

ATOL: Art Therapy OnLine

Writing for Publication in Art Therapy: Reflections on an ATOL Workshop

**Christopher Brown, Jenny Gibbons, ETTY Mathews, Dean
Reddick, Rosemary Sawyer, Ros Taylor**

Introduction

“Do you feel there is something you would like to say? Do you have an idea but are unsure how to write about it? Clinical work stimulates ideas, which may or may not be shared with others, and the thought of going public may feel scary. Few of us are born writers but all it takes is a bit of know-how and some practice. This workshop is designed to help you focus your thinking, approach the task of writing with confidence, and to explain the process of publishing. It will be held at a private address and places will be limited to 6 participants on a first come basis.”

– ATOL Workshop publicity statement.

There were six people in the two-hour workshop: four participants, Jenny, Ros, ETTY, Rosie, and two facilitators, Chris and Dean. It was held in a room in Chris's flat. The workshop was free for participants in keeping with ATOL's ethos. Participants were given a hand-out prior to the day, which contained information on how to approach and structure writing and what makes a good article. The hand-out also included a selection of the different kinds of articles and media ATOL publishes that we hoped they would look at beforehand (see appendix).

Together we thought about some of the ATOL publications and discussed what else people had been reading about art therapy. This led on to what kinds of writing people were interested in; accounts of clinical work, reports and evidence based practice for example. Being a small group enabled fairly free ranging conversations to develop that revealed individual concerns about the writing process. These were explored and the facilitators drew on their own experiences of writing by way of illustration.

The workshop allowed the group to find a voice for both interests and anxieties about writing. This generated some positive energy that led to an idea about everyone writing a brief reflection on the event to be sent to the facilitators who agreed to provide some feedback to each author. Further thinking by Dean and Chris about these reflective pieces led to the idea of including a more formal editing process along with the feedback. Each piece was edited, three by Dean and three by Chris, using Microsoft Word's functions of track changes and comments. These were then shared among the whole group with a request for further reflections on the process of editing. This written material forms the basis for the article along with some discussion of themes and issues that arose. These included: reasons for writing, the diversity of writings on art therapy, exploration of the parallel process between writing and making art, post-training isolation and the value of peer groups, inhibitions to writing and the need for a space in order to write.

Reflections on the workshop

We now present the reflective pieces with comments and track changes visible. In this way we hope to allow readers inside the editing process and provide a greater sense of what this experience was like. Some of the longer deletions appear in appendix 1.

Writing for Publication Workshop: A Reflection

Ros Taylor October 2017

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Some weeks have passed since attending the Writing for Publication Workshop, along with three other participants, which was facilitated by Chris Brown and Dean Reddick. It seemed appropriate that a writing task came out of it, but as a working mother of two small children - soon to be three - finding time for this has proved difficult. A deadline had been set though, and although quality thinking-time was scarce, the workshop gave me a considerable amount to think about and I was determined to carve out some time to put these thoughts down on paper.

In the workshop, Dean revealed that he had once been told that writing is like art making. This is a helpful analogy for me, as with both practices, find the blank page can seem equally daunting and exciting. There seems to be a parallel with writing and being an art therapist; a rewarding yet lonely endeavor. Coming together in this way made me realise the importance of peer support in all aspects of work as an art therapist: peer supervision, art making together, the exchange of recommended reading material, sharing ideas for writing and drafts.

A small group of people coming together to discuss a common cause can be very exciting and supportive: ideas flow and form, experiences can be shared. The interest generated reminded me of a group of new mums I worked with, who once the art therapy was over, had a thirst for art making and carved out a couple of hours a week to meet at each other's houses to continue their creativity.

The following list comprises ideas I took away from the morning and thoughts that I've had since.

- Encouragement helps.
- I would certainly like to come together as a group again, sharing what we are doing; peer support.
- Sending drafts to others for scrutiny might feel exposing, but is helpful.
- Time alone is also valuable; thinking space.
- I am excited by the things I have been doing in the field since leaving

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the course.

- There are other ways of recording other than writing: films, artwork etc.
- I may already have the beginnings of a piece of writing, in the form of process notes etc.
- We have a duty to our profession to share experiences that may not have been shared before.
- If there is a hole in the literature, plug it!
- Papers need to be accessible.
- Although there is a need for quantitative research, this can be very dry and uninspiring to read; anecdotal evidence could be as strong as statistics and certainly more rewarding for the reader.
- Read examples of good writing,
- Something you have read that didn't speak to you initially, may sing to you once you have experienced it.
- Reading makes writing better. Thinking about the things you enjoy reading and why, and the things you don't and why, allows you to write better.

Time to meet with peers, time to myself, time to read feels difficult to grasp at this moment in my life and the vastness of the task of writing and all that it entails seems out of reach. However, in the same way that going to an exhibition can inspire me to want to make a piece of art, the writing workshop has made me eager to read more and to write. I have perused more articles online; re-reading things that I thought had been particular good and thinking about why they had that effect. I am excited about discovering literature relevant to my interests and have a thirst to share more with peers.

Even if the writing has not yet begun, the enthusiasm has - in earnest. I have material for some gaps in the art therapy literature. I may even have the beginnings of some text that I hadn't thought about before as publishable. Now just to find the time, and start filling the blank page...

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ATOL: Writing for Publication

Etty Mathews

I arrived early, after accepting a late cancellation, and thought how the project [that](#) had prompted me to apply for the workshop had since been put on hold. This realisation, combined with the fact I was still unemployed since graduating from Goldsmiths, provoked feelings of shame. I felt a fraudulent imposter as I sat waiting for the others to arrive.

On the wall was a black and white photograph of a road accident in Clerkenwell ([Colin O'Brien, 1962](#)). I wondered about the fate of the people within it, specifically, of the girl standing in the intersection of the road [and](#), wondered where she was now. As Rosie, Ros and Jenny arrived I questioned if they were even alive when the incident happened? [I seemed to have identified with the photograph through my feelings of shame.](#)

Our session began as Chris and Dean explained the parameters of ATOL and of the workshop; we reviewed the comprehensive notes and texts previously given and shared our understanding of them. We went on to outline our own aims.

Rosie seemed curious about the exacting reports she wrote, perhaps [conveying a need to validate their craft, I thought.](#) Jenny talked of writing about art therapy with expectant mothers and their children and the affect of trauma on this [client](#) group, herself currently heavily [pregnant](#). Ros seemed to want to evidence the success of the practise of art therapy within a school environment. Dean shared his feelings [of the](#) inherent joy of making connections and resonances in writing, whilst Chris seemed to advocate a more rigorous, self disciplined [aspect to writing, that might even feel punitive at times.](#) We shared [our](#) views on writing as well as giving examples of our most recent reading. [In](#) doing so differing facets and perspectives [emerged](#) [and](#) I felt less of an imposter.

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Since graduating I have felt a sense of loss that I could no longer have total online access to [Goldsmiths Library](#). Perhaps I hold a subconscious desire towards elements of being a student? I considered the emotional change I had experienced and how reading has almost taken the role of a transitional object enabling me to leave fulltime education whilst transitioning into work.

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Whilst reflecting on the notes we considered the concept of who was our writing for.

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Comment [2]: This sentence does not work well. It might be better to delete the emotional change bit then something like 'Since leaving full-time education, reading seems to have become a transitional object for me whilst I transition into work'.

I can position my previous writing within an ego driven narcissistic flood of experiential feelings but my wish now is for a more mature sense of writing for others. Dean tentatively suggested that we should all write a reflective piece on the session and somehow it seemed that we had all agreed to do so!

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As I descended in the lift I reflected on the nurturing, encouraging experience I had as part of this group. Voices were heard, boundaries were held, and practical suggestions were given. As I walked out onto the noisy City road I pondered what direction I might take.

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I now work as an art psychotherapist for two different organizations. Perhaps I will be able to write about some aspect of my work, and in turn someone might read it.
Etty Mathews.

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Reflections on Writing for Publication Workshop

As a new editor for ATOL I was excited to co-host this workshop with Chris, an experienced editor and published author. I suppose I still feel like I am a fairly inexperienced writer and editor myself, despite the publication of an edited book 'Art Therapy in the Early Years' and my years working with students at Goldsmiths University of London. I liked the setting in Chris's flat, being up high seemed to suggest new perspectives which were appropriate to the workshop.

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I felt the group worked well together, this was a relief as one can never know beforehand how a group will come together. Chris and I had worked together

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previously so I was confident we could facilitate jointly and I was pleased with the flow of the workshop, which I thought was good. My sense was that all of the members of the group contributed and that we were able to learn from each other without the workshop being too didactic. This is often a concern for me, that the teaching element might overly disrupt the group process, I didn't think this was a problem with this workshop and I felt a more collegial atmosphere developed.

I enjoyed and was stimulated by the theme that arose around evidence-based writing, finding, I had a strong opinion about this, it was valuable for me to be able to portray my feelings in the group and to hear others' ideas and experiences. There was something affirming in the idea that our evidence is part of a narrative tradition and this in itself is an important kind of evidence with a long and rich history. Since the workshop I have thought a bit more about this theme. I came to realise that even very technical and empirical fields of knowledge, for example physics or maths, are often accessible through written and spoken narratives. I have read a number of popular science books in my life and the skill of the writing in these books is to present complex scientific ideas and data within a narrative form, which is accessible to a large audience. Perhaps there is something for us to consider in our approach to evidence based writing such as, for example, Andrea Gilroy's writing about evidence based practice. From the workshop I realised that I am not interested in writing for a narrow and powerful audience of commissioners and psychologists.

I also thought the discussion of our art making in relation to writing was helpful and as a group we seemed able to explore some of the different ways we work. There is some overlap or common elements in speaking, writing and making art in the presence of another, which is to do with the importance of the audience. As I am coming to the end of this piece of writing I am more conscious of my audience (you the readers) and of wondering how you will hear what I have written. What are our internal reading voices like? Do they change with different types of writing?

Dean Reddick

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500 words about writing-Jenny Gibbons

It has taken me three weeks to find the time to sit and contemplate writing a reflective piece in response to the ATOL writing workshop. I'm in my therapy room, after school with the hustle and bustle outside of after school clubs, meetings and hoovers as a soundscape. I wonder where I should be writing and think of an 'ideal' space to work, a fantasy of a clear, organised space to reflect. Creative, calm, my books and articles and stationary all laid out. I don't think this is it!

Before the workshop, as I worked through the reading list and realised I had never considered such different ways of sharing work for publication before. I knew there were certain types of writing I devoured more than others, but the range of styles and writer/reader intention and voice was a surprise. It made me think about my own style of writing and wonder if I could learn to write in other ways. Before the workshop I thought about what I would like to write about and why I wanted to do it. I am a supervisor for students on placement, so the topic of 'who to write about' in a MCCS or FCR always makes me think the same, who or what in my caseload would be my focus for writing?

I want to write about A and his mum. Documenting the experiences, anxieties, tears, confusion and patchy memories between a seven year old boy and his mother who are working to try and repair a damaged attachment after a very long separation when A was sent to Nigeria aged 2. There are moments of pure joy between A and his mum, in the realisation and rediscovery of love between them as they find ways to show or tell each other in the therapy room. There are also devastatingly poignant moments as A and mum start to revisit the separation and the abandonment, loss and loneliness that was felt by both of them. It feels intimate and a privilege to be part of. I feel this work is culturally relevant to working in an inner London primary school, as the practice of parents sending their child to intermittently live abroad with extended family is not unusual, but the after effects of the damaged attachment can be devastating and the impact on school relationships significant.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [3]: Underline or bold for a heading

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [4]: Nice punchy opening which paints a picture for the reader

Dean 30/11/2017 08:33

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Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [5]: This sentence is incomplete. It works better, I think, if you change the 'and' for an 'I'

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [6]: Here is a good example of you writing for the reader, you are telling us something which helps us understand the rest of your writing.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [7]: You might use a colon here as the following sentence is a run-on sentence.

Dean 30/11/2017 08:36

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Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [8]: This is a nice piece of writing and gives the reader a taste of how you might write a case study about e and his Mum

During the thought provoking and encouraging discussions from the workshop I reflect about gaps in literature and I need to read more around more. I think I want to write about A because I'm enjoying the work and want to share it, but also so that I have a reason to research and space to think reflectively. I wonder why I don't feel able to do this without a 'purpose' such as writing; I should be able to do this anyway. I haven't written about my work other than reports and proposals since I qualified and I miss it. Since the workshop this feels louder than ever.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [9]: Although I quite like this sentence's rhythm I think you can be more precise here.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [10]: research what?

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [11]: Good point, writing is reflective and part of a reflective process in art therapy.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [12]: absence?

A Bird's Eye View - Writing For Publication

Rosie Sawyer October 2017

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [13]: Nice to have a title, it provides context for the writing.

Art Therapy On-Line (ATOL) is a useful free resource for the independent practitioner. Whilst searching for a paper I noticed an invitation to attend a workshop on 'writing for publication'. I applied out of curiosity and, as a practicing art therapist, seeking an incentive to write about my profession beyond clinical reports. Some months later I found myself approaching the venue on the top floor of a tower block with excitement and a little trepidation.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [14]: This is an interesting opening paragraph, starting with a fact for the reader and then telling us your motivation for attending the workshop.

The workshop was generously facilitated, at no cost to attendees and in line with the 'open access' ethos of ATOL, by Chris Brown and Dean Reddick, both highly experienced art therapists, tutors and writers. Three other (female) art therapists formed the small but friendly group. I wondered why more people had not attended - was it ambivalence towards writing or suspicion of free Continued Professional Development?

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [15]: Nice personal reflection. It would have been interesting to read a line about what you thought about the gendered situation since it something we come across so frequently.

We were e-mailed some useful hints about writing and the editorial process that served as a framework for discussion, and a short but varied reading list of articles published by ATOL. I was struck by the diversity of styles included: first hand accounts, interviews, reviews, photo and video essays, as well as more formal academic papers. This refreshed and broadened my perhaps narrow view of the free material available and made me wonder about what

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [16]: I think a semi colon here because what follows is a complex list.

we read as art therapists and why. I became aware that my current choice of reading material, although necessarily governed by the context in which I work, had become rather 'dry', academic and lacked variety.

Conversations were nudged by Chris and Dean to thoughts around what to write about and looking for gaps in the current art therapy literature. Writing for publication was described as a learning process driven by a 'need to know more', and some of us shared our own methods. Interesting themes emerged from our varied practices including art therapy with people who had experienced the recent and on-going trauma of the Grenfell Tower fire. Another person was interested in writing about working with mothers and babies and the added dynamic of her own pregnancy. Clinical reports to describe the client's story and a sensitive awareness of their potential readership were also talked about.

At the end of the workshop the familiar ending ritual of exchanging emails was abandoned in favour of Dean setting this reflection as an 'optional' task. The deadline gave us some structure and a way to move forward. Many thanks to Chris and Dean for providing a 'bird's eye view' of writing about art therapy, a space to think about this, and the other attendees for their contribution. It seems important that art therapists continue to take up the challenge to creatively explain and describe what we do. There are many obvious parallels between writing and the art making process: the blank page, taking risks, time needed for the maturation and refining of ideas, and the pull of procrastination. Written words are tools as much as the art materials we use. I personally hope to read, and write, more.

(502 words)

Reflection on Writing for Publication Workshop Christopher Brown

Over the years I have increasingly come to enjoy writing and the processes involved in bringing writing to publication. In both these activities I have been

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [17]: I like the movement between your personal reflections and wondering to a narrative of the group and workshop, this provides a good structure to the writing. I wonder if you were conscious of this as you wrote?

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [18]: Good use of an example to illustrate a point.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [19]: I think this sentence reads better if you lead with 'We also talked about clinical reports'

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [20]: can you find a way of not using end and ending?

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [21]: Nice use of the title to make a summing up.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [22]: Nice phrase, these moments in our writing where rhythm and iteration (p and p) etc. occur add style and flavour.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [23]: Editors like it when you include a word count!

helped by more experienced colleagues. When Dean suggested ATOL might provide a free workshop to encourage new writers I immediately agreed and set about putting my own thoughts, and bits and pieces about writing collected over the years, into a document to form the basis of the workshop. It was also important that it was going to be free of charge as the whole ethos of ATOL is that it is open access (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_access).

In fact the workshop started by my giving a brief, unplanned history of the journal, which gave some context and led nicely to discussion of a selection of the different kinds of article ATOL publishes that the group had been asked to read beforehand. I was struck by everyone's response of how broad a range of articles there were. It reminded my how blinkered we can become in what we choose to read and the importance of the diversity of the journal.

People took turns to share what they have been reading and what aspects of their work they may wish to write about. One of the things that emerged from this was the pressure felt by individuals, perhaps working in isolation from peers, to prove the efficacy of art therapy to managers. We talked about the way hearing about the work when giving examples during feedback opportunities, can bring the value alive to an audience in a way that statistics fail to do. Dean made the important point that the stories of the clinical work are our evidence. I felt the group were glad of an opportunity to tell others about their work in an informal setting without anxiety-inducing agendas.

However, writing invariably brings anxieties with it along with ways to defend against them. A classic example is all the things that can get in the way of actually starting, in a similar way, perhaps, to that other creative activity – making art.

This prevaricating may link to issues of self-confidence and the kind of feedback one gets on what you have created. I shared my own experience of having a submission repeatedly turned down as unsuitable for publication, but from this I learned a valuable lesson about not over-reaching myself and losing coherent argument in the process. The need to gain confidence in a safe setting was thought about. We shared our own experiences of having.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04
Comment [24]: Hyperlinks are increasingly used in online publications.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04
Comment [25]: I don't think this is necessary here

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04
Comment [26]: 'provided' rather than 'giving' and then 'gave'

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04
Comment [27]: This sentence, although coherent, is rather complex and long and could be simplified

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04
Comment [28]: me

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04
Comment [29]: 'ATOL journal' for clarity?

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04
Comment [30]: nice use of italics for emphasis

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Dean 11/4/2018 12:04
Comment [31]: I probably would try and avoid starting a new paragraph with 'However'

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04
Comment [32]: and how

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Comment [33]: check for clarity of meaning.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04
Comment [34]: would this be better on a new line?

and not having places to do this. Post-training peer groups are often places where discussion leads to creative output. Dean suggested we could all write a short reflective piece on our experience of the workshop to be shared between us as a group. I found myself feeling uncertain if I wanted to commit myself to yet another group activity, later I thought this was perhaps linked to unresolved dependency issues. In the end it felt a good thing to do.

Dean 11/4/2018 12:04

Comment [35]: This is intriguing but a bit cryptic for the reader.

Discussion

In the reflective writing all the writers introduce themselves in relation to the workshop (newly graduated, experienced editor etc.). This tells the reader who the writer is and also describes the writer in relation to the group and the group task. These introductions, which all have an autobiographical element, contextualise the writing that follows and also provide insights for the reader into the dynamics and possible anxieties in the group. These introductions may also serve as a way into the writing for writers, a way of finding a position for ourselves from which to write.

There are many references to the setting of the workshop in Chris' flat, the top floor of a tower block. The writing about the setting was creatively used by some writers as a metaphor, for example in the title 'A Bird's Eye View', and as a way to think about the space (both physical and metaphorical) needed for writing. It seems to follow that after the introductions comes the writing about the place, it tells the reader who is writing and where. It is interesting to notice how prevalent this format is in the six reflections.

All the writers talked about the group in some way, referencing other participants and the learning that occurred between members. In some of the reflective pieces there is a narrative of the group, which provides a structure to the writing. The importance of being in a group is a clear theme in the writing with post-training isolation and the value of peer groups being acknowledged. The group gelled well and there was a shift from student/teacher relationships to something more collegial.

Lots of the pieces of writing end with open musing or questioning as a way of providing a sense of something occurring beyond the workshop and beyond the reflective writing task. All of the pieces have a sense of a beginning, middle and end with the middle being used to explore some of the issues or content of the workshop. No one piece of writing captures all of the topics that were discussed in the workshop. However across the six pieces of writing all of the topics are described and thought about and this was particularly satisfying as a group writing process.

Some reflections on the process of being edited

Following the process of editing, everyone in the group was asked to write a short (300 word) piece reflecting on the experience. This brought up a number of issues that we now comment upon and illustrate with quotes from the texts.

The shock of so many edit boxes in the margins

Using track changes and inserting comments is a good way for editors to make amendments, query meanings and offer suggestions to authors. However it can come as a bit of a shock, as Ros describes:

‘When I first glanced at the edited piece of writing I had submitted I was rather alarmed at how many adjustments had been made. On closer inspection, there were fewer than first appeared on the page; many of the edit boxes claimed ‘deleted’ where nothing had in fact been edited from the original text. I am still rather baffled as to why this might be’ (Ros Taylor).

This does need to be done with sensitivity particularly when authors’ egos may not yet have developed robustness to receiving feedback on their work. Ros commented:

‘I liked the fact my writing hadn’t been altered at the level of the sentences, but instead restructured and rearranged to make a change for the better that made sense to me.’ (Ros Taylor)

Dean found similarities with experiences of ‘the weekly “crits” at art college’ but also a crucial difference between an art critique, which does not involve the canvas being painted upon, and editing a document in track changes with concrete changes to the words on the page:

‘Unlike an art criticism, in an editing process the editor actively changes the work and this can feel intrusive especially when ideas are changed or challenged’ (Dean Reddick).

Feelings of being assessed and criticised

This idea of feeling criticised was commented on by several participants:

‘Seeing my editor’s comments for the first time brought up old insecurities around ‘assessment’ from school days. My fledgling text was annotated with brightly coloured boxes like little flags of potential criticism. I wondered how the other ‘editees’ felt. When I actually read the comments I found them helpful, objective and even positive. I thought about the writer/editor relationship and how it might feel more punitive on occasions’ (Rosie Sawyer).

Rivalry and competitiveness

Another issue is the rivalry and competition that may arise in a group. Interestingly, this was commented upon by both Dean and Chris. They know each other well from having worked together in various settings and can acknowledge the healthy aspect of competing that leads to greater achievements. There can also be transference aspects to this as well:

‘At one point I found myself getting caught up, in a rather pedantic way, over whether ‘anxiety inducing agendas’ (my version) or ‘anxiety-inducing agendas’ (Dean’s version) was correct. Consultation with the Oxford dictionary revealed that anxiety is a noun and induce a transitive verb, which suggested that I might be right. However, when I checked with my cousin Sarah, a professional writer, she pointed out that the word pair was functioning as a complex adjective in this sentence and therefore should have the hyphen. Damn, I thought, that pesky sibling transference (my brother, *the professor*)

caught me out again! This is a good example of how competitiveness can attach itself to minor details. Perhaps the moral of the story is to trust your editor...' (Chris Brown).

The editor's eye seeing what the author is blind to

It is a remarkable thing how we are able to deceive ourselves by not seeing what is obvious to others:

'I am always surprised that the editor can see things that I should have seen myself such as poor grammar and punctuation and unclear communication of theory or ideas. This experience resonates with the idea of the transference and counter transference where one is blind and unknowing of attitudes, defenses and ways of relating that the therapist and client each become aware of through the process of therapy' (Dean Reddick).

Group process

Sharing in a small group is an established form of experiential learning and the sense of being part of something wider than oneself continues beyond the physical aspect of coming together:

'The initial feeling of alarm I experienced on agreeing to have my writing edited was minimised by knowing that it would be a collective experience. I enjoyed reading all the initial draughts and subsequent edited pieces by the group and I sensed a collegiate feel around the process...Being edited felt similar to the process of making art in a group and how similar themes often arise...I have found the time elapsed in the process has been comforting and containing. I wondered if this was because as a newly qualified art therapist I missed past study and supervisory groups?' (Etty Mathews).

Links to art making process

As we were all art therapists it is unsurprising that comparisons between the two processes of writing and art making appeared:

'Dean compared writing to making art in the workshop and I agree, both require time, space and clarity of thought to process ideas and refine composition in order to create a final piece of work. Too often, in juggling vast caseloads of clients, reports, meetings, organisational responsibilities and dynamics, supervising and line managing others and then attempting some semblance of a work/life balance; art making and writing have both been pushed to the side' (Jenny Gibbons).

Jenny makes the important point about how hard it can be to find time for either art making or writing and the need for a space in order to write, in the same way one might need a studio to make art in.

Gratitude for help

Everyone acknowledged that in spite of a range of anxieties and feelings evoked by the editing process in the end it was helpful. Gratitude for help received is important, particularly when editors are giving their time freely without financial reward.

'I did feel gratitude for his going through my writing and making corrections. It is easy to feel defensive about being edited, especially if one is nervous or a bit insecure about writing' (Dean Reddick).

Conclusion

This article grew out of a writing for publication workshop through a process of reflective writing, editing, sharing and further reflective writing. The decision to publish an article emerged as the process evolved. Dean and Chris were the editors and facilitators but the process was a group one, with all the texts shared with all the members of the original workshop and with everyone contributing at each stage. Being a group was an important part of the process. As Ros wrote in her reflection, writing can be 'a rewarding yet lonely endeavor'. Perhaps forming writing groups for art therapists would be a useful step in supporting writing in the profession.

Anxiety was present throughout the process. In the initial workshop we discussed anxieties about competency and about the critical eye of managers, readers and editors. In our reflective pieces we acknowledged our own rivalries and competitiveness. Through the editing process we got in touch with persecutory anxieties and the feeling of being exposed. Jenny wrote, 'I found the idea and process of being edited daunting and uncomfortable' and Ros wrote, 'What I did feel was relief that the editor had seen some merit in what I wrote and not completely torn it apart.'

Blind spots in the writing, muddled communication and mistakes were visible in the editing process (and in showing the edits in this article, the editors expose their editing to the same process). These experiences were felt to be similar to making and showing art and to the transference situation in therapy. These dynamic aspects of the writing/editing process have an impact on our writing and how we feel about ourselves as writers.

As well as anxiety, the group identified positive experiences through the editing process. As part of her reflections on being edited Rosie wrote, 'The editorial process seems to resemble a muddy puddle that becomes clearer over time with each filter, enabling the reader to look below the surface and see the deeper meaning'. Chris describes how he found the editing process; 'I found this experience of being edited very helpful, both for my writing and in giving me some comparison to my own editorial style. It definitely resulted in an improved text.' The role of the other in the process of writing, either the reader or the editor, is clearly pivotal: even when one is writing alone the imagined other is present.

The parallels between writing and making art were commented on several times. Dean introduced this idea from lectures given by Andy Gilroy and the group took up this important and helpful comparison of writing and art making. The process of writing, editing and rewriting is, like art making or playing, a time-based process. Ety wrote in her response to being edited; 'I have found the time elapsed in the process has been comforting and containing.'

Finding time to write can be difficult. In her initial reflections Ros describes the need to carve out time for writing. Being a part of a group seemed to help here; the support, the expectations, and the deadlines helping to focus the writer. We used deadlines at each stage of the process and everyone responded well to these, in spite of busy lives! It seems that deadlines were seen in a positive light, as encouragement to make the work happen, rather than as something potentially threatening or punitive; unlike the science fiction writer Douglas Adams (The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy) who once said about deadlines 'I love the whooshing sound they make as they go by!'

Chris and Dean would like to thank Ros, ETTY, Jenny and Rosie for taking part in the workshop and the subsequent reflective process of writing and editing and for agreeing to use their work in this article. We hope it stimulates other art therapists to write for publication.

Appendix 1

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- There seems to be a parallel with writing and being an art therapist; a rewarding yet lonely endeavor. • A small group of people coming together to discuss a common cause can be very exciting and supportive: ideas flow and form, experiences can be shared.
- Coming together in this way made me realise the importance of peer support in all aspects of work as an art therapist: peer supervision, art making together, the exchange of recommended reading material, sharing ideas for writing and drafts.

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- The interest generated reminded me of a group of new mums I worked with, who once the art therapy was over, had a thirst for art making and carved out a couple of hours a week to meet at each other's houses to continue their creativity.

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- Time to meet with peers, time to myself, time to read feels difficult to grasp at this moment in my life and the vastness of the task of writing and all that it entails seems out of reach.

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Appendix 2

Introduction

We will start by looking at the different types of articles we publish and it would be useful if you could look at some or all of these beforehand:

Academic e.g. Chris Woods (7,1)

<http://ojs.gold.ac.uk/index.php/atol/article/view/404/pdf>

Notes from the field e.g. Edward Bbira (7,1)

<http://ojs.gold.ac.uk/index.php/atol/article/view/405/pdf>

Opinion piece e.g. Douglas Gill (8,1)

<http://ojs.gold.ac.uk/index.php/atol/article/view/429/pdf>

Interview e.g. Lucia Simoncicova (6,1)

<http://ojs.gold.ac.uk/index.php/atol/article/view/393/443>

Photo essay e.g. Leslie Morris (8,1)

<http://ojs.gold.ac.uk/index.php/atol/article/view/426/pdf>

Video essay e.g. Chris Brown (2,2)

http://ojs.gold.ac.uk/index.php/atol/article/view/290/html_4

Frances Prokofiev (4,1)

http://ojs.gold.ac.uk/index.php/atol/article/view/317/html_2

Book review e.g. Robin Tipple (5,2)

<http://ojs.gold.ac.uk/index.php/atol/article/view/368/398>

Arnell Etherington (7,1)

<http://ojs.gold.ac.uk/index.php/atol/article/view/409>

Exhibition review e.g. Sarah Eley (4,1)

<http://ojs.gold.ac.uk/index.php/atol/article/view/320/351>

