Appendix A. Methods

The purpose of this multifaceted sequence of studies is to understand how expert writers and emerging scholars from the fields of composition, applied linguistics, and related disciplines learn develop into expert writers, in other words, exploring what makes an expert writer an expert. Three related studies interweave in this book to form a comprehensive picture of writing expertise: a four-year longitudinal study of expert writers, an interview study of emerging scholars, and a quantitative survey of 198 members of the field of writing studies. I now describe each of the studies, datasets, analysis strategies, and limitations.

Study 1: Four-Year Longitudinal Expert Writing Process Study

Goals: My goal with the four-year longitudinal writing process study was to explore, in depth, the writing processes and experiences of self-identified expert professional writers from the field of writing studies. By following them through a complete writing process from idea to publication—I could then have a data-driven understanding of what real expert writing processes looked like as a foundation for this book.

Procedure: After gaining IRB approval at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IRB #18-260-ONLINE), I put out a call for participants for a longitudinal writing process study on the Writing Studies and Writing Center listservs. My goal was to recruit ten individuals who considered themselves expert academic writers, who had extensive publication experience, and who were in the process of conceptualizing a new work. Each of my ten writers agreed to compose in Google Docs and keep a writing process journal that they would update each writing session. I also interviewed them at least three times: before they started at about the halfway mark, after the article was submitted, and after they engaged in revisions receiving reviewer/editor feedback. I interviewed half of the writers four times, and we also frequently exchanged emails every month or so between interviews.

Key to this study was the combination of self-reported data (interviews and writing process journals) and direct observational data of their composing process through a Google Doc plugin called Google Draftback.

For the purposes of this book, I am including data from participants who successfully completed their articles, books, or book chapters which resulted in eventual publication. Of the initial ten participants I recruited, six participants completed the study in that they submitted an article for publication. The remaining four either decided not to pursue the original project we had discussed (2), withdrew (1) or decided to shift careers (1). This completion rate is typical for longitudinal studies that span more than a year and has been consistent with my

other longitudinal work (Driscoll, 2023). The complicating factor of the global pandemic also impacted the latter part of this study, with many people having to pivot and adapt to radically changing circumstances (which took place the third year of the study).

Google Draftback plugin: The Google Draftback plugin is a very useful tool for writing process research that I and my then doctoral student, Roger Powell, began to explore its use in writing studies research (Powell, 2018, 2021). Google Docs provides tracking for each keystroke and change made over time; the Google Draftback plugin renders these changes into a video that can be played back later, allowing a researcher with access to the file to directly observe how the text is written over time. The Google Draftback plugin also generates useful analytics including tracking when, where in the document, and how the document was modified, the changing size of the document, hours spent writing, and visualization of the changes in the document. Access to this data combined with the writing journals and interviews, allowed me to triangulate how expert writing processes worked in relationship to writing for publication.

Interviews: In the first interview, I asked participants a range of questions about their typical writing process, scholarly identity, research trajectory, and specifics of the book chapter or article they planned to write. The second interview occurred around the 70 percent drafting mark, where we discussed aspects from their writing journals, how the purpose of the document had shifted, and walked through aspects of their composing process. The third interview happened after they had "finalized" the text and it was submitted for publication. In this interview, I offered them screenshots of the writing analytics from Google Draftback, we discussed more aspects of their writing journal and process and discussed the nature of writing expertise. Because I was engaging in analysis as the study continued, I presented initial findings to participants, which then we could discuss, and they could elaborate further. Finally, for most participants, I was also able to interview them after the article/book received reviewer feedback and as they were revising.

All interviews were conducted via Zoom from Fall 2018 – Spring 2022. Interviews lasted 60 minutes and were audio recorded. All participants received the questions I was asking at least 48 hours in advance of the interview.

Because this is a study of expert writers, participants used their real names in the study. Table 1 offers a list of participants, the kind of project they worked on for the study, the theme, number of interviews, institutional status, and publication status at the time of writing this book. At points, I have de-identified portions of their experiences or spoken more generally at their request.

Table 1. Expert Writing Participants

Partici-pant	Type of Project	Project Theme	Number of Inter-views	Status When Interviewed	Publication Status When Interviewed	Notable Demograph-ics
Alice	Book (fol-lowed one chapter)	Historical work on literacy heroines	4	Professor emeritus of writing and rhetoric with tenure, retired	Published	Retired
Dan	Book (fol-lowed one chapter)	Theoretical discussion of embod-iment and affect in the writing center	4	Associate professor of English with tenure, writ-ing center director	Book under review	Woring class, nontra-ditional graduate stu-dent turned faculty
Heather	Book (fol-lowed on chapter)	Empirical study of STEM minority writers	4	Visiting assistant professor of writing; later assis-tant professor of professional and techni-cal writing	Published	Nontra-ditional career path; contingent labor at start of study, now assistant professor
Matt	Article (solicited for edited collection)	Personal reflec-tion on history of Wikipedia	3	Assistant and later tenured associate professor of English	Published	
Ryan	Article (for journal, unsolic-ited)	Rhetorical examination of decep-tion in news	3	Assistant and later tenured associate professor of rhetoric and writing	Published	
Stepha-nie	Book chapter (for edited collection, solicited)	Theoretical discussion of creative writing pedagogy and lore	3	Professor of creative writing (tenured)	Published	

Expert Publications Followed in this Book

The following is a list of all publications followed as part of this study:

Falconer, H. (2022). *Masking inequality with good intentions: Systemic bias, counterspaces, and discourse acquisition in STEM education*. The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado. https://doi.org/10.37514/PRA-B.2022.1602

Horning, A. (2021). *Literacy heroines: Women and the written word*. Peter Lang.

Lawson, D. (In press). *Naming how we feel: Specific affect and emotional labor in the writing center*. Utah State University Press.

Skinnell, R. (2022a). Deceiving sincerely: The embrace of sincerity-as-truth in fascist rhetoric. In N. Crick (Ed.), *The rhetoric of fascism: Devices for the cult of irrationality* (pp. 222-240) University of Alabama Press.

Skinnell, R. (2022b). Two truths and a big lie: The "honest" mendacity of fascist rhetoric. *Journal for the History of Rhetoric, 25.2*, 175–197.

Vanderslice, S. (2021). Toward a unified field: The complications of lore and global context. In M. Moore & S. Meekings (Eds.), *The place and the writer: International intersections of teacher lore and creative writing pedagogy* (pp. 167–175). Bloomsbury.

Vetter, M. (2020). Possible enlightenments: Wikipedia's encyclopedic promise and epistemological failure. *Wikipedia@20: Stories of an incomplete revolution*. Ed. Reagle, J. & Koerner, J. MIT Press. https://wikipedia20.mitpress.mit.edu/

Data Analysis

Analysis of this rich set of data included an initial read and watch-through of all the data, doing some initial analysis and discussion with participants in the third and fourth interviews, and exploring relationships between the writing process videos generated by Google Draftback, writing journals, the completed texts, and the interviews. I also did a MS Word "draft compare" on each of the publications, examining the changes that were made during revision and peer review. Thus, for each of the six participants I created a "writing map" of how the documents unfolded and a trajectory and timeline of everything that happened. Additionally, I systematically coded the interviews for a wide range of features (many of which became the major themes in each chapter) and I coded writing process journals. The goal was to come to an understanding of how the direct observational data aligned or diverged from the self-reported interview data and triangulate these different sources of data for a cohesive picture in the book. More detailed analysis methods for each chapter are described in Appendix B.

Study 2: Field-Wide Writing for Publication Survey

After engaging in two years of data collection for the ongoing expert longitudinal study and after initial conversation with my case study participants on composing styles (Driscoll, 2025), I conducted a larger-scale survey to understand the scope writing processes and writing for publication in the field of writing studies.

After pre-testing the survey and IRB approval, I distributed the survey on three listservs, Writing Studies, W-Center, and Next-Gen (IRB #18-260-ONLINE). Calls for participants were sent out in early October 2020 and then a follow-up call was sent two weeks later. The survey remained open for 30 days.

The survey was completed by 198 individuals who had either engaged in writing for publication, or started to write for publication, and who had identified as being members of the field of writing studies. This included 58 (29.3%) identifying as males, 128 (65.6%) as female, three (1.5%) as transgender, and eight (4.0%) who prefer not to specify. Participants identified as Latinx or Hispanic (4, 2%), Native American (3, 1.5%), Asian or Pacific Islander (10, 5.1%), African American (8, 4%), and white (173, or 87.4%). Participants came from a range of statuses at the university, including graduate student (40, 20.2%), adjunct or part time instructor (8, 4.0%), full time non-tenured instructor (29, 14.6%), tenure-track faculty (33, 16.7%), tenured faculty (30, 15.2%), individuals in various administrative roles (44 or 22.2%), upper administrators (10, 5.1%), and retired faculty (10, 5.1%). Participants had a range of teaching experiences, including teaching a full load, being an adjunct at multiple institutions, or having loads split between teaching and administration.

208 survey responses were recorded, with 10 removed due to an incomplete survey (I removed surveys that were less than 10% complete). All surveys that remained (including those partially complete) are included in the study.

I analyzed the surveys with the SPSS Statistics (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) which included calculating descriptive statistics for demographics, expertise, and information on writing process, flow states, and composing styles. After ensuring the data was normally distrusted, I performed a Spearman's Rho inferential statistical test to explore correlations between composing style and demographics, institutional status, and self-reported expertise.

Study 3: Interviews with Emerging Scholars

Goals. Based on early feedback on my book proposal, and after three years of data collection for the longitudinal expert writing study, I realized that I needed to also understand the experiences of emerging scholars to offer a full picture of writing for publication expertise. Thus, I and one of my graduate students, Islam Farag, worked to interview 11 participants of diverse backgrounds who were either doctoral students or early career faculty (within their first two years of a new position). We put out a call on the Writing Studies listserv in Spring 2021 and conducted interviews via Zoom in Spring and Summer 2021 (IRB# 21-173-ONLINE). Islam also had an interest in multilingual writers, so he conducted a second interview with three of our multilingual writers to go more in depth with their publication experiences (data of which he primarily used for his own article project). Interviews lasted one hour, and participants were sent the interview script in advance.

For the interviews, participants were asked to share as much writing process data as they could with us: the article they published; any drafts they had;

materials for revising, time management tools and strategies; feedback they received from peer reviewers, mentors, or peers; editor communications, and so forth. This resulted in 125 documents (articles, drafts, editor communication, blind peer review, feedback), ten images (screenshots, photographs, and various other writing process examples) across the 14 interviews.

Table 2 provides an overview of the participants, including the type of article we interviewed them about, the project theme (generalized to be non-identifying), their status at the time of the interviews, the number of publications they had worked on and/or published at the time, and the identifying factors that they brought up in the interview that were salient and important to them.

Emerging scholars chose whether or not to use their real names and most provided a pseudonym; this is indicated in the table.

Table 2. Participant demographics

Partici-pant	Type of Project	Project Theme	Status When Interviewed	Peer Reviewed Pubs When Interviewed	Notable Demographics
Amal (pseud-onym)	Article for conference proceedings	Visual rhetoric and production of a homegrown textbook at an international university	Doctoral student and instructor of writing at International University	2	Multilingual writer, four languages with Arabic as L1, neurodiverse (dyslexia); located in a middle eastern country with major social upheaval/unrest
Brita (Real name)	Book chapter for edited collection	Cultural/rhetorical examination of cookbooks	Doctoral student in rhetoric and composition	1 under review and one published	White, suffers from anxiety, comes from rural conservative community in the U.S. Midwest; has newborn
Candace (Real name)	Article in peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion of community colleges, career readiness, and developmental English	Doctoral student in curriculum and instruction with English focus	1 (solo)	African American from southern USA

Partici-pant	Type of Project	Project Theme	Status When Interviewed	Peer Reviewed Pubs When Interviewed	Notable Demographics
Emilio (pseud-onym)	Article in peer reviewed journal	Empirical article in WID/WAC focus-ing on STEM majors' beliefs and practices on writing	Assistant professor and director of the writing center (first year, tenure track)	4 (discussed first solo pub-lished article)	Hispanic, bilingual in Spanish and English, from metro area in Midwest USA
Gina (pseud-onym)	Peer reviewed journal	Autoeth-nography on relationship with writing and writing pedagogy	Doctoral student in rhetoric and composition	1 (solo)	Mixed race background (Hispanic and Caucasian); bilingual in English and Spanish, from Midwest, USA
Sara (Pseud-onym)	Peer reviewed journal	Theoretical discussion of refugee literacies	Doctoral student in writing/applied linguistics	2 (1 under review)	White, registered disability, from U.S. Mid-At-lantic area
Nadia (pseud-onym)	Peer reviewed journal article	Modern liter-ature, literary and cultural analysis	Assistant professor of writing and English (teach-ing track)	1 (under review)	White, from U.S. Midwest
Danny (pseud-onym)	Peer reviewed journal article	Data rhet-orics and technical com-munication (empirical)	Doctoral student in rhetoric and composition	6 (4 collaborative)	White, queer-iden-tifying, from Midwest, USA
Khaled (pseud-onym)	Peer reviewed journal article	Empirical examination of academic socialization in graduate programs	Assistant professor of English, writ-ing program director	5 (3 collaborative)	South Asian, multilingual scholar (bilin-gual in English and Bangla)
Wade (pseud-onym)	Peer reviewed journal article	Rhetorical examination of a local land-mark in relationship cultural and racial theory	Doctoral student in rhetoric and composition	1 solo	White, working-class background, from metro area in Mid-west USA

Partici-pant	Type of Project	Project Theme	Status When Interviewed	Peer Reviewed Pubs When Interviewed	Notable Demographics
Kathy (pseud-onym)	Con-ference proceed-ings	Reflections on pandemic and self as multilin-gual scholar/ teacher	Doctoral student in rhetoric and composition	5 (3 collaborative)	Chinese from China, multi-lingual scholar

Analysis: Similar to the expert writers, in order to analyze the data from this study, I first worked to create a timeline of the publication by examining both the interviews as well as the texts themselves. When participants provided me with initial submissions and final publications (8), I also conducted a draft compare, allowing me to see the kinds and nature of revisions made, and compared these revisions to their interviews. I extensively analyzed the interviews with multiple rounds of coding, exploring themes in major chapters. Participants were contacted for member checks while the book was being written.

Triangulation Between Three Studies

My ultimate goal was to present as complete of a picture of writing expertise as possible, thus, after engaging in extensive analysis with all three studies individually, I worked to examine points of intersection, comparability, and divergence. Which of the major themes coded were the same? Which demonstrated some evolution from emerging to expert scholars? From this, the major chapters and themes in the book emerged. For different parts of the book, I selected the most compelling stories and data to illustrate the points, also providing code counts and other data where necessary.

Member Checking

During the writing of this book, I was in touch with participants to clarify their experiences and ask follow-up questions. Once I had a draft of the book, all emerging and expert scholar participants had an opportunity to review the full work and offer member checks and feedback. This ensures that their experiences and views are represented accurately.

Limitations

Overall, in the four years of collecting data in relationship to this book, I did my best to engage in a thoughtful, robust, and meaningful triad of studies that could inform the way that graduate students learn how to become professional, expert writers and how to engage in meaning-making in the discipline. No dataset is perfect, and as is befitting any study, I am left with more questions than answers.

COVID-19. I began the longitudinal writing process study of experts in Fall 2018; four of my six participants finished the study prior to the onset of COVID-19. The final two finished initial drafts during the pandemic (2020 and 2021). The survey was conducted in Fall 2020, which was within the first year of the pandemic. The interviews of emerging scholars were conducted in Spring and Summer 2021, still in the middle of the pandemic. Thus, this study has a mix of pandemic and non-pandemic data, and the pandemic likely substantially impacted many people's writing processes. For example, my survey respondents often indicated that they had less time to write due to increased work obligations, childcare and working from home, difficulty in focusing due to ongoing anxiety and stress, and increased demands on their time during the pandemic. Thus, I am certain that some of what I present in this book, particularly from the survey and emerging scholar interviews, was shaped by the material circumstances of the pandemic.

Since a triangulated study of this scope and magnitude has never been conducted before, I don't have comparison data. But I have made every opportunity to note what data may have been influenced by the pandemic or not. To counter this, in all the interviews during the pandemic, I asked interview participants in both studies about the impact of the pandemic and how things had changed. Generally, the view was that writing for publication continued to occur, but that writing took a lot longer than it would have before the pandemic. Some participants, however, noted more time to write due to the decrease of social obligations while others noted less due to increased family obligations and children at home. I also note here that the conditions under which people write are always changing, and large disruptions may be disruptive to writing processes. Families have deaths and crises, relationships end, new babies are born—these are individually disruptive and happen. The pandemic was a larger disruption that affected people more, but in some cases it also represents the reality that writing is often disrupted due to life.

Longitudinal Writing Process Expertise Study. Even with the technology of Google Docs/Google Draftback and videos of the writing process, interviews, writing journals, no researcher can ever have a complete view of someone's writing processes. Thus, there are certainly aspects of their writing that that I could not capture—particularly, it was difficult to capture what happened in between "on the page" sessions beyond the limited information in journals and discussion in interviews. I often asked participants in interviews to share with me what happened in between points in the moment of drafting, or to fill in what they were doing. As this was done retrospectively, I'm sure there are things I missed. Even so, I feel as though I have captured enough data to have a good representation of these scholars' processes and can represent them accurately. Due to the nature of how people write and the fact that writing processes can span months or years, I'm not sure that there would be a better way to capture this information at a distance nor in a less invasive way, but this limitation is still worth noting.

Emerging Scholar Interviews. Interviews with the emerging scholars, combined with their many documents, drafts, and reviews that they shared, were able to offer a picture of the writing experiences that they faced. The biggest limitation with this data is that it is retrospective interview data and is self-reported (Chan, 2010), which means that in some cases, participants could not remember the nuance of their process. However, as Lauren A. Sosniak (2006) argues, retrospective interviews are a necessary way to study the development of expertise, especially over longer periods of time. Because I wanted to capture their early successful writing process, in some cases, my graduate student and I were interviewing participants almost a year after they had submitted a final draft or right after their article was in print. The only way to circumvent this would be to do a similar study with emerging scholars as was done with the expert writers—which still has limitations. I worry that such a study may put undue pressure on the emerging scholars—the expert scholars were experts, and didn't mind me "looking over their shoulder" so to speak as part of their process, but given the higher levels of anxiety and stress faced by emerging scholars, I'm not sure if a similar study would be successful. The other issue with self-reported data is that participants may not be willing to share everything accurately due to how they feel they may be perceived. These are hardly new limitations; however, they are worth noting. Part of how I address these limitations **is** both through the triangulation of the three studies and with the collection of the documents that accompany the interviews.

Surveys. Surveys are great for gathering little bits of information from larger groups of people. The limitation here is again, they are self-reported (having the same issues above, perhaps mitigated somewhat by the fact that they are anonymous). Some participants also noted in their open-ended question that their responses would have been different pre-pandemic or post-pandemic, which has already been noted above.

Collaboration. As the study was already complex, multi-institutional and multi-year, I focused on studying individuals who were working on a solo-authored writing project. While collaboration often came up for all scholars in interviews, I did not follow a collaborative writing process of experts. This would have been an entirely different study—but with that said, there are other dimensions to collaboration in terms of drafting, revisions, and navigating peer review that were not captured by this data.

Field-Specific Data. A final limitation with this dataset is that it is limited to the field of writing studies, which draws upon multiple metagenres (Carter, 2007) those using methods of empirical inquiry used in the social sciences and education approach (about half of participants) and those in the humanities (half of the participants). However, as the participants came from a range of related fields, the dataset cannot speak to those writing in very different circumstances, such as those in lab-based settings in science or those working on performance-based writing.

Artificial Intelligence and Writing. Data collected ended for all three studies in early 2022, prior to the widespread release of AI-writing tools like Chat-GPT. Thus, data presented in this book is before the advent of publicly available AI writing tools like Chat-GPT. There is no question that emerging AI technologies will shape expert writing processes, but that is not included in this data.