

Notice and Focus and The Method

From *Writing Analytically* by David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen

Notice and Focus

This exercise is governed by repeated return to the question, “What do you notice?”.

What do you find most INTERESTING?

What do you find most STRANGE?

What do you find most REVEALING?

Cite actual details of the thing being observed. In our case, the articles you are reading. You are not explaining what they mean, but pointing out what you notice. For our articles, you are to list **ten** things that you notice. You may go beyond ten, but make sure what you are noticing is quality information, which means you can't list everything in the article. Record what you see in the article that you think is important. Do not move to generalization or judgement.

After compiling your list of ten, circle the three most important or interesting points in your list.

Finally, create a statement as to what the author's point is or what they are proposing/arguing. Begin with “In “name of article,” author's name argues/proposes/claims/acknowledges/warns/condemns. .

The Method

The Method is a strategy that utilizes a series of steps to look for patterns, connections, and details.

Step 1: Repetitions- List **exact repetitions** and the number of each (words, details) For example: if forms of the word *seems* repeat three times, write “seems x 3.” With images, the repeated appearance of high foreheads would constitute an exact repetition. Concentrate on meaningful words. Identifying different words that have the same meaning is not repetitions; they will fall into the next category.

Step 2: Strands- List repetitions of the same or similar kind detail, word or concept. For example: *polite, courteous, decorous*. Be able to explain the strand's connecting logic, with a label: *manners*

Step 3: Binaries - List details or words that form or suggest binary oppositions - pairs of words or details that are opposites- and select from these the most important ones. For example: *open/closed*, *ugly/beautiful*, *global/local*. Don't worry about evaluating their importance yet. You are trying to locate the tensions and issues that the piece is trying to resolve.

Step 4: Anomalies - Locate anomalies: exceptions to the pattern, things that seem not to fit. Once you see an anomaly, you will often find that it is a part of a strand you had not detected (and perhaps, one side of a previously unseen binary).

Don't worry about putting something into the wrong category. If you are unsure what category your discovery goes in, choose what makes the most sense to you.

Step 5: Summary Statement - Finally, create a statement as to what the author's point is or what they are proposing/arguing. Begin with "In "name of article," author's name argues/proposes/claims/acknowledges/warns/condemns. . .