

Cognitive Gym

A dojo for sharpening my thinking through active learning

- [Better thinking through writing \[Draft\]](#)

Better thinking through writing

[Draft]

- What is Writing
 - writing is any deliberate activity to externalise the thoughts which can later be manipulated
 - I want to separate writing for work vs writing for thinking
 - the obv analogy is fitness for manual labour vs fitness for better health
 - writing is fitness for your brain, writing taking time and effort is a feature not a bug
 - Writing helps organize your thoughts, in fact for any serious thinking writing becomes absolutely critical
 - thinking is hard and takes time
 - the objective is not to share something with the reader but rather a canvas for your own brain to wrestle with your thinking
- why not just think on your mind
 - working memory is limited, hence you are artificially limiting yourself when thinking. This leaks through the quality of thoughts and consequently the actions you take in the world.
 - you can't keep track of your thoughts historically across long durations of time
 - you can easily lie to yourself
 - emotions can get in the way
 - you cant get feedback from others
- what do I use writing for
 - informal notes for learning new concepts
 - organizing my thoughts to make an important decision, listing out the pros and cons and the tradeoffs involved before making a decision. this enables a few
 - convey my thought process
 - a theraputic device to let out my emotions - helps when you feel overwhelmed
- my writing algorithm
 - it depends on the use case, but it roughly boils down to the following
 - loosely based on babble prune.
 - explore first, then cut off as much as possible.
 - in explore phase dont care about semantic or syntactical correctness
 - mental dump of various tangents that are fresh on my mind
 - load as much higher order bits of context into my working memory before starting to write
 - try to get a rough shape of what I am trying to convey
- tools
 - the simpler and robust the system the better. What you think/write is more important than how, but with technology you can use them to aid your writing
 - aim for minimal distractions
 - the tool should not hinder your progress or flow state

- tool should help you collaborate without friction when needed [trivial inconveniences]
- my way of writing/thinking involves using an outliner heavily (eg. workflowy, dynalist)
- is there a difference between
 - writing by hand and typing?
 - there are some studies which
 - writing vs dictating to an AI
- AI x writing
 - people get an illusion of understanding when they discuss ideas with an LLM
 - there is a huge epidemic of people offloading their writing, thereby thinking to LLMs hence leading to atrophy of thinking in general. Similar to how muscles atrophy without resistance.
 - people who are serious about thinking, would guard and notice this subtlety.
 - like others, I substituted discussions with LLMs and using the generated text as a product of my thinking. In come
- what does a good AI human symbiosis look like?
 - you need to own the scaffolding and the thought vectors
 - a vector has a magnitude and direction - use LLMs for magnitude and not for direction
 - own the direction and don't take the magnitude gain from the LLM at face value
 - use the LLM for critique without being influenced as much as possible
 - an ideal usage would be something like a compiler. Similar to how a C compiler compiles high level code to assembly, a good LLM based workflow ought to preserve the semantics of your writing.
 - the more I think about it, I feel convinced that wielding LLMs would require ICs to develop some managerial/executive thinking
 - as much as I abhor the M word, we can study an activity without falling for the ough field beliefs that we have associated to it based on our experience.
 - how do small group of humans run large corps, governments, armies, etc. where they don't have the full context of everything that's happening?