Overview of the Concept

In 1946, George Orwell noted that

> an effect can become a cause, reinforcing the original cause and producing the same effect in an intensified form, and so on indefinitely. A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks. It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language. It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts.
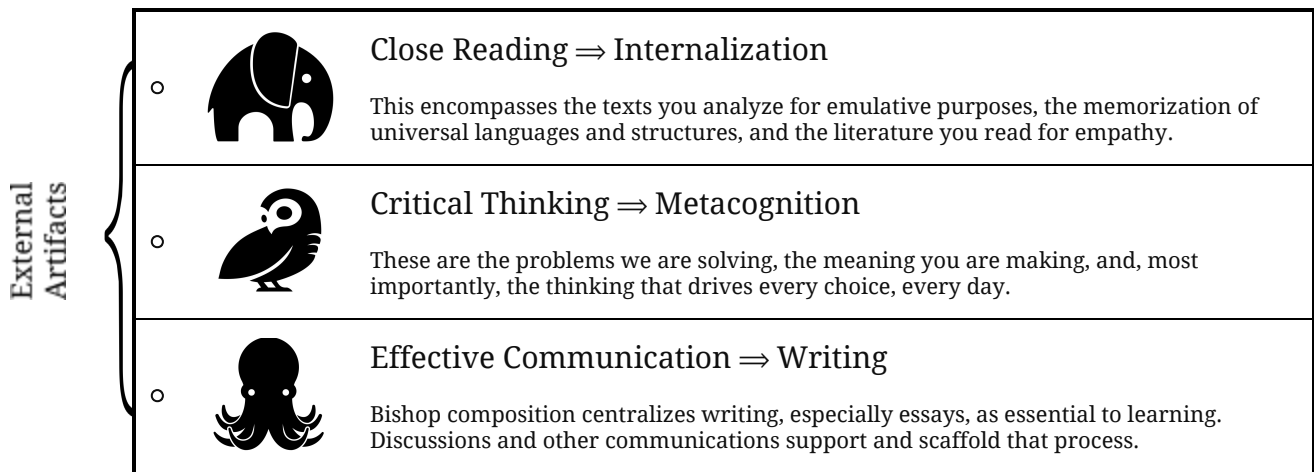
Later, he summarizes this idea: "But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought." Our work isn't so negative, though. We are focused on a feedback loop that builds strength in thinking through strength in writing. We listen to Orwell but invoke Neil Postman:

> Writing makes it possible and convenient to subject thought to a continuous and concentrated scrutiny. Writing freezes speech and in so doing gives birth to the grammarian, the logician, the rhetorician, the historian, the scientist — all those who must hold language before them so that they can see what it means, where it errs, and where it is leading.

In here, we also pay attention to Paul Graham and his theory that essay-writing in school focuses on literary analysis through "a series of historical accidents," with the end result that most school essays are "now three steps removed from real work." Even non-literary assignments lose authenticity in the pursuit of academic emulation.

The path forward has you read what you write and write what you read. You must understand how an author writes in order to *emulate* her, not to produce the sort of analysis that a cursory search of Google would reveal. It's the difference between applied and theoretical science.

So we arrive at emulation-through-analysis (ETA) work, which is designed to teach you how to answer analytical questions while you answer them. You should define new terms, look up new concepts, and enlist peers to help you. Getting the right answer is *a* goal; understanding how to use the strategy or technique is *the* goal. And the substructure is, as always, the universal skills of grade abatement:

External Artifacts	**Close Reading ⇒ Internalization** — This encompasses the texts you analyze for emulative purposes, the memorization of universal languages and structures, and the literature you read for empathy.
	Critical Thinking ⇒ Metacognition — These are the problems we are solving, the meaning you are making, and, most importantly, the thinking that drives every choice, every day.
	Effective Communication ⇒ Writing — Bishop composition centralizes writing, especially essays, as essential to learning. Discussions and other communications support and scaffold that process.

You must know *how* to create in order to create. A makerspace requires granular expertise before experimentation and iteration will yield results. Otherwise, it's just a sandbox.

Meanwhile, keep another idea from Orwell in mind:

> A scrupulous writer, in every sentence that he writes, will ask himself at least four questions, thus: What am I trying to say? What words will express it? What image or idiom will make it clearer? Is this image fresh enough to have an effect? And he will probably ask himself two more: Could I put it more shortly? Have I said anything that is avoidably ugly?