



STOP | REFLECT | WRITE | REPORT



WHAT IS IT?

Stop | Reflect | Write | Report (also called SRWR or “Stop|Reflect”) is one of the most frequently used tools in our work. It is a process that invites a team to stop and to reflect on a question; to slow down their process. Usually, we ask the people to write down their responses to a question, but it is not essential to write the thoughts down. It is a quick process for collecting and then sharing thoughts.

WHY IS IT USEFUL?

There are basically two uses of the SRWR.

The first is related to learning. One of the key functions of an ARL Team Coach is to help people become aware of their behaviors, to learn from that awareness and to thus change that behavior if necessary.

When people are working, especially in teams, they are focused almost entirely on the What, on the task, on achieving the goal, and as a result they pay little attention to the How — the way they are working. And often this failure allows the team to continue to operate ineffectively. When a coach stops the work and asks a question for people to reflect on, he is helping the team to slow down their process, to reflect on what is working well and what is not, to develop a critical view of what is happening, and to extract conclusions. Normally, the result of the SRWR is that the behavior changes after the pause; new information has been brought into the team’s consciousness; people are aware of how they are working, and how they can—and should—improve their process.

The second use of the SRWR is as a fast process to collect everyone’s thoughts on a certain issue. It gives silent reflection time to the introverts, it forces the extroverts to be silent, and everyone gets an equal opportunity to express his/her thoughts.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

When the coach finds that the team is not making any progress in its work, s/he might consider it is a good “learning moment”. S/he stops the team and asks the members to do a SRWR.

The coach thinks of a question that can best bring out awareness of what is happening in the team – or in an individual – and allows them one or two minutes to reflect and write down their answers. Writing thoughts down adds tremendous value because people express themselves in a clearer way when they write down their responses. Also it saves time because thoughts can be shared in a faster way if everyone just reads what they have written instead of thinking out loud.

When is a SRWR appropriate? What are indicators of a “good learning moment”?

- 🏠 When the individual or the team is going in circles or not making progress
- 🏠 When people are not participating equally
- 🏠 When the norms are not being respected
- 🏠 When the agenda is not being respected
- 🏠 When there are communication problems between two or more team members
- 🏠 When the session is over and the team is ready to extract lessons

Another appropriate use is for the fast collection of thoughts. For instance:

- 🏠 To collect expectations at the beginning of a session
- 🏠 To set norms
- 🏠 To get feedback on someone’s performance (leader, coach, etc.)
- 🏠 To express feelings
- 🏠 To collect thoughts before an R&D session
- 🏠 To develop an agenda
- 🏠 To do the check-in at the beginning of a session
- 🏠 To do a closing of a session
- 🏠 To brainstorm ideas on an issue
- 🏠 To write assumptions



EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONS

The following questions, asked during the work of the project teams, are designed to heighten a team's awareness of how they are working together.

INDIVIDUAL

- 🏠 How would you rate your own participation during this meeting so far? Why?
- 🏠 What would you like to do differently?
- 🏠 What did you like about your contribution to our work so far?
- 🏠 What have you learned about yourself during this meeting?
- 🏠 What special contribution or role do you bring to this team?

TEAM

- 🏠 How would you rate our teamwork during this meeting?
- 🏠 What did we do as a team or as individuals on the team that helped us to work effectively during this meeting?
- 🏠 What can we do differently during our next work session to improve our effectiveness?
- 🏠 What are we learning about ourselves as a team?

ORGANIZATION

- 🏠 Based on our work as a team, what are some implications and applications for our organization?
- 🏠 What can we do differently when we work in teams back home on the job?
- 🏠 What are some recommendations we can make to senior management about teamwork and the role of reflection in particular?

SO WHAT?

The frantic pace of the usual business day means that managers seldom make time to take the deliberate step of capturing their own learning, and the teams learning. It is important for the ARL Team Coach to send the message that the team members should not wait for the coach to act, but to suggest their own SRWR when they feel their team is struggling. This action reinforces the point that everyone should take responsibility for their own process, and their own learning.