these practices different? How do they work together? Students engage in discussion to consider and describe these practices as a class. In smaller groups, they will work together to develop a critical analysis of an art or design project through a series of prompts and consider ways to combine strategies of description and analysis; develop a critical rationale for their research; and assess how these practices contribute to their own practice and/or discipline.

7. Vocabulary of Critique

Engaging in critique involves entering into dialogue with peers and instructors. Familiarity with the language and vocabulary of critique provides students with strategies to help them manage this new and challenging aspect of creative production. This is a discussion-based workshop where students are invited to ask questions, present concerns, and then practice critiquing a sample art or design work.