

How Do I Make a Sustainable Plan for My Documentation

Sabina Holzer



— *M1+1*, Artist in Residence Nao Coclea, 2010. Photo by Jack Hauser

There are *many very good reasons to document your work* as a dancer, teacher, and researcher; and yet daily life often confronts us with plenty of other very good reasons not to do so.

Documenting your work is an additional project in combination with the work you are already doing. To let this advantage become a reality to support you, it is good to frame the intention and connect on an emotional and cognitive level with what the benefit of this commitment could be: It will help you to keep track and follow the decisions you made in order to unfold your growth and development.

I gathered some simple questions to support you in planning your documentation in a way that it becomes a reliable companion to enhance your work. It is an approach that is inspired by ways of *Solution Focused Brief Therapy*, which was founded by the American social workers *Steve de Shazer*¹ and *Insoo Kim Berg*, and developed further by *Nurit Sommer* and *Gudrun*

Schreiner in the frame of the method of *Systemic and Integrative Bodywork*.² They talk about *Solution Oriented Work*: a method for bringing your awareness to what is there and not to what is missing. So you are invited to have a close look to your resources on all different levels: your talents, attractions, emotions, tools, techniques, and time in order to see how all this can support your future planning.

The following questions, hopefully, can help you to bring your attention and appreciation to your competences and connect them to your goals and wishes. Sometimes it is good to be reminded that one needs not to become someone else in order to achieve what is wished or wanted. If it turns out that the goal is not related to the things one imagines to do with pleasure, then it might be good to reformulate the goal, or to focus on finding someone who does have the things needed and who can do it for you. But in order to be active and in charge of your vision it is mostly better to start thinking and constructing with the things which are there with and around you.

Take time to reflect and answer these questions. Even if the answers do not come easy or seem obvious take notes of your answers. I suggest one hour for the whole process, so you have time to imagine, to relate, and to formulate your vision.

WHEN YOU RELATE TO YOUR PRACTICE:

1. **How would you feel if you accomplished your documentation successfully?**

What would *change* for you? How would you *recognize* that? How would you *feel*? How would this change the climate in and for your work? *Who else* would recognize this change and *how*?

2. **What is the benefit of documenting your work?**

What do you want to *use it for*? (To improve your teaching? Transmitting knowledge? To get a clearer sense of what you are doing? Creating, improving interdisciplinary practices? To publish? To perform? To let people know what you are doing? ...) Are you interested in *documentation as artistic practice*? (To nurture your artistic investigation? To find out about your aesthetics?)

3. **Which medium, do you consider, is the most exciting one?**

Which medium to document is the most familiar to you? *Which medium* will you use? *Why*?

4. **For how long do you want to document the work in this way?**

What will be the *focus/methodological approach/score* of your investigation? How much *time* would you like to spend on your documentation (Hours, minutes, days)? If you think about *your daily schedule*, how can you *integrate documentation into your plan*?

5. **Would you like to have a moment within your documentation project – to evaluate and maybe change some of the parameters?**

When should that be?

6. Are you interested to have a person: friend/colleague/‘first reader’ with whom you can share your documents during the process?

If so, *how often* would you like to do that?

If you have answered these questions, as clear as it is possible for you in this moment, you will know more about your documentation project:

- ☐ *In terms of your intentions, your goals, and benefits*
- ☐ *How you can integrate this additional work within your daily schedule*
- ☐ *How long you consider to have this practice*

There is the chance that things (reflections, decisions, realizations) take longer or another direction than one thinks. Give yourself time to experience how you act in the frame you created for yourself. You can always decide to change it if something does not suit you. Let the change be a decision and not a ‘rescue’. Do it when you still feel in charge, able to overview the situations you are in. Don’t forget: if you change one thing, all other components will change, shift, and respond to that.

Stay friendly, respecting that you are doing your best – treat yourself as you want to be treated by others. Keep connecting to your competences – treat them with care, do not overstrain them, and stay in dialogue with them modestly. They will support you and show you the way.

If you find yourself in a situation which is more complex than you expected, you can look at it from the following few points:

- ⊗ *Don’t repair what is already working!*
- ⊗ *If something works, do more of it!*
- ⊗ *If something does not work, don’t repeat it. Try something else!*

Keeping these in mind helped me to stay connected with my own path, individual visions, versions, and wishes. I hope it supports you, too.

NOTES

1. For further suggested reading in German:
Shazer, de Steve (2006). *Das Spiel mit den Unterschieden. Wie therapeutische Lösungen* lösen. Heidelberg: C. Auer Verlag.
2. ISIB | Institut für Systemische und Integrative Bewegungslehre, Vienna, Austria:
<http://www.isib.org/index.php>