Chapter 29. Writing and Thinking: Psychiatry, Psychology, and Consciousness

Much of my research has focused on the historical evolution and social location of writing, and each writer's strategic response to their situation in relation to evolving genres; nonetheless, the growth of the writer's thinking has always been a motivating undercurrent for me. We invent ourselves in our responses to our located situations, using communicative forms meaningful to those around us, yet it is our growing selves that we draw on, work with, and reflectively bring into those social and historical spaces.

My last year in high school when I started to collect my papers systematically, I did so to keep track of my intellectual growth. At that time I firmly anticipated becoming a physicist and had no sense that I would become a writing teacher. The experience of writing a research paper on the human impact of thermonuclear war in the Telluride Summer Program after my junior year in high school showed me that my writing could address important human problems where answers had not yet emerged and discoveries still needed to be made. While I had done library research before and I had access to the Columbia University library throughout high school, I had never dealt with such a deeply self-motivated inquiry (living as I did in the shadow of the nuclear arms and testing race my whole life until then.)

As a university student I would regularly reread my growing file of writing to see how my thinking had evolved, particularly as I pondered what I valued and what path I might take. Then when I became an elementary school teacher, I looked at young students' writing to see what they thought and valued. I also watched how their changing literate skills affected their demeanor, attitudes toward schooling, confidence in themselves within schooling, and peer relations. At CUNY working with young adults making their transition into the university, I continued to examine student papers as signs of intellectual growth, along with noting the skills we needed to work on. As I saw students' writing evolve, I used my sense of who they were becoming, the ideas and understandings they were developing, and their ways of seeing the world around them as ways to motivate and direct their next piece of writing. I have continued to do this in all my courses, especially as inquiry projects have become central to my pedagogy, whether working with first year undergraduate students or doctoral candidates working on their dissertations.

Problem Solving in Students Learning to Write

Reading Vygotsky helped me to understand better the interactional sources of growth and to enter into the dialogic space of students' Zones of Proximal

Development. I learned to offer just enough clues and supports to help students move forward and gain the rewards of discovery, but without saying so much as to short-circuit growth-producing work nor to displace their impulses towards meaning-making through writing. Vygotsky also made me aware of creating space for them to connect their spontaneous concepts arising from making sense of their lives and organized academic concepts they encountered in their classes (or scientific concepts, as Vygotsky called them), so that they could come to see the collective knowledge and practices of disciplines as personally useful. This conjunction of spontaneous and academic inquiry released energy in their projects that would become more interesting to them, me, and their classmates. While sometimes my dialogs with individual students would be pursued in private communication, as much as possible I pursued dialogs in class and seminar so each student could see the struggles each other had in bringing their writing into being. No matter how varied their projects might be, they almost always were interested in seeing their peers at work and the writing that resulted. They also could provide each other useful suggestions. This collaborative atmosphere of inquiry kept us all in each other's ZPDs, bootstrapping ourselves into our next place of discovery and writing.

As I came to understand problem-solving during writing as the mechanism of learning and growth, I found ways to have students spend more time on task so that they would think more deeply about the challenges their writing presented, from the earliest framing of tasks, problems, and information seeking through final editing. Because projects became so engaging to students, they often exceeded expectations of the assignments, and I set length requirements as a floor, saying if they needed more space, take it. They often did, usually without puffery, repetition, or verbosity. As a writing teacher I saw my task to midwife the content they were discovering, and then how they might put this together in ways that would be intelligible, credible, and convincing to others.

Researching Writing and the Development of Thinking

For a number of years, I did not follow up informal teacher observations about student thinking with focused research, as I was pursuing social and textual issues—how writers were connecting to what was outside them rather than what was occurring within. As I studied influential writers who changed the social and intertextual spaces of others, such as Newton and Priestley, however, I saw their development as writers connected to their development as thinkers in both their overt intellectual productions and their reflections on what it meant to write. Further, their reflections on writing changed in conjunction with their understanding of society, communication, and ideology.

Because Vygotskian theory provided me a powerful way to connect writers' intellectual growth with the social communicative field they engaged in, I wrote an encyclopedia article on implications of Vygotsky for writing (Bazerman, 1998k).

I also reviewed some books on cognition (Bazerman, 1996a, 1997a, 1998a, 2001b) and kept reading socially oriented psychologists like Jerome Bruner and Michael Cole, but could not find a detailed mechanism that connected disciplinary forms of consciousness and disciplinary forms of writing. An essay I wrote on Jack Goody's work on the consequences of literacy eventually helped clarify my thinking (Bazerman, 2006e). He was best known for his work on the psychological consequences of literacy, but Goody was an anthropologist by trade. His book on *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (1986) provided ways of seeing how literacy impacted society. I reinterpreted his work to connect the social and psychological sides, using an activity theory lens. I argued that cognitive consequences of writing were the result of specific cognitive practices and reasoning associated with domain-specific genres that carried out socially organized activities. Writing gave us new things to think about and ways to think about them, as the production and use of specialized texts became the object of our cognitive and affective attention.

For a conference on genre, I more explicitly presented my ruminations of writing and consciousness formation, which was then published in the conference volume (Bazerman, 2009c). I proposed that learning genres created a cognitive challenge space, at the same time as structuring and providing tools to address the challenge. Over time the writer can internalize these forms of expression, reorganizing the writer's thought. This formulation provided a way of articulating how people entering into disciplines and professions developed the ways of thinking that were practiced in those fields (though with individual variations of perspectives and resources).

The chapter gave me some focused hypotheses that could be tested about exposure to new genres in a way that might speak to psychological research, using forms of data and argument recognizable to that field, which I had initially become familiar with during my study of the APA Manual. In order to carry out these studies I needed to find a subject population where the cognitive change might be robustly visible and where other factors that might influence indicators of thought could be held stable or controlled for. The full details for the selection of the study population are in Bazerman, Simon, Ewing, and Pieng (2013e), but key was finding a group of students with already demonstrated skill in academic writing who were to be introduced to new genres, new professional literatures, new professional practices, and new professional identities. Further, we needed access to them over an extended period where these professional activities, modes of representation, and thought would be repeatedly practiced and become familiar. Finally, the program they were in would need to have specific cognitive goals that would provide measurable accomplishments. The problem is that students develop rightfully down their own paths, incorporating what makes sense for them, but this makes it difficult to determine what kind of intellectual, cognitive growth they engage in, because each student would, in a sense, need a different measure to make visible their cognitive growth. Some programs, however, have

particular forms of thinking they want to foster—in this case it was a particular form of teacher thinking valued within a teaching credential and M.Ed. program. This particular supported form of thinking is what could be measured. Through a preliminary ethnographic study, we identified the goals, curricula, and assignments of the one-year program, which then focused our data gathering for our main study with the next cohort the following year. A further methodological puzzle was to find measures of change in thinking independent of the genre of documents which were hypothesized as the means of development; otherwise, we might only be measuring the learning of genre expectations with no more fundamental changes in thought. For this independent measure we examined informal and more spontaneous comments in the classroom and in online forums. A final challenge was to develop emergent collaborative coding and intersubjective rater agreement, through extensive negotiation. Through all of this work, we were able to confirm some key parts of the hypotheses and indicate the likelihood of some other parts. The last, most speculative hypothesis, about moments of conceptual reorganization, was beyond what our data could tell us.

From analyses of many texts and contexts throughout my career, I had learned the importance of being in immediate touch with the data, which meant carrying out all the analysis personally so I could see what might be there. In this case, however, my graduate collaborator, Kelly Simon, had the most detailed understanding of the corpus. I learned to trust her careful observations, while I could ask her the right questions to make sure I understood what was going on qualitatively beneath the numbers. With her detailed knowledge of the corpus, Kelly started noticing something interesting not captured in our coding and analytical procedures. Namely, she noticed what looked like more sophisticated thinking in the sentences which involved references or discussions of sources in contrast to the other sentences. We added several new kinds of codes to our analysis to test the hypothesis that citation and discussion of the literature were associated with higher level thinking and then, if true, to understand the phenomenon more deeply. These new codes tracked whether sources were referred to, the mode of reference, the way the source was used, the degree of critical perspective and independent voice adopted by the student, and the length of the discussion. These new layers of coding revealed striking and robust findings, even more than our study of the impact of genre, showing strong effects in all the dimensions we measured, far beyond our original expectation (Bazerman, Kelly, & Pieng, 2014g).

In both these papers working from the Teacher Education data, I had some anxiety about meeting the standards of fields not my own (particularly involving the inferential statistical methods). Even though a graduate student specializing in statistics, Patrick Pieng, did the technical statistical work, I still had to learn to think with these tools and to be able to represent them and what they revealed in terms appropriate to the data and methods. While people trained in these tools early on would have internalized them by this point in their career, for me it was a learning challenge, expanding my writing repertoire.

Kelly, for her dissertation, followed through on another analysis of the same data set to see the effect of data and experience on the students' thinking. Kelly's study highlighted for me the psychological consequences of students engaging in disciplinary data practices, preparing me for the studies of data in undergraduate writing described in the previous chapter.

Understanding Writing Anxiety as a Social, Relational Issue

The course of my writing on psychological issues cannot be understood without looking back on another strand of work, on anxiety, which I had begun earlier in my career. To write about anxiety took confidence and courage which took me awhile to muster, because it would require me to discuss psychiatry, an area in which I was even more amateur and which at that time was still somewhat stigmatized. Further, I would be relying on an out-of-favor theoretician, and the study would identify me as having undergone psychotherapy, even to the point of revealing personal details. These concerns would, over the years, require me repeatedly to muster my courage as I continued to explore the issues that grew out of this work.

Since my early days of teaching, I had been interested in writing anxiety, which was an obstacle to writing and created resistance to growth and development. Anxiety could restrict the writer's ability to reach out, engage, and participate in literate interactions. In therapy I had become familiar with Harry Stack Sullivan's interpersonal psychiatry, which considered anxiety arising through early social interactions to form a self-system, which would influence one's later interactions, though later interactions and relationships could modify both anxieties and self-systems. I thought about how writing itself created interpersonal and social situations which could arouse long-standing anxieties and be generative of new anxieties.

Since writing always means literally putting yourself on the line—exposing your statements to scrutiny and criticism by others—anxiety is endemic. Even more, writing gains force, presence, and reader engagement by saying new things. Writing tempts us into the unknown, the previously unsaid, or at least the things we personally had not said. This is not a false temptation, but the very name of the game, and inherent in the idea of writing as discovery. Finally, since writing can be held in semi-privacy, at least for a while, the writer can build novel meanings, identify and rework thoughts, and push statements further into difference—unless, of course the writer is frozen into silence by anxieties. While sometimes writing just for ourselves may free us of some fears, often enough the writer will wonder whether to share and with whom. Each writer's sense of the self and its boundaries can either constrain or extend exploration of new areas of meaning. Further, even though new supportive interpersonal relations can help relieve

anxiety and expand one's ability to try new things in writing, those supportive relations will be conditioned by one's prior ways of developing relationships.

In my own writing I became aware of how anxieties led to procrastination and slowness. I started to recognize uncertainties that could be considered phantasms, and how I worried over some choices more than they needed to be. Other times I was sluggish without realizing why. To some extent, labeling these moments as anxious helped get me back to work. Having the courage to say what I wanted to say became a habitual stance, which often meant pushing through doubts. When I became more conscious of revision, I told myself I could always change or remove statements that didn't seem right or wise later. In revision, however, I found I was often happy with where I had gone, and even went further, with added courage. My revisions focused on making my arguments more concise, elaborated, particular, evidenced, coherently sequential, and synthesized—that is, pushing the text faster and further to where it was going. I came to trust my impulses as having aggregated my thinking and research. I kept pushing into my anxieties, seeing them as obstacles to going into the new places my writing was taking me. Of course, I did not know where I could not imagine going, what tasks or statements would never occur to me, things that still were beyond my sense of self, or even my transgressive self. But even this last phrase "transgressive self" indicates how much I had taken on the identity of courage in entering the dangerous unknown or disfavored.

Awareness of the sensitive psychosocial dynamics of writing attuned me to the arts of building trust. I learned to be accessible within the other person's way of relating, forming bonds, and gaining information. Ultimately I tried to increase their courage to write. Writing education is filled with obvious anxieties about correctness, perfection of form, and school assessment. Even more powerfully, however, writing can raise specters about what the writer feels comfortable saying, of what readers might think, or of exploring ideas and experiences outside one's family, community, self-formed identity, or personality constructs. But, of course, what the teacher or writing mentor can offer or accept is also conditioned by the mentor's own anxieties and self-system, which can affect the interaction with the student. Yet each new teaching and learning situation, each new reaching out offers expansive possibilities for teacher and student. The writing teacher can aid this process of mutual learning by providing an emotionally less fraught space in which students can explore meanings and different ways of saying different things, expanding their expressive potentials and resources. Teachers as well can expand their own sensibilities, understanding, and empathy, as well as dissolve some of their own bounding anxieties as they are able to hear and experience more of what students have to offer. Our professional roles can open ourselves up to the students' writing and thinking as we ask open-ended questions, listen to student answers, understand their struggles and conditions, and appreciate their unanticipated talents and wisdom. Even something as simple as respecting a student's career ambition or political ideology which we would never choose in

our own life can help us grow as teachers and people, expanding our sense of self beyond our margins of discomfort.

This expansive interaction though literacy can extend beyond the classroom or even beyond face-to-face synchronous relations. Writers often grow through reading other writers they know only through their texts. Because those writers' texts speak to the readers, they can build a trust that expands the developing writer's vision and even can encourage the developing writer to entertain ideas, perspectives, or verbal pleasures that would be rejected when offered by less admired or trusted authors. As a student, with the encouragement of teachers, I myself learned the value of identifying what I appreciated in my favorite authors and even of imitating authors I may not at first have appreciated. I have since then tried to foster among my students practices of learning from the authors they value to expand their ways of seeing, being, and communicating.

I was pressed into articulating these ideas from my own writing and teaching practices by a recurring discussion among Vygotskians about the role of emotions in learning, especially on the XMCA listserv associated with Michael Cole's Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition. I felt I had some insight into anxiety because of the reflective practices I had developed in writing and teaching relying on my experience of interpersonal psychiatry. I found these ideas consistent with what I had been taking from Vygotsky and his followers. Both traditions conceived psychological phenomena as primarily social and interpersonal rather than individual and they also saw their work as interdisciplinary, as all dimensions of people's lives were related to each other. As I returned to the texts by and about both Sullivan and Vygotsky, I was surprised to find specific points of historical contact between the two circles in the first half of the twentieth century, which I document in an article (Bazerman, 2001a). These points of contact include Vygotsky's article on "Thought in Schizophrenia," translated into English by Hanfmann and Kasinin (1934); five years later Hanfmann published the first English translation of the last chapter of Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* in the journal founded and edited by Sullivan. Decades later, in 1965, the same Eugenia Hanfmann was co-translator of the first English edition of the book.

In writing an article about the connections between the two traditions, in order to set up the problem of the article I questioned the then current Vygotskian optimistic picture of cooperative learners growing through their ZPDs. Despite my practice of avoiding critiques of others' work, here I felt that exposing an absence was needed to bring together the growth-oriented Vygotskian world (albeit born in the troubled world following the Russian Revolution) with psychiatry's consideration of the more troubled parts of the human psyche and "difficulties in living" (as Sullivan framed it). After noting the neglect of psychiatric concerns in the Vygotskian world, I pointed out Vygotsky himself had been interested in psychiatric issues, particularly noting the influence of Adler in his work, though this had been little commented on at the time I wrote. Vygotsky's articles on schizophrenia and on cognitive deterioration in psychiatric states initially brought his

work to the attention of the psychiatric community in the West. This historical link explicitly connected the ideas of Sullivan and Vygotsky. I followed this with a practical account of my experience with a Sullivan-based psychotherapy focused on noting social interaction in talk, which led me to think about writing as a social interaction.

I have spent some time discussing the issues and organization of this essay because the largest problems I needed to solve were how to explain and integrate Sullivan's thinking into the Vygotskian world, both as a rhetorical matter and to sort out the connections in my own mind. This integration forced me to reveal some of the ideas that had come to form my vision of life and most personal relations with others. I moved cautiously and deliberately from the audience's known world of Vygotsky into the foreign and stigmatized world of psychiatry and psychotherapy, to ultimately land on my own experiences. I felt very unsure about whether readers would follow me down this path and what they would think of me by the end.

Shortly thereafter I had the opportunity to present and write another exposition of some of these ideas, but this time for an audience of writing scholars with a psychodynamic orientation (Bazerman, 2001f). Since this new audience was already disposed to seeing emotional and depth issues in writing, although they were not familiar with the application of Sullivan to writing, and since I had already worked out the connections to Vygotsky, this piece was intellectually and emotionally much easier to write. The biggest challenge, which was not much of a stretch, was to explain writing not only as a social act, but as a social exposure and a potential transformation of a social identity, which would trigger Sullivan's social mechanisms of anxiety.

Integrating Writing and Psychology Within Interdisciplinary Social Science

Making progress on the integration of Vygotskian and Sullivanian thought gave me more confidence to formulate an interdisciplinary understanding of writing. My personal understanding and teaching had been informed by multiple disciplines from college onward, as this book already should have made evident. Then when I started to publish on scientific writing I began to explicitly draw on and conceive of syntheses of multiple disciplines (Bazerman, 1983a, 1985b). Again, with genre theory I kept trying to make connections among disciplines (most explicitly in Bazerman, 2004f). Both Sullivan and Vygotsky sought interdisciplinary syntheses, seeing life as multidimensional, unfolding in a unified way, though dimensions could be isolated for analysis. They both pushed outwards from their psychological professions to open doors to other fields. Vygotsky drew on his own complex educational and social background as a Jew in pre-revolutionary Russia and as a teacher of language and literature, in order to engage in the open

intellectual ferment of the early soviet years and to see the relevance to psychology of fields as diverse as history, culture, economics, language, semiology, psychiatry, physiology, and sociology. Yet while his research and theory opened doors to these other fields, he never systematically pursued them. After he died young, his followers split along separate disciplinary paths, though they remained sensitive to the multidimensional complexity of the lives they studied. Sullivan, on the other hand, actively sought to create interdisciplinary syntheses in his own work; a posthumous volume of his essays is in fact called *The Fusion of Psychiatry and the Social Sciences* (Sullivan, 1971). Even more, he brought together interdisciplinary teams on a number of projects, foremost of which was his journal *Psychiatry*. The journal had an interdisciplinary board with many of the leading scholars of their generation and published a remarkable range of articles from fields as diverse as economics, medicine, language, literature, anthropology, sociology, and history. The journal explicitly framed its mission broadly in the first issue:

> Originally a specialization with the medical arts somewhat related to psychology (and thus to philosophy), the psychiatry of today is a growing integration of the biological and the social sciences. . . . . Psychiatry.… is enriched by and contributes to social science. Medicine, hygiene, philanthropy, education, criminology, penology, religion as a normative influence in life; all of these turn more and more towards a 'rediscovery of the individual,' in the end the study of interpersonal relations in the psychiatric sense. Psychiatry, which finds something useful in each of these activities, has also something to offer, and fair promise of increasing usefulness. (1938, 1: 1, 141)

The journal recognized that problems of living could arise from anywhere in the complex of human life, and solutions may need to be found in economics, culture, governance, or other domains as much as in the psychotherapeutic consulting room. I searched for other attempts to create interdisciplinary social sciences, but they were few, and none had gone as far as this in attempting to reintegrate the social sciences once they had started splitting off from philosophy and then each other in the nineteenth century.

The wide scope of the journal *Psychiatry* for me raised the question of how far the journal had gotten in developing an integrated synthesis and whether there were lessons for future integrations of social science. I further was interested in where the authors placed language and writing within their synthesis (Bazerman, 2005f). With this inquiry I was back on familiar research grounds, examining a run of journals. This project was in many ways even easier than some of my earlier ones, because it only attempted to synthesize the contents of the articles to see whether a coherent theory or mode of analysis emerged. The challenge was to organize and connect the themes in the articles. What I found was that while a number of articles proposed interesting syntheses, no broadly accepted

vision emerged; further, despite a number of articles considering language and literary culture, neither language nor writing was a significant part of any of the syntheses. I concluded that, at least from the perspective of writing, no adequate integration had yet been articulated and the problem was not yet solved. This recognition motivated me even more to pursue that integrative project.

Toward My Own Synthesis

To work on that integration, I wrote a series of chapters explaining what I saw as the intersection of socio-historic-cultural studies of writing and psychological studies. Some of these articles were addressed to psychologists and some were addressed to language and literacy scholars, explaining connections across the large divides. But it was not until I came to the two-volume theoretical work described in Chapter 23 and the collaborative work involved in the lifespan project, described in the next chapter, did I come to a more comprehensive synthetic position that rose above the disciplines to unite them rather than do border work between specific ones.

My first opportunity to explicitly address cognitive psychologists came from an invitation from Virginia Berninger to contribute to a volume on *Past, Present, and Future Contributions of Cognitive Writing Research to Cognitive Psychology* (Bazerman, 2012d). From the beginning I was presented with a dilemma about my credibility on the topic before such an audience. Since I was far from a cognitive psychologist of writing (though that's how the volume title positioned the authors), I was intimidated by the presumed audience of cognitive scientists (again as positioned by the book title). But after a confessional opening admitting my lack of credentials for the area, I decided to go bold: to say bluntly how the field seemed to me as an outsider from writing studies. In for a penny, in for a pound, as the adage goes. That remained my stance in all my articles addressed to psychologists, under the assumption I was asked particularly for my difference of views, which they could choose to pay selective attention to or even ignore. I identified my ethos and authority as a practitioner, teacher, and scholar of writing. Further I located my work as arising from a socio-cultural perspective, which already called into question typical psychological assumptions about the individual subject.

Consequently, my opening positioning statement was a rather long two pages. Next, in order to address scholars who might have a very different view of writing, seeing it as an individual psychological accomplishment, I needed to explain the premises of the sociocultural perspective on writing, the implications for what it showed significant about writing, and the contextual picture it revealed about learning to write in contemporary educational settings. Only at the bottom of the seventh page did I get to the actual business of the article to explain what I saw as writing's psychological complexity, both affective and cognitive. Not until the tenth page did I begin to discuss the problem of identifying researchable

psychological regularities that might be located, confirmed, and investigated through research. Despite the long and complex introductory nine pages, I did want to propose a coherent and intelligible agenda for psychological research, arguing that the most useful and productive questions could be integrated with sociocultural studies. I offered five specific directions or questions for psychological research, each elaborated in a paragraph or two. Only in the last few pages did I introduce the psychological researchers that I found most useful, but I presented them only in a very limited way, as examples of what might work well in concert with sociocultural approaches. I wanted to speak more broadly to current psychological research rather than to advocate particular approaches, because my suggestions for research directions were much broader than the ideas my favored authors pursued.

In this article I found it difficult to articulate what I had come to believe in terms that would be intelligible and meaningful to people trained in a field with very different starting assumptions and ways of proceeding. Even trickier was to make suggestions that would be actionable in their research world. It was also tricky how to transparently admit my own preferences for psychologists without having that become a dominating filter for both what I had to say and what readers might perceive me to be advocating. I spent much time coming to a structure of the article that I hoped would realize my desired stance and message.

Shortly thereafter I had another opportunity to explain the implications of sociocultural work in an educational psychological context. While the *Handbook of Research on Writing* that I had edited was organized around socio-historic principles while bringing in other perspectives, *The Handbook of Writing Research* edited by MacArthur, Graham and Fitzpatrick appearing at about the same time took a more decidedly educational psychology approach. In the first edition (2006) there were two articles presenting socio-cultural work as contrasts, distinct from the educational psychology approach. When I was invited to contribute to the second edition (2015), I felt I was now prepared to present sociocultural work in a way that could be better integrated with traditional educational psychology approaches. Following on the strategy of providing a list of useful takeaways, I itemized a series of lessons from sociocultural work that could inform an understanding of how people learned to write, elaborating each in a paragraph or two, and then directing readers through citations to the research behind the statements. The main challenge here was to identify those lessons, select among them, formulate them succinctly, and finally sequence and organize them in readily understood clusters. Since I was already well familiar with the work in the area, and was not attempting a complex theoretical explanation nor recommending research agendas, the actual elaboration of these lessons was not difficult. Further, since I was only offering findings from an explicitly sociocultural perspective and not posing a research agenda, no preliminary authority or theory building was needed. Since I wanted these lessons to be widely applicable and the research behind them readily understood, however, I revised heavily to

make the material accessible with as many familiar examples as could be offered in the limited space, relying on as little theory as possible (Bazerman, 2015c).

In two later pieces for educational psychologists, I was explicitly asked to provide critical comments from an alternative view, so my oppositional perspective was given advance license. Nonetheless, I wanted to offer criticism in a way that would generate serious questioning and thought. The first was to be the final commentary article in a special issue of the *Journal of Literacy Research* devoted to articles on "A Developmental Path to Text Quality." I was given prior access only to the abstracts of the articles and not the substance of the arguments. Since I was not given access to the full articles, I couldn't legitimately comment on them or accurately frame a critique. My problem was how to make my concerns clear without entering into a broadside oppositional diatribe, which besides being in danger of not fitting the actual articles also would likely not have much purchase with the audience for this issue. I hit on the strategy of asking questions about each of the terms in the title of the special issue, suggesting how complex each was, how each relied on assumptions, and how much each required further specification or elaboration. I took my inspiration for this strategy from a passage in a satiric novel about academic life that kept me amused throughout grad school, Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim.* As the protagonist was delivering an academic paper, he starts to question what he is reading aloud:

> "In considering this strangely neglected topic," it began. This what neglected topic? This strangely what topic? This strangely neglected what? (Amis, 1954, p. 14-15)

So my comment was impishly entitled "A? Developmental? Path? To? Text? Quality?" (Bazerman, 2019a). After an introduction characterizing the complexity of writing, particularly school writing, I asked a series of questions about each of the terms in the title. The list structure seemed to work well here as in the previous few pieces at the intersection with psychology, since it kept me from entering into complex arguments and theoretical discussions. The format created points that could be taken up separately by the readers, as items struck them as useful or engaging, and allowed them to skip past the items which seemed less interesting. Since I had recently emerged from the experience of the Lifespan Development of Writing working group (described in the next chapter), the questions mostly reflected the kinds of questions that came up in the group.

In another special issue, on conceptual constructions of writing in *The Educational Psychologist*, I was also the non-psychologist outsider (Bazerman, 2018d). Psychologists had tended to frame their concepts of writing within models used as general characterizations of phenomena, rather than imposed by analysts, researchers, assessors, teachers, or writers themselves, each for their separate purposes. I immediately saw a fully structured argument that questioned the universality of models by discussing how they were situationally used by different actors. In "What does a model model, and for whom?" my strategy was to denaturalize

the use of models in prior psychological discussion about writing by questioning how school writing and curricular goals came to stand for all writing development. I further argued that individual writers used models idiosyncratically and for very different purposes than analysts, researchers, or curricular designers. I suggested that naturally occurring generalities about writing, if they were to be found, would occur at different levels and in different ways than the models and conceptualizations were looking for them. I devoted the latter half of the article to challenges different writers might face in their different developmental trajectories, including those imposed by the structure of language, curriculum, social interaction, the nature of meaning-making, or human physiology and human neurobiology, among other elements that a writer must work with. A seriatim list of fourteen items (in essence a research agenda) was elaborated within a clearly articulated theoretical vision. Steve Graham, who was editing the issue, was generous enough to grant me the space and license to make this broad critique.

I wrote one final article synthesizing the psychological dimensions of studies throughout my career for a composition and writing studies audience in a volume showing the continuing relevance of psychological studies for writing studies in the US In the eighties and nineties, cognitive studies of writing were the leading edge of empirical research, so much so, that if you mentioned writing research, writing teachers would likely assume that you meant process studies within cognitive models. As socially based studies were to become more dominant in the later nineties in the US, the center of cognitive process research moved to Europe. In the US, however, work continued on such psychological issues as reflection, metathought, dispositions, habits of mind, and transfer. As well, advances in brain science were starting to provide new ways of thinking about writing. This volume was to bring together these lines of work and revalorize explicitly psychological research.

My sociohistoric and cultural work had always had an undercurrent of psychological concern, as I have discussed in this and earlier chapters. This undercurrent had become increasingly explicit but placed within the complexities of socio-historic positioning and development of writers. Wanting to present these psychological themes and implications more coherently for my peers in writing studies, I had little problem organizing the essay. I started with a naturalistic description of writing to indicate how much thinking, imagination, and other internalized work went on in writing, and then offered a narrative of my interests in cognitive and affective elements of writing, indicating how the elaboration of ideas and research questions went hand in hand with my sociohistoric investigations. I ended with an explicit overview of my current understanding and research questions, referring to recent articles and current research questions. The main task in writing was identifying and reviewing my prior publications and pedagogical practices that bore on psychological themes, and articulating what the connection was for each. Once I had a good sense of the pieces I wanted to discuss, I could describe the path I had taken to get to my current understanding.

This was a story I had been rehearsing in a number of talks, but this retelling took the synthesis one step further in reconstructing how my thinking had developed (Bazerman, 2017c).