Chapter 7. Cultivating Generative Dispositions, Mindsets, and Emotions towards Writing for Publication

Part I: Crossing the Threshold

When you think of the words *failure* or *struggle*, what emotions come to mind? How do you feel in your body if you think about your own past failures? How many times have you felt afraid to fail, and perhaps that limited you in even trying something to begin with? How did you feel when you were struggling and others around you weren't? Often, these kinds of experiences represent very serious challenges to most of us. In many ways, educational systems teach us to fear failure and to do everything we can to prevent it. A failing grade could lead to failing a course, being held back a year, or even losing one's financial aid. The grading system present in most educational contexts leaves very little room for anything but peak performance. When you begin to learn how to publish, an entirely different set of experiences and expectations emerge—that most of us get rejected, and sometimes often, but that rejection is not the end—you always have a chance to revise your work and/or submit it somewhere else. Learning to accept that failure and rejection is part of the process, and that it happens to everyone, are still not easy things to embrace.

When we look at Table 7.1 and our threshold concept below, we can see the ways that experts who have crossed the threshold have several key distinctions surrounding how they manage the emotional aspects of writing including how they manage and overcome failures, struggles and setbacks. Emotional challenges and learning to manage and overcome them have been explored in the literature on professional academic writers (Boice, 1990; Kellogg, 2006) and tied to effective learning transfer and long-term development (Driscoll & Powell, 2016). Similarly, Christine E. Tulley (2018) selected accomplished members of the field who had outstanding publication records and interviewed them about their process. One of Tulley's key findings was that experts recognize the importance of persisting through difficult parts of the writing process and not giving up. But how do you take on this mindset? How can you let go of a lifetime of socialization that insists that struggle is bad? These are the topics tackled in this chapter through our exploration of our threshold concept:

> ***Threshold Concept:*** *Expert writers leverage failure and struggle to grow as writers and improve their text through cultivating emotional resiliency and growth mindsets.*

Part of what this threshold concept teaches us is that publication requires a different kind of relationship with our writing, with revision, and with understanding the role of struggle and failure. It is not a matter of if you will fail, but how you will handle that failure and how you will persist through it. Thus, through this chapter, we'll explore the research on failure and growth mindsets (Dweck, 2006) with suggestions on cultivating a more productive relationship with failure and struggle to provide perseverance necessary for successful publication. Through this process, you will learn to cultivate a healthy and lifelong writing practice.

Table 7.1 Crossing the Threshold

Student Mindsets and Dispositions		**Expert Mindsets and Dispositions**
Failure is to be avoided at all costs and may cause serious emotional disruption. Emerging scholars may lack emotional resiliency or specific strategies.	**THRESHOLD**	Failure is not fun, but it accepted as part of the process. Experts cultivate emotional resiliency and specific strategies to regulate emotions to persist through challenges and manage struggle.
Receiving requests for extensive revisions or having an article ejected point to a lack of capability or competency.		Extensive revisions or failures do not reflect the writer themselves or their capability or competency. They reflect the state of the text, which can always be revised further.
Small setbacks or difficulty may cause a writer to question themselves, their belonging, in higher education, making them feel like an imposter or failure.		Taking small setbacks or difficulty in stride, recognizing that small setbacks are part of the process. Feeling the emotional resiliency to preserve through the difficulty.
Focusing on weaknesses, failures, or struggles.		Focusing on strengths and leveraging those strengths to overcome weaknesses.

Exploring Dispositions and Mindsets towards Publication

Do you believe that you are able to succeed? Do you persist through difficult times? Do you value the work you do? How you answer these questions speak to one of the factors that helps you be you—your dispositions. Dispositions are not knowledge, they are not skills, but rather, they are internal qualities that you possess and that directly impact your behaviors and affect your development as a writer. Dispositions are not what you know or who you are, but rather they are internal, personal qualities that define how you respond to situations. In fact, they are so central that to your overall development that, as Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2007) describe they are the "precursors and producers of later development."

Dispositions—along with our identifies, prior experiences, and our mindsets—are useful to consider with the iceberg metaphor. You, as the writer, are the iceberg;

and what is on the top of the iceberg is what is external: these are the behaviors you engage in—sitting down to write, sending articles out for review, procrastinating, and so on. But as we know, most of the iceberg is under the surface of the water, not observable. Thus, your behaviors are driven by a host of factors that are often invisible and internal. Drawing from my co-authored work (Driscoll & Zhang, 2022), from writing developmental standpoint, these include:

- **Your identity**, such as who you are, the culture you were born into, your gender, sexuality, race, religion, and how you define yourself (identities and motivations are covered in Chapter 6)
- **Your dispositions**, such as your belief in your ability to succeed (self-efficacy) or your ability to persist through difficulty (persistence) (covered in this chapter)
- **Your mindset** towards struggle and failure (growth or fixed) (Dweck, 2008) (covered in this chapter)
- **Your prior experiences** that you have and how you draw upon, work with, or are limited by your past (covered both in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7)

Here's the thing about the iceberg—what is on the surface is propped up and supported by all of the ice underneath. This means that while your behaviors or emotional reactions are observable, what drives those behaviors is often deep beneath the surface. Thus, understanding these aspects can greatly aid us in developing as expert writers.

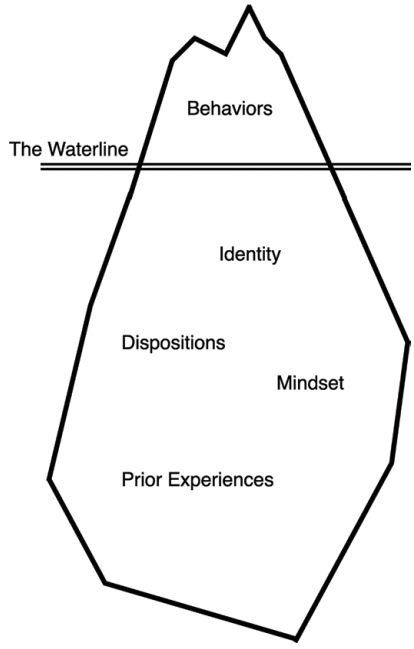

Figure 7.1 The iceberg: what is visible and what is below the waterline.

Some aspects of the above may be very may be conscious for you (closer to or even at the water line of your iceberg) or they may be semi-conscious or even unconscious, existing in the deep, dark waters of your psyche. Dispositions and mindset are two that are often less visible—and yet they have substantial and direct impact on your ability to become an expert writer.

While often invisible, these dispositions are so powerful that they can subsantially impact your long-term success as a writer (Driscoll & Wells, 2012; Driscoll & Zhang, 2022; Powell & Driscoll, 2020). Dispositions include your writerly self-efficacy or whether or not you feel you are able to accomplish a task (Bandura, 2013), your willingness to persist in continuing in the face of adversity, value you place on the writing task, your general motivation and emotions towards writing (Driscoll & Wells, 2012) and your mindset (Dweck, 2006; Powell & Driscoll, 2020). Also, at or below the water level are other emotions and states of being that emerge from these dispositional qualities: anxiety, imposter syndrome, and burnout.

Throughout the study, key dispositions emerged for these successful scholars. These include value, self-efficacy, curiosity, and help-seeking. Help seeking is explored in Chapter 6, value in Chapter 6, and curiosity in Chapter 2. This chapter focuses on the emotional aspects of writing as they related to mindsets and dispositions, which thereby connect to a host of common challenges for those working to publish: imposter syndrome, anxiety, and handling difficulty and failure.

How Do You Handle Struggle? Growth Mindsets and Growing Writerly Expertise

If we return to the questions that opened this chapter about failure and struggle, we come to our first threshold concept: Expert writers leverage failure and struggle to grow as writers and improve their texts. Take a moment to consider these questions again: How do you commonly handle failure? What happens if you are struggling? What happens if you get an article rejected? Do you shut down, seek help, or embrace the struggle? Does this depend on the context?

Mindset theory can give us a set of tools to productively engage with the expected struggle and failures tied to writing for publication. In this theory, mindset is a theory of intelligence that determines how you handle struggle, your attitude towards facing adversity, and your beliefs about learning (Dweck, 2008). Carol Dweck's (2006) body of work on mindset theory has demonstrated that people typically have one of two mindsets: growth or fixed. Closely tied to mindsets are the idea of giftedness (Palmquist & Young, 1992) where writing is either seen as a "gift" that a person is born with and thus cannot change, or a belief that writing is something that can be learned. The two mindsets are as follows.

Fixed mindsets: Individuals holding a fixed mindset believe that skills and intelligence as "fixed" and unchangeable. They believe that they are either a good writer or not and everyone has a certain amount of ability. Those with a fixed

mindset have difficulty managing struggle, failure, setbacks, often avoiding situations where they may struggle or fail entirely or shutting down when things get difficult. Fixed mindset individuals assume that the failure is a direct reflection on themselves, and failure represents a direct challenge to their own intelligence As Dweck (2006) has demonstrated, fixed mindset individuals often over-estimate their ability to perform and then are devastated when they are not successful.

Growth mindsets: On the other hand, an individual with a growth mindset recognizes that failure, struggle, and difficulty are part of learning, and through hard work, they can improve their skills and intelligence. They recognize the promise of "growth" in their abilities over time and may use the language of "not yet" to describe their growth. Growth mindset individuals have demonstrated as having more accurate understandings of their skills and abilities. While nobody likes to fail, growth mindset individuals use failure as an opportunity to deepen their understanding and continue to persevere through that experience.

Two major challenges are present when we consider mindsets in terms of becoming an expert academic writer. The first as we began to explore in the opening to this chapter—school systems teach and foster fixed mindsets (Dweck, 2006). This means that many emerging scholars may have fixed mindsets as byproducts of their education. The second is that rejection, failure, and struggle is a regular part of the process of writing for publication, with both expert and emerging scholars receiving difficult feedback, rejection, and other challenges (Chapter 5). The good news is that mindsets can be taught and modeled, particularly with intention, mentoring, and support, fixed mindsets can be transformed into growth mindsets (Dweck & Yeager, 2019).

Mindsets have been recognized to impact literacy learning and academic success, from primary and secondary education (Blackwell et al., 2007; Limpo & Alvies, 2014) to undergraduate college students (Driscoll & Wells, 2012; Wardle, 2012), to workplaces and internships (Baird & Dilger, 2017) and into graduate school (Powell & Driscoll, 2020). In fact, work by myself and a co-author (Powell & Driscoll, 2020) found that mindsets surrounding feedback and writing were so central to graduate students' development that a fixed mindset may radically alter the course of a person's career trajectory, where an individual avoids further failure due to a fixed mindset. Mindsets may also determine what writing instruction is taken up by students and which is avoided (Knuston, 2019). Mindsets can be domain specific, that is, you may have a growth mindset about one thing (practicing yoga), but a fixed mind set in another area (writing for publication); Laura Schubert (2017) relates this in writing to students' competing value systems.

Like other "under the iceberg" personal qualities, mindsets can be unconscious or semi-conscious and are therefore, critical to understand and bring to the surface. Thus, you may be only semi-conscious or even unconscious about the impact of mindset in your life—by learning these theories you can start to bring these to the surface and consciously interact with them. Like other aspects of the iceberg, what is under the water level determines what is manifesting on the

surface and above the water level: procrastination or dropping a publishing project after receiving a rejection or difficult feedback. Once you learn about them, you have a lot more power to control and shift them.

Part II: Exploring Mindsets, Dispositions and Imposter Syndrome in Emerging and Expert Scholars

What if I fail? Mindsets in Expert and Emerging Scholars

As Table 7.2 describes, all six expert scholars demonstrated growth mindsets—accepting that struggle, failure, and extensive revision was part of the learning process and that they could learn and grow from those experiences. The majority of the emerging scholars also demonstrated emerging growth mindsets, where they describe the process of transitioning from fixed to growth mindsets (five scholars) or having growth mindsets (four scholars). The two remaining emerging scholars did not demonstrate mindsets (this is because not all articles had substantial revision or struggle, and not all talked about their work in the direction of mindsets). No writers in either group demonstrated a fixed mindset in the study, which is a compelling pointing to the need for cultivating a growth mindset to be successful in publishing.

Table 7.2 Growth and Fixed Mindsets in this Study

	Growth Mindset	**Emerging Growth**	**Fixed Mindset**	**No Evidence of Mindset in Data**
Expert scholar	6	0	0	0
Emerging scholar	5	4	0	2

For most emerging scholars, growth mindsets were demonstrated through their philosophies about revision and time invested in revision, how they handled setbacks during revisions, and their relationship with blind peer reviews. Unlike the expert scholars, who talk about mindset as a matter of fact, emerging scholars describe many stories of what I identified as "emerging growth mindsets" where they are describing shifts in their mindsets—through the experience of writing and publishing, through good mentoring and support, they are able to recognize that they can grow, learn, and use struggle productively.

Emerging scholar Emilio describes his long writing process and the struggles he faced to see parts of his dissertation published (my emphasis added for mindset qualities):

> I spent one and a half years working on this dissertation and writing all these chapters and then I ended up using less than half of what I ended up working on. *Not that that labor was wasted in my mind. It got somewhere and it was meaningful if*

> *only for my development as a scholar and as a person*. But it wasn't until I actually was willing to do the really hard thing of letting go of a framework which I thought was working and accepted that a different framework was necessary, that it really all came together and made me feel like I knew what I was talking about. *It made me a better teacher, a better scholar, a better writer*. … When I got my feedback on this article that was "this isn't working" … *I was primed already to say okay, it's not working*. I'll bring on this other thing and I'll try this new thing … *But I had already done the hard mental jump of I got really bad feedback; I need to really think, rethink, and change all this stuff. I was ready for that now*.

In this excerpt, we can see how Emilio's experience as a dissertation writer, where he had to productively engage with struggle and feedback and recognizing his own learning process "primed" him to have a growth mindset with his publication. He knows that even if he gets "really bad feedback" he's ready to change, improve, and grow. These are all qualities of a growth mindset towards writing for publication that allowed him to persist and persevere and will continue to serve him in his future publications.

Likewise, emerging scholar Sara shows how she is moving from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset about feedback, specifically using strategies she learned from her graduate program faculty, "I knew from being part of the program, if you're taking feedback emotionally, you got to let it sit for a while. … what I found when I was cool-headed and looked back at it. I was like, no, this is actually really helpful and I totally get what they're saying." Rather than shutting down and avoiding the feedback, she recognizes through mentoring and instruction in her doctoral program that feedback is as a place for her to grow and learn.

These shifting and growth mindsets are demonstrated by successful emerging scholars. I will also add that my years of teaching Writing for Publication suggests that many graduate students (at least a few in every class I teach) have publications that they do not pursue due to fixed mindset issues. They get the feedback, either a rejection or a revise and resubmit decision, and then they simply shut down and refuse to pursue the publication. When I talk with them, it all comes back to fixed mindsets. Given all of the above, this is why mindset is such an important threshold concept for writing for publication.

Anxiety, Self-Efficacy, and Imposter Syndrome

How many times have you had the quiet voice in your head saying "I'm not good enough? I'm an imposter." Imposter syndrome is widespread in many professional fields and has major impacts including negatively affecting well-being; causing anxiety, burnout, and stress; and increase dropout rates (Jaremka et al.,

2020; Sverdlik et al., 2020). These questions bring us to our next set challenges and dispositions that impact professional writing expertise.

Imposter syndrome is the belief that you are not good enough, that you are an imposter and do not belong or are not worthy of doing the work of the field (Driscoll, et al., 2020). Imposter syndrome is essentially the opposite of having a positive self-efficacy and belief that you can succeed, rather, it breeds anxiety as writers feel they are not up to the task, they are frauds, and they can't succeed. Imposter syndrome happens to many people working to become professional scholars, and nearly all of us must contend with it and overcome it at some point or another. All but the most senior of scholars in my studies discussed imposter syndrome.

Nine of the 11 emerging scholars specifically identified feeling imposter syndrome at points in their writing for publication. And all 11 emerging scholars discussed the importance of building their confidence as writers and overcoming imposter syndrome and the anxiety it produces. They offered a range of specific strategies, some that are environmental and external, and some that are internal to them as follows:

External factors that mitigate imposter syndrome. External factors are those that are external to the writer, and may involve seeking help from others, having external affirmations on the work of the scholar, or seeking therapy. These included:

- Having a good reception of their scholarship: work accepted to conferences, presenting work at conferences, and having a good experience (four scholars)
- Encouragement from their faculty on the quality of ideas and or quality of work (eight scholars)
- Having articles or scholarship recognized by their program/department/university (two scholars)
- Successful experiences in publication and recognizing that they had the tools to succeed (five scholars)
- Learning (through mentoring, coursework, books) the key rhetorical moves of publication, article writing, and conference presenting so they can build confidence (three scholars)
- Directly talking about imposter syndrome and anxiety with peers, writing groups, faculty (five scholars)
- Seeking medication or therapy to manage debilitating anxiety (two scholars)

Internal factors that mitigate imposter syndrome: internal factors are those within the emerging scholar themselves: their thoughts, emotions, identities, sense of time management, and so on. While these can be assisted with the above list, they are essentially things they work out for themselves as they are engaged in their publication process:

- Taking up non-academic hobbies (crochet, hiking) to destress (two scholars)
- Developing mantras or positive self-affirmations ("I can do this," "I am good enough," or "I will succeed.") These may be repeated, printed out and displayed in their writing area, or written at the top of documents they are working on. (three scholars)
- Recognizing that they had important, novel things to share with the field (five scholars)
- Recognizing that their identity and voice was important to the field (four scholars)
- Consciously shifting their perspectives on how they view themselves, their capabilities, and their expertise (six scholars)
- Shifting their views on peer review processes from terrible to helpful (four scholars)
- Recognizing their learning journey from novice to expert as an ongoing process (two scholars)
- Developing set schedules, structures, and time management to manage anxiety and give time for success (five scholars)
- Recognizing that imposter syndrome is not real (two scholars)
- Putting things in perspective, specifically that academia is a job, not the entirety of their lives (two scholars)

All emerging scholars were able to share specific examples of how they cultivated a stronger sense of self-efficacy and fought against imposter syndrome. Carrie describes her growing sense of self-efficacy as she began to work on her article and how it required an internal identity shift and trusting in herself:

> Trusting my own voice. … It just took me understanding authority in my writing and that was one of the first times I actually proposed a solution for somebody to follow. It's like I read these solutions all the time but who am I to propose a solution. I think it did take some self-identity work. I think I am credible to be able to do this, but I think maybe if I was a professor or something like a tenured professor, I wouldn't think that. But as a graduate student I'm like, do I really have this authority. But I think I overcame it by this is what I genuinely think about it, let me just add it in the article. Is it a right or wrong answer? As long as I can support it, I think it'll be fine. I just took a leap of faith, honestly.

Likewise, Wade realizes his own developmental trajectory as someone who is still learning and growing, and honors his novice status but also the skills he brings to the table,

> I didn't have the imposter syndrome at first because they accepted my proposal … I felt good about that. When I sat down

> to write it … I guess the thing about the imposter syndrome part is easy, actually to me, because I know that I am a graduate student. If I don't feel bad about not writing article that's as good as one that a professor wrote because I'm not a professor. To an extent, I know that I'm not supposed to be as good at writing as professor because I'm a grad student. It doesn't really upset me to think about it that way.

In both the case of Carrie and Wade, we can see them negotiating and exploring their status as graduate students turning emerging scholars. Carrie recognizes that she has important things to share and cultivate her own sense of ethos and authority. Wade recognizes that he's still growing and learning and being okay with that. Likewise, Emilio describes the process of working through peer revisions and his growing self-efficacy through telling himself he is capable of success. He specifically talks about one reviewer comment to "step on the gas harder" which confused him during the revision process,

> Especially with that thing, "step on the gas a little harder." I don't know what that means. I spent a lot of time just staring at my screen thinking, am I supposed to know what this means, is this a common thing that people say to each other, how am I supposed to translate that. … But with that said, I also think that to some extent, I experientially or I know I have the conflict in my head that says I know that I'm a competent person, I know that I'm not here by mistake, and I know that I can do this work. I have seen myself do this, I have people who tell me that I can do this that I trust, I know I can do this.

What we can see from these three scholars is that part of the developmental trajectory of overcoming anxiety and deepening one's self-efficacy is identity work. It's believing in oneself, recognizing one's own growth and learning process, and learning to trust one's own voice. This work does not happen overnight, but dedication, persistence, and support allow these emerging scholars to find voice, confidence, and success.

The value of positive mantras is really key for emerging scholars, particularly those that are facing multiple compounding challenges. Amal identifies as neurodiversel has attention deficit disorder, dyslexia, and anxiety; and is also a second language writer. She describes the incredible value of positive affirmations to help her overcome anxiety and imposter syndrome,

> I have ADD; I have been diagnosed with multiple traumas … They all interfere with learning and literacy, especially because I code-shift, code-switch, code-mesh, and code-stitch a lot. I used to see all these as hindrances which have caused performance anxiety at many levels. I could overcome some of it.

> Needless to say, the "impostor syndrome" was great until I kept repeating the mantra: "I am the intellectual equal of everyone around me" enough times to the point where, to use Dr. Amy Cuddy's words, I faked it till I became it.

Now, Amal notes (in other parts of this manuscript) how much she loves writing and the importance of the scholarship she is engaging in.

These stories of emerging scholars coming into their own expertise are critical models of how you can work to shift your own mindsets and dispositions to success.

Part III: Activates and Concepts for Developing Growth Mindsets, Generative Dispositions, and Emotional Resiliency

As this chapter has explored, internal characteristics are critical for crossing the threshold into expertise. This is reflected in our threshold concept: Expert writers leverage failure and struggle to grow as writers and improve their text through cultivating emotional resiliency and growth mindsets. Our key takeaways include:

- Dispositions are internal qualities that we possess like self-efficacy and persistence that determine how we address challenging situations, such as writing for publication. Crossing the threshold includes managing our dispositions and cultivating generative ones that help us overcome struggle and difficulty (such as confidence, self-efficacy, or help-seeking behavior).
- Both expert and emerging writers routinely experience failure and struggle in writing for publication. One of the keys to success is recognizing that struggle and failure are part of this process but approaching these challenges by fostering growth mindsets and resiliency.
- Mindsets are one such disposition that determines our response to struggle, challenge, and failure. Growth mindsets give us a chance to see struggle/failure as an opportunity to grow and learn while fixed mindsets often shut down in the face of struggle.
- All expert scholars demonstrated growth mindsets. Emerging scholars either demonstrated growth mindsets or movement towards growth mindsets, suggesting growth mindsets are necessary for successful publication.
- Imposter syndrome is a common challenge for emerging and even some expert scholars—this is the belief that you are an imposter, do not belong in academia, or are a fraud. Emerging scholars developed external and internal factors to help them overcome both anxiety and imposter syndrome.
- External approaches to overcoming imposter syndrome included having encouragement from family, successful publication experiences or good reception of their scholarship, learning more about how to publish

successfully, talking about imposter syndrome and anxiety with peers or faculty mentors, and seeking support when needed.
- Internal factors to overcoming anxiety and imposter syndrome included taking up hobbies to de-stress, developing mantras and positive affirmations, recognizing their own potential contributions and identities, shifting their view on peer review, recognizing their learning journey, time management, and putting things in perspective.
- Emerging scholars describe trajectories that took them from feeling anxiety and having imposter syndrome to feeling confident in their current and future publication using the above methods.

A popular social media meme says, "the expert has failed more than the beginner has tried" and that meme, in many ways, encapsulates what this chapter has been about. Or in the words of Amal, "fake it till you make it." Because the conditions of academic peer reviewed publication can be so difficult and so different than predictable coursework, it requires that emerging scholars take on this "leap of faith" mentality. You have to learn to believe in yourself—or at least believe enough to push through until you are successful and truly believe it. And with this, we return to our threshold concept for this chapter: Expert writers leverage failure and struggle to grow as writers and improve their text through cultivating emotional resiliency and growth mindsets..

The memes shared above nails this threshold concept—experts are experts, in a large part, because they can successfully navigate and learn through their struggles and failure and still have enough confidence in their own voice and expertise to continue to persist in the face of these challenges. We saw this leveraging in the stories from emerging scholars above—they talk themselves into their success and competency, they seek help, and they continue to persist until they succeed. The big difference between emerging and expert scholars here is that the expert scholars have many more experiences with failure and struggle as well as more success, so they are used to the process and know they will succeed given hard work.

As the data above explores, many myths exist surrounding successful writing processes and writers—that you are born a good writer, that some people are just better than others at writing, and that if you are a poor writer, you might always stay that way. Mike Palmquist and Richard Young (1992) described these kinds of feelings as "giftedness." I've often heard students working to transition to professional academic writing, particularly after a challenging rejection letter, expressing notions of giftedness and fixed mindsets. However, these myths are not reality, and the quote that opens this chapter certainly rings true. Experts are experts because they have experienced the many ways in which one can fail. There is no magic potion that will suddenly turn you into an expert writer. Rather, it's a slow process of understanding yourself, developing your own writing process, being persistent and diligent, creating opportunities for deliberate practice

and receiving high quality feedback, and fostering a growth mindset about that feedback that sets you up for success.

In fact, as we explored in Chapter 5, experts also encounter plenty of difficulty and challenges—rejections, reworking of texts, needing to completely rehaul manuscripts, and more. It's that the experts had growth mindsets and a range of generative dispositions that allowed them to be successful in spite of the difficulties. In the stories of emerging scholars in this chapter, while acknowledging their ongoing transition into expertise, they modeled these same behaviors and had a lot of support of faculty mentors to help them recognize they are capable, have something important to stay, and can persist through the challenges present in publication.

Dispositions are rarely discussed or cultivated in school settings, and in fact, many school settings push the typical high-achieving student into a range of disruptive dispositions that do not serve them well as they transition into professional expertise. Fear of failure, high-stakes testing, feedback systems and grading systems, for example, all help foster fixed mindsets (Dweck, 2006; Haimovitz & Dweck, 2017; Mueller & Dweck, 1998). With higher-than-ever stakes in graduate coursework, doctoral program examinations, and dissertations, fixed mindsets, imposter syndrome, and anxiety are extreme experiences for many graduate students (Driscoll et al., 2020; Tutkun, 2019).

Cultivating Generative Writerly Dispositions and Emotional Resiliency

Our threshold concept for this chapter focuses on how expertise cultivates emotional resiliency through distinct action. Resiliency is the capacity to endure, to recover quickly from difficulty, and to be flexible in a wide range of uncertain circumstances. When we think about resiliency in writing for publication, it is focused on our emotional resiliency—to cultivate within us strategies, supports, and dispositions to address the difficult emotions that come with any extremely challenging task, such as writing for publication. Thus, working to identify, understand, and shift your dispositions and cultivate emotional resiliency is a critical part of developing writing expertise—and without this part, no amount of knowledge or skills really matters. You can know all there is to know, and still not be successful without the requisite mindsets and dispositions to put that knowledge to work. The range of activities and information in this final section helps you do just that: understanding your own dispositions and creating a plan for supporting generative dispositions in your writing.

Dispositions may be *generative*, aiding in the writing process and overall development as an expert, or they can be *disruptive*, hindering your writing process and overall development (Driscoll & Wells, 2012). The impact of disruptive and generative disposition on your development over time can be quite

substantial (Driscoll & Zhang, 2022). Most importantly, dispositions can be *changed, cultivated*, and *developed***.** Table 7.3 offers a list of dispositions that manifest in generative or disruptive ways as explored in this study, with additional terminology from Wardle (2012) and the Framework for Success in Post-Secondary Writing Instruction.

Table 7.3 Generative and Disruptive Dispositions

Generative Dispositions	**Disruptive Dispositions:**
High Self-Efficacy: believing you are capable of success.	Low Self-Efficacy: doubting your abilities and capabilities.
Growth Mindset: seeing struggle and failure as an opportunity to grow.	Fixed Mindset: shutting down or withdrawing in the face of struggle/failure; believing writing skills are fixed.
Persistence: being able to continue to proceed in the face of difficulty.	Procrastination: delaying writing and putting off deadlines.
Help-Seeking: seeking support through peers, faculty, and writing center.	Answer-Getting: seeking to please, seeking a single "right answer."
Knowledge-Seeking: being curious and inquisitive about the world around you and our discipline.	Low Self Efficacy: feeling like you can't succeed, having imposter syndrome.
Flexibility: adapting and pivoting as necessary.	Negative Attitude: framing things always in the negative/glass half empty approach.
Positive Attitude and Outlook: believing that you can succeed.	Inflexibility: Sticking to your plan and refusing to deviate from it, regardless of external stimuli.

Activity 7.1: Iceberg Exploration

Going back to our iceberg metaphor at the beginning of this chapter, one of the ways you can figure out your own dispositions and mindset has to do with your observable behaviors, feelings, and emotions. To do this, you should look back at two to three recent failures or struggles (preferably in an academic setting) that you had to identify how you responded. Now consider this from at least four different angles:

- Emotional response: How did you feel? What were your emotions? Did those emotions change and how?
- Actions: What did the struggle/failure make you do? Did you procrastinate, avoid the situation? Did you spring into action?
- Feelings of self: How did this alter/shift your sense of self-efficacy and identity?
- Learning: Did you learn anything from this experience? If so, what?

Now, examine your responses in light of the chart in Table 7.3, Generative and Disruptive Dispositions. What do you see in terms of your own dispositions? By

working through these, you can begin to see where you are in terms of dispositions and mindsets, and being aware is half the battle!

Activity 7.2: Mindset Quiz.

The following is a short Mindset quiz that you can use to better understand your mindset towards writing for publication. After taking the mindset quiz consider: what did this teach you about your own mindset? How can you use this information to develop your expertise as a writer?

Question	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
When I struggle with high stakes writing (writing for publication, dissertation, etc.), I seek help from my peers or faculty mentors.			
The idea of getting an article rejected makes me not want to submit one.			
I shut down when I receive feedback that is difficult or challenging.			
I feel like writing for publication is a lot of luck and talent; you either know how to do it or you don't.			
I realize that failure is something that happens to everyone.			
Some people are just better writers than others.			
In the past, when I struggled or failed at something, I saw it as a reflection on my capabilities or intelligence.			
I have actively avoided putting myself in situations where I might fail.			
Each of us has our unique skills and those can be improved through experience and learning.			
I feel that when I fail, I am able to understand why and learn from my failures.			
When failures happen, I am likely to blame others and focus on the role that others may play.			
I feel like a lot of my peers are smarter and better than I am.			

Scoring Guide:

- Give yourself a +1 for questions 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12
- Give yourself a –1 for questions 1, 5, 9, 10
- Any questions that you answered "neutral" are not counted.

- The higher the score, the more fixed of a mindset you have. The lower the score, (2, 1, 0 or negative numbers) indicates that you have a growth mindset.

Activity 7.3: The Power of "Not Yet"

When thinking about writing for publication as a developmental process that takes time, a useful practice comes out of the mindset literature—the "not yet" mentality (Dweck, 2006). Rather than saying "I can't do this" say "I'm not there yet, but I will be." This is one way to cross the threshold. The "not yet" mentality can be practiced and put in place when you face struggle, difficulty, or failure.

Create yourself a reminder of "not yet" (a mantra, image, or saying) and then place it somewhere prominently so that you can remember.

Activity 7.4: Develop a Mindset and Dispositional Plan

In groups or individually, examine the list in Table 7.3. What areas do you feel that you already do well? What areas do you struggle with? From here, make a plan to play to your strengths and work to address at least one disruptive disposition. Try to make your plan as specific as possible to support your development. You can use the list of internal and external factors to support growing self-efficacy in the previous section to develop your plan.

For example:

- My generative dispositions are flexibility, a positive attitude, and help seeking.
- My disruptive dispositions are procrastination, low self-confidence, imposter syndrome, and a fixed mindset.
- My plan: use meditation and reflection to work through confidence issues; talk through these things with my advisor and writing group, and place positive affirmations on my wall where I write. When I encounter difficulty, I will take a step back, recognize the opportunity to learn, and then seek help.

Activity 7.5: Dealing with Imposter Syndrome and Writing Anxiety

Imposter syndrome is a critical problem faced by many graduate students and early career faculty and has to do with feelings of confidence and belonging. Imposter syndrome is defined as when an individual feels like they are a fraud, not a real scholar, or do not really belong or feel worthy. In a study on self-care in doctoral education, Dana Lynn Driscoll et al. (2020) found that imposter syndrome caused substantial challenges to many graduate students, and it often disproportionally affected minorities and women. It caused substantial issues with well-being, dispositions like self-efficacy and curiosity, and could even prevent people from following their career paths or being willing to submit for publication. As we discovered through our research, and supported here with

the stories of emerging scholars, the most effective way of addressing imposter syndrome is to talk openly about it and recognize that while a majority of people struggle with it, it can be overcome.

Considering the content in this chapter, reflect on what you can do to help overcome imposter syndrome. Use the following questions to guide a discussion (in a class, in a writing group, with peers, etc.):

1. How have you experienced imposter syndrome?
2. What impact has imposter syndrome had on your life, career, and academic pursuits?
3. How have you worked to address imposter syndrome?

At the end of this discussion, each person should commit to a plan for addressing imposter syndrome.

Activity 7.6: Playing to Your Strengths: The SWOT Analysis

Goals and objectives help us achieve great things, but other forms of planning and understanding ourselves can also greatly aid the process. Sometimes, the best-made plans are never realized, and understanding what we bring to the table—and what we have to watch out for—also helps us meet our goals. A SWOT analysis, described by Lon Addams and Anthony T. Allred (2013) is a common analysis used in a variety of settings, including helping individuals meet their goals and understand themselves and their time. The SWOT analysis consists of four parts: **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities, and **T**hreats.

Strengths and weaknesses are internal qualities we bring to any situation. Our strengths are those areas that help you achieve success, and what you bring to your writing and larger professional situation. If you aren't sure what your strengths are, ask three to four of your family members and closest friends. You can also use published tools, like Gallup's StrengthsQuest (Clifton et al., 2002), to help find and understand your strengths. On the flipside, weaknesses are things that may hinder your writing and professional success. Most of us are well aware of our weaknesses, but asking others who know us well about our weaknesses is another approach. Strengths and weaknesses are internal; opportunities and threats are external.

While opportunities and threats are external to us, they are still things that we have to regularly contend with. Opportunities and threats may be rooted in our professional workplaces, our personal lives, our living circumstances, or our broader culture. They may include affordances given to us or taken away by identities we carry; resources that are available to us (or not); demands on our time and energy from various obligations; or relationships that may help or hinder us in our professional goals.

Get a piece of paper or use a digital tool to perform a SWOT analysis on yourself. These are often best if you can create these visually—as a poster, drawing,

mind map, or doodle. On your page, put your name or something that represents you in the middle. From you, bring out four bubbles that represent:

- **Strengths:** What strengths do you bring to writing for publication? This can be anything from previous experience, a strong work ethic, good peer and faculty support, or great ideas.
- **Weaknesses:** What weaknesses are you concerned about in writing for publication? Your weaknesses may be mindsets or dispositional qualities, anxiety, imposter syndrome, or other areas not mentioned in this chapter.
- **Opportunities:** What opportunities have I recently been given to explore writing for publication? These might be anything from potential co-authorships or faculty opening doorways to invitations to peer review or write for an edited collection.
- **Threats:** What threatens our ability to successfully engage in writing for publication that are external to ourselves? This might be anything from demands upon your time, difficult family obligations, feeling unsupported in your writing, or being isolated.

Once you perform your SWOT analysis, either in groups or individually, consider yourself holistically. How can you play to your strengths? How can you use your strengths and opportunities to address your weaknesses? How can you work to minimize external threats?