

Section I. Writing is Always Happening: Developing an Expert Writing Process

Writing is always happening, and I think those distances and those different filters that we can place our thinking through and with and alongside are ways to really enrich the process. ... I think reflection and giving yourself time and space to wander a little bit and explore a little bit. Just let that process of invention not be super focused but let invention happen by being open to different conversations, different sources, different ideas, different processes.

– Matt, Expert Scholar

We now take a deep dive into the writing processes of expert and emerging writers. While the chapters are presented as distinct, what happens in a complex writing for publication process is recursive and overlapping. Matt’s quote above offers useful framing of this idea in that “writing is always happening” for publication. It’s not just happening when you sit down to write or create an outline; it is happening when you are having conversations, thinking, engaging in invention, and sometimes even when doing your dishes. As you are deeply diving into a publication, you are being shaped by your writing itself, the feedback you gain from others, your subconscious, and the broader interactions you have in the world. Additionally, because writing processes for publication span months or years and research agendas broaden beyond a single project—there is a sense that one is always writing or thinking about writing—and through the writing, ideas are being generated in novel and new ways. We can see these four domains in figure S1.1.

Part of the reason that we have several chapters on different aspects of the writing process, starting with invention, is that fMRI studies of the brain activity of professional poetry writers (Pinho et al., 2016) and studies of other creative activity (Beaty et al., 2016) show that these idea generation vs. idea refinement are distinct from brain chemistry standpoint. In Ana Luisa Pinho et al. (2016), poets were asked to generate new poetry and then revise their self-generated poems. fMRI scans of the brain showed that when poets were drafting, they were accessing the “default network” in the brain, which as Roger E. Beaty et al. (2016) describe, is tied to divergent thinking, imagination, memory, improvisation, spontaneity, and generating multiple solutions. However, when the poets began to revise their work, they used the “control network” of the brain, which is tied to convergent thinking including the evaluation of ideas, selecting a single solution to a problem, narrowing down, and goal-oriented activity (Beaty et al., 2016). This research is clear: we are literally working with different parts of our brains as we generate ideas vs. refine and revise them, and thus, we need different strategies at play when engaging in these practices.

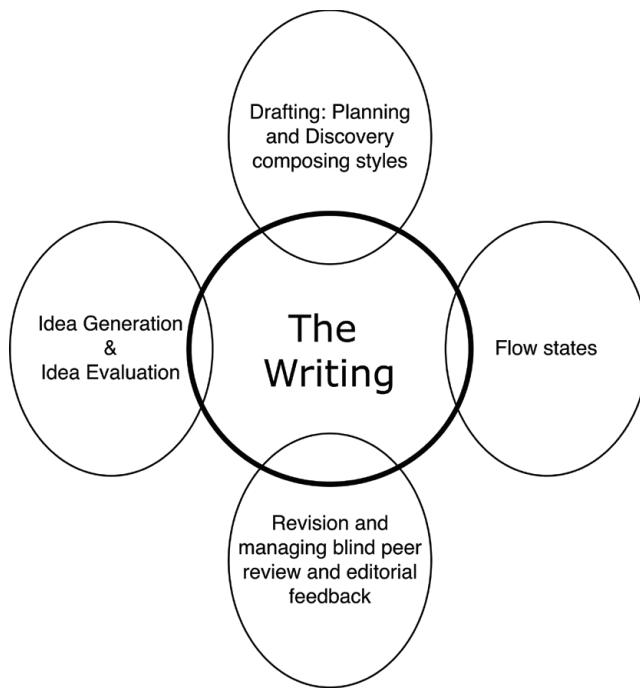


Figure S1.1 Areas that impact writing process.

To honor and recognize the distinct brain activity that happens at stages of the writing process, we begin in Chapter 2 with invention and creative idea generation strategies—the strategies that writers use to generate ideas which can happen at any point in their publication process. We then move to drafting processes in Chapter 3, and for the purposes of this work, drafting is anything that takes place before a completed draft is produced, which is typically mostly between a writer and the page. As this drafting is going on, writers seek to cultivate flow states, as explored in Chapter 4. Flow states are when writers are deeply immersed in their work. I offer a whole chapter on these states for two reasons: first, it is such an important part of the process for many writers, and second, it is very understudied and underexplored in writing studies. Chapter 5 in this section examines how people revise their texts in relationship to the demands of audiences and field-specific knowledge. I've defined revision in this work as what happens after that initial draft is completed and the work is shaped by feedback: from peers, writing groups, mentors, editors, and blind peer reviewers. So let us now delve deeply into how experts and emerging scholars write to build your knowledge of how to cultivate a creative process, develop a writing process, cultivate flow states, and explore revision trajectories.