8 Professional Writers and Revision

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A key feature of professional writers' working strategies for writing that distinguishes them from student or novice writers is their approach to revision. No professional writer would ever consider submitting for publication or professional review a piece of writing that had not been thoroughly revised. The professional writers studied in *Revision Revisited,* none of whom had "writer" in their job titles, had no difficulty with the idea of someone wanting to study their revision practices. Student writers often do little if any revision, and will resist revision even if they may improve their writing and their grades by revising successfully, especially since it is clear that revising touches on every part of the writing process (Sudol ix). Students' attitudes toward revision arise from the general approach to teaching followed in many writing classes in college, a view of revising that focuses too much on the skills needed to revise and too little on the underlying awarenesses which inform effective revision. Students' and teachers' views of revising need significant updating as current research is revealing more and more about how writers execute successful revisions of texts. The distinction between awareness and skill in revision will be reviewed here first, summarizing the findings from my research for *Revision Revisited.* Then, two case studies with writers whose work appears in other parts of the book will be presented. The data reflect the importance of awarenesses in effective revising and suggest specific pedagogical strategies for the teaching of writing.

Awarenesses and Skills: A Summary

The research findings in *Revision Revisited* draw on the nine case studies done for that report. The subjects were all practicing professionals

in a variety of fields; none had "writer" as a job title, but all were in professions that entail extensive writing: two academics, four workplace writers including a public relations person, an editor, and two attorneys, and three members of the clergy. Each subject answered questions about writing and revising strategies generally and about the goals of the revision under study, and then revised a document drafted previously. During the revision, each subject completed a think-aloud protocol (Smagorinsky 3–19), explaining the changes being made. After the observation, I received the subjects' drafts produced in the session along with the draft they had created prior to the session. I produced a written account of the session which each subject also read. If additional drafts of the document were produced later, the subject also gave me those. The cases are presented in full detail in the book.

Professionals' Awareness

The findings show, first, that professional writers have three particular kinds of awareness of themselves as writers: metarhetorical awareness, metastrategic awareness and metalinguistic awareness. Metarhetorical awareness refers to writers' knowledge of themselves as writers. One of my first subjects described her process by saying "I always do this and change it later," indicating that she was aware of a certain way of beginning. Professional writers know the strategies they use and how they work. Even those strategies that are ultimately unproductive in terms of generating a final document are ones they know they have available for use. By contrast, novice writers may or may not be aware of their strategies or may not have any particular strategies other than to simply start writing, or perhaps do some outlining or brain storming if required by a teacher.

For professionals, metastrategic awareness arises from their knowledge of themselves as people, especially in terms of personality type, and the implications of this self-awareness for their approaches to writing. In one of my mini-case studies, the subject was a strong introvert who would not normally consult with others for help with writing. However, when she was in difficulty with a writing task, she sought out counsel from others as she worked on the document she was producing. Metastrategic awareness is helpful in just this way: writers know when they are in trouble and know how to shift to a different, typically non-preferred approach, to solve a writing problem or create

a stronger draft. Novice writers seldom have sufficient strategies available to make such a shift possible.

A third awareness that professional writers have is specific knowledge about language, metalinguistic awareness. The professionals I studied were all fully familiar with and aware of the features of their written language that needed attention in their drafts. They would comment on the phonological features of a sentence ("too many puhs" said one, referring to a string of words starting with "p"), structural issues ("here's a sentence that needs help" said another), or issues of tone or formality or use of a particular word (leading one to stop work to consult a thesaurus). Professional writers' revision is distinctive in this way. They know about language, know what they know and what they don't, and pay attention to language *per se* as they revise. Novice writers do not have enough metalinguistic awareness to attend to language issues in revision unless teachers point out errors or problems in word choice or usage, sentence structure and related matters.

Professionals' Skills

In addition to their level of awareness, professional writers also have four skills useful to revising: skills in the use of collaboration, in genre, in audience and context, and in using tools effectively to rework a text. These skills are ones that do get some attention in the teaching of writing in college classrooms, though not all get as much attention as they could and should. With respect to collaboration, for example, professional writers use collaboration in a way different from the kind of work students are asked to do in a writing course. Professional writers generally ask other content-area experts for substantive commentary on their writing.

In my work on *Revision Revisited,* for instance, the full manuscript was read by another expert in Rhetoric and Composition Studies and came back to me with detailed comments on nearly every page of the manuscript as well as four pages of more global discussion of the overall organization and development of my argument. I will be eternally grateful to this very thorough and careful reader, since his comments surely helped me write a much better book. My subjects often revised in response to comments from experts; the medical writer was constantly reworking his texts in response to expert readings from doctors and university medical researchers. Hardly any professional writer asks for or gets feedback on thesis, comma usage or the level of detail in the

summary. And while teachers will correctly say that learning to write is different than being a professional writer, the more we can move student/novice writers in the direction of professionals, the stronger their writing and revising will be.

A second skill professional writers have lies in their ability to use the particular genres of their writing to good effect. A knowledge of genre led one writer I studied to rethink the document she was writing, changing its modality from email to letter to formal memo. Other professionals I studied were preparing encyclopedia or reference book materials for non-specialist audiences, requiring a particular approach to both content and form. The matter of genre is one that gets some attention in teaching writing, particularly beyond the level of first-year composition. Students may be asked to compose letters or editorials, case studies or arguments that will be sent to real audiences. One of the most engaging lessons I have seen in a classroom entailed the use of Lewis Carroll's poem "Jabberwocky," asking students to rewrite the poem as a news report. This kind of work helps students develop skill with the use of different genres in ways similar to those professional writers exploit productively in writing.

Another skill of professional writers that most writing teachers address successfully in class involves the understanding and use of texts and their contexts. This skill is central, certainly, to research writing, where teachers do a lot of work with college writers. To use a source to support an argument, student writers must understand the source and where it came from, i.e. its context. Students get plenty of opportunities to develop this skill and plenty of practice using it in research papers and reports of various kinds that are a standard feature of many college classes from first-year composition to upper-level courses in all disciplines.

A different manifestation of the skill of text and context is the issue of audience, another area typically addressed carefully in college writing courses. Professional writers work in the context in which they write and so are keenly aware of its impact on their writing and revising. Their sensitivity is important to their revision: one of my academics noted in her revision some changes based on the fact that her text was a paper to be presented at an academic meeting, likely to be attended by both graduate students and other professionals in her field. The Episcopal priest juxtaposed an Old Testament and a New Testament passage in a revealing way, but noted in her revision that this

juxtaposition required full explication in her sermon. There are many such examples for both novice and professional writers.

The last of the skills professional writers have is the ability to use a toolbox for writing, both on the computer and off of it. Here again, teachers spend plenty of time in class, in workshops, in conferences with students talking about the toolbox skills. Using spell check, grammar check and other computer functions to produce stronger writing is fundamental among professional writers, even those who, like one of my attorneys, sometimes disagree with a program's feedback on sentence structure. Professional writers make skilled use of the dictionary, grammar handbooks, and pre-writing tools like outlines or webbing to help them produce clean, well-structured sentences and paragraphs that are error-free and clear. The medical writer I studied was able to revise and reformulate the text he was working on by using an outline/template for the document. In college writing programs, teachers show students a variety of paper and electronic tools and give them many opportunities to practice using them to improve their writing.

Methodology for the Case Studies

In creating the case studies presented below, I have followed the format I used in *Revision Revisited.* The two subjects agreed to provide results of (in the case of Subject A) or to complete (Subject B) the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, a personality instrument, and to be interviewed about their general approaches to writing and revising. They also agreed to answer questions about their work on their chapters that appear elsewhere in this book. These writers, unlike those studied in *Revision Revisited,* are writing teachers and scholars who probably have an even higher level of awareness about their personal strategies for writing than the writers I studied previously. The methodology, then, includes the following parts: first, completion of the Myers-Briggs if necessary, administered, scored and after the observation, interpreted by me (I am a licensed user of this instrument). Then, the subjects completed an extensive interview with me exploring their general approaches to writing and strategies for revising text. The list of questions used appears in Appendix A at the end of this chapter.

Once these preliminary steps were completed, the subjects could move on to the remaining steps in the study. The third step entailed a more detailed set of questions concerning the project at hand (see Ap-

pendix B at the end of this chapter). This third step generally occurred shortly before the observation portion of the study. In the fourth phase, the writers took a draft prepared prior to the observation, and spent an hour revising it while I watched. While they were revising, I asked the writers to talk out loud about the processes, strategies, changes and thinking that they were using, and audio taped their comments. This procedure is called a "think-aloud protocol" in research. I received copies of their first drafts and the revisions that resulted from this revising session, as well as copies of further drafts produced at a later time. Finally, I prepared a written account of what happened in the revising session and asked the subjects to read and comment on my account to produce convergent data, adding validity to my case study approach. One further point that warrants mention is that my role in this work was as a participant-observer, since I am a contributor to this book and its editor as well as an observer of the work of these writers.

Case studies: Writing Teachers Revising

For each of the case studies presented here, I will provide a description of the subject's responses to the background questionnaire and then a discussion of their description of the project at hand. Following this, several samples of the changes made during the revision process will be presented with analysis in terms of the awarenesses and skills demonstrated by these writers.

Background Questionnaire for Subject A

Subject A is a full-time faculty member at a medium-sized public university in the Midwest. She holds a permanent non-tenure track teaching position which entails the expectation that she will not do research or publish her scholarly work, but will devote her time to a full load of classes and to service on committees and other responsibilities at the university. Before moving to this full-time position, Subject A worked at the university as a part-time faculty member in the writing program for about fifteen years. She completed her PhD in English in 1994, focusing on Old English poetry. Her language background includes reading knowledge of German as well as Old English.

Subject A had completed the Myers-Briggs four years prior to this project and had received a detailed interpretation of her results. Her reported type was ENFP (extraversion, intuition, feeling and perceiving), with a very clear preference for intuition and moderate prefer-

ences for extraversion and feeling. Her preference for perceiving was only slight. She thought, on reflection, that she might be more of an introvert than the Indicator results suggest, but has adopted extraversion due to her work as a teacher. In addition, she also thought that she preferred judging, at least in some ways. Given the slight preference for perceiving in her reported type, her self-identification of a different preference is not surprising.

Turning to Subject A's typical approach to writing, when asked if she uses collaboration, Subject A reports that she rarely collaborates on documents for most purposes. Typically, Subject A does all of her writing on a word processor, without use of a Dictaphone or outside editor. She will use paper for flow charts of her ideas or brainstorming, and likes to print her drafts so she can edit on paper, but the bulk of her writing work is done on the computer.

When asked to describe her writing process and typical strategies, Subject A reports that she does a fair amount of thinking about a writing project before and after beginning it. She often thinks about a project when she is stuck somewhere that she needs to be physically present but can be mentally absent. She will also rehearse or plan writing mentally while doing other things like walking her dog. At some point in this process, she will sit down at the word processor and dump out her thoughts into a file. The resulting beginning generally has "no architecture" but offers a global start on the task. If working collaboratively, she can sometimes see the architecture or structure in another's writing more easily than she can see it in her own. If she has notes or will make use of secondary sources, she uses those to provide some discipline and organization to this first draft.

The background interview with Subject A suggests that she does not plan much before writing. She begins a project and sees what emerges as her first few attempts take shape on the computer screen, a more global and exploratory approach to beginning to write. Her overall strategy is fairly consistent with her type preferences for intuition and perceiving (Jensen and DiTiberio 53–57, 69–71). Her process suggests a high level of metarhetorical awareness, but relatively little metastrategic and metalinguistic awareness. This finding may help to explain why drafting is such a laborious and complex process for her. As an experienced writer, she surely has the four skills of writing readily available for use (collaboration, genre, text and context and the toolbox).

Task Questionnaire for Subject A

Subject A and I met a second time for the observation portion of the research. In this portion, there are three steps: first, an additional set of questions (see Appendix B of this chapter) on the task at hand, then an opportunity to practice "thinking aloud" on a simple paragraph I wrote for this purpose, and finally, the audio taping, with the subject's permission, of about an hour of revising work with the accompanying think-aloud protocol. The task questionnaire begins with a question about any further thoughts the subject has had about his or her writing strategies since the background interview was completed. Subject A did have some additional ideas.

She described the beginning of her process in much greater detail. In preparing the draft that she planned to revise, she noticed that she tends to begin work with her own ideas and waits to integrate source materials by "sneaking up" on them after the text has already begun to take shape and a plan is apparent. She often begins with a set of categories or some pre-existing scheme. She also noted that she tends to think in either-or, binary terms and then in revising, reworks her text to reflect what she described as "more mature thinking."

Moving on to discuss the passage she planned to work on in the session, the working title of this portion is "Definitions and Distinctions." There are plenty of sources, but they will be added at a later time. She thinks of the audience as teachers of writing with relatively little experience in teaching and little contact with trained rhetoricians. She thinks some of the readers of her chapter will have some background information on revision theory and practice, but more of them will think of revision as editing. Most readers won't have a more global view of revision as working on the larger issues in texts. She has spent a few hours a week for a few weeks creating the first draft.

Responding to the questionnaire issues, she notes that she doesn't have a specific thesis at the moment; the draft she has is filled with many more questions than answers. Her goal in this revision session is to work on both text content and design. To create a readable text, any text must have a clear point and set up of the sequence of ideas at the outset, an "engine paragraph" that provides a précis and sets out the overall plan of the text. This opening paragraph must tell what she wants to say and what order she will say it in, but she is not sure she can prepare this paragraph at this point. She feels the current draft has many either-or ideas in it. She wants to expand these with the use of

metaphors and to show that students and teachers see revision from very different vantage points. The preliminary work concluded with a short practice passage (see Appendix C) which the subject worked on briefly, talking about the changes she made to it to understand the think-aloud procedure.

Observation of Subject A

Subject A begins her work by reading through her entire text of a page and a half, making some notes on the paper copy, indicating a place where she will take a paragraph out and move it to the end of the text for the time being. She uses journalism's heuristic (who, what, when, where, why, how) to organize her ideas. The paragraph that is out of order is about teachers of writing and will need discussion later in the chapter.

She focuses her attention on the "who" paragraph, expanding it by adding several sentences. Here's the original draft that she brought to the session:

> Continuing to ask the journalist's basic questions, we should consider the "who" of revising. Is the act "revising" if a student makes corrections marked by the teacher and that's it? On one hand, we might consider that the student is doing clerical work. Often the student will say, "I did what you said. I hope the grade is better." Teachers need to inquire what else happens when a student just makes corrections. Does the student reread his or her work with greater pleasure? With a better understanding of sentence rules, word choices, integration of quotations into a text, or whatever the teacher marked? If so, there may be more going on than just clerical work. What if a student responds to questions about a passage or an idea not by considering the passage and explaining it better or further but by dropping the offending section? Sometimes there's not a lot of power-sharing; a student feels obligated just to respond to the teacher's objection. It may be that when a student drops something instead of working on it, her or she is feeling silenced or disregarded. Or the student may be making a power move of another sort: if this displeases you (teacher) then I'll withhold it altogether. Between these two extremes of agency, we find multitudes of ways to share power.

In the margin, she had written a note that said "Teacher's comments as disruption of audience and purpose." In revising, she changed this paragraph into two paragraphs as follows:

Continuing to ask the journalist's basic questions, we should consider the "who" of revising. Normally in a writing class, peer editors and the teacher comment on a draft and the writer works with the suggestions. Peer suggestions can run the gamut from unusable to useful, from small-scale editing to large issues of structure, and student writers normally understand the need to evaluate the advice and decide what to use. Suggestions from a teacher, however, often carry more force, considering the teacher's experience and power to give a grade. Thus, students may think of revising as complying with a teacher's explicit feedback, particularly editing marks. Often we wonder, is the act "revising" if a student makes corrections marked by the teacher and that's it? On one hand, we might consider that the student is doing clerical work. Often the student will say, "I did what you said. I hope the grade is better." Teachers need to inquire what else happens when a student just makes corrections. Does the student reread his or her work with greater pleasure? With a better understanding of sentence rules, word choices, integration of quotations into a text, or whatever the teacher marked? If so, there may be more going on than just clerical work. At the same time, this is revising of a very limited sort, the student having minimal agency and thinking of the activity as mainly following a specific set of directions.

What if a student responds to questions about a passage or an idea not by considering the passage and explaining it better or further but by dropping the offending section? Sometimes there's not a lot of power-sharing; a student feels obligated just to respond to the teacher's objection. It may be that when a student drops something instead of working on it, he or she is feeling silenced or disregarded. Or the student may be making a power move of another sort: if this displeases you (teacher) then I'll withhold it altogether. Between these two extremes of agency, we find multitudes of ways to share power.

She says that she wants to add to the description of an ordinary college writing class. Students can and do help one another through processes of peer review, but they don't always pay as much attention to this feedback as they do to responses from an instructor.

At this point, Subject A pauses in her work to reread what she had written, asking herself if it worked. She has drawn on her personal experiences with students, noting that the interaction of students and teachers

over a text is often full of misunderstandings. Peer editing has the status of suggestions, but teacher comments are somehow something more than this. Still, students have some level of "agency" and may choose to refuse or ignore the feedback given by other readers. She notes that she has a couple of competing ideas to present and struggles to clarify her point, which is about students' level of agency in the writing and revising process. She's not satisfied with how she is thinking about the issues, but decides to put in what she can and see what will happen.

She then moved on to later sections of the text, making changes after rereading what she had changed so far on the screen. At this point, fatigue set in. The think-aloud process is very demanding for both writer and observer, so we called a halt to the session, which ran for about fifty minutes.

Analysis of Revising: Subject A

Subject A's discussion of her writing process at the second session I had with her reveals a much more complete and complex picture of her revising strategies. This picture is consistent with those of the other professional writers I studied in *Revision Revisited* in that Subject A has a very high level of metarhetorical awareness, though limited metastrategic and metalinguistic awareness. Her skills are, like all professional writers, very strong.

In both the first and second descriptions of her process, Subject A indicates that she knows how she works at writing. It is very clear that for this writer, the general notion of revision touches all parts of her process. Her typical beginning strategy takes the form of an exploratory draft that is almost a kind of free writing on the topic at hand without a pre-set plan. Source materials will be added later through a process of "sneaking up" on them, not clearly a matter of conscious choice and decisions. She is aware of how the computer supports her writing, but sees it clearly as a tool or means to an end; this point will be discussed below in the skills section. Her approach is to begin by sketching out her ideas without drawing on source materials, with full knowledge that revisions will lead to the addition of these at a later time along with other changes.

These points are reflected in Subject A's comments at the beginning of her think aloud. She was looking through her draft and planning her work as she talked aloud. One observation she makes is that the computer has changed her writing and revising processes substantially. In part, this change is a result of the fact that, as she says, the word processor

allows the writer to "park" ideas in various places while dealing with other parts of the text she refers to as "things you don't understand." This comment was made after she planned to move a paragraph from one part of her prepared draft to the end while she focused on other sections of the text. Once she forms up a plan for how to revise, she moves to sit at the computer screen and begins to work.

A further point raised by her pre-revising discussion reflects her metarhetorical awareness. She notes that students often revise by correcting surface errors noted by their teachers, behavior she describes with the phrase "clerical work." In describing this observation as a metaphor, Subject A captures the key feature of her metarhetorical awareness, her conscious use of metaphors to describe the writing and revising processes, whether her own or those of others. Besides the examples noted above. at one point in the think-aloud, she says she may be "writing herself into a canyon." At another point, she refers to part of her text as a "riff," a term used to describe musical improvisation that moves away from the main themes of a composition. Finally, she says in the think-aloud that she knows the chapter will need an "engine paragraph" to drive the whole piece.

In general, Subject A's think-aloud reveals little metastrategic or metalinguistic awareness. Although she was aware of her personality preferences based on administration of the MBTI in another group, she showed no awareness of how her type might impact her writing processes. Other writers I have studied who have metastrategic awareness refer to their type preferences and see how they affect their writing behavior. With respect to metalinguistic awareness, she does note at one point that the spell check has flagged the word "syntactical" and that it does not sound right to her either, and there are other points in the tape where she says "the computer doesn't like that" but they appear to be reactions to the word processor as a tool and not a by-product of particular sensitivity to language.

In terms of the four skill areas that professional writers have, Subject A seems to have considerable skill in all of these areas. On the matter of collaboration, the background questionnaire shows that she has the skill to collaborate successfully with colleagues as illustrated by the project done for the local community college and one for her church as well. Again in the background questionnaire, she comments on her knowledge of genre, saying that her chapter is modeled on a scholarly monograph or research report. She knows that she will need to bring

in outside source materials and she has a plan or strategy for doing so that she refers to as "sneaking up" on the sources. Her skill in this genre of research writing reminds me of one of my academic writers whose revising is presented in *Revision Revisited.* This academic said that she used sources "strategically" to support her points in the text and planned specifically to do so.

In the area of text and context, Subject A's skill is reflected in her sense of her audience, also noted in the interviews prior to the actual revision session. She has thought about the audience for this book and what the readers might already know or think about revising. Subject A clearly has solid skills in text and context and will make use of these in her text. When she draws on her own classroom experience for examples to illustrate her points, she demonstrates her skillful use of text and context, choosing appropriate texts in the educational context of the book.

Finally, the toolbox is very much in evidence as Subject A interacts with the computer all through her think-aloud work. At the beginning of the think-aloud, she comments on using the word processor's ability to move text around and uses it to move paragraphs to the end of the file. These are paragraphs she will use later in the text or elsewhere. In ways typical of a person with a feeling preference, she notes that "the computer doesn't like that" when a red (for spelling) or a green (for a grammatical problem) line appears on the screen. This reaction from the computer would be a concern to someone whose main goal in life is the preservation of harmony with all things, animate and inanimate.

I want to make one further comment about this writer's work. While her verified personality type preferences are ENFP, she says that to some extent this is a type she has adopted as a result of her choice of teaching as a career. Jensen and DiTiberio suggest that a sign of mature writers (such as the professionals I have studied including this one) may be able to use both sides of each dimension of personality and I think this may be the case for this writer (75–104). As an extravert in terms of her energy sources, as a writer, I think Subject A may draw on this preference, based on her claim that she works on writing while doing other things. However, her need to think carefully about her text in ways not possible while the think-aloud was in progress is a more likely comment from an introvert. In knowing Subject A as a colleague, I tend to think of her as an introvert, chiefly because she

often will mention very thoughtful insights that do not appear in her ordinary conversations and interactions, clearly the by-product of introverted processing. Thus, she may have a somewhat different set of preferences in working on writing than those reflected in her scores on the MBTI. Finally, this use of the Myers-Briggs is one illustration of the type of current research that is revealing more about writing and especially revising processes used by professional writers.

Background Questionnaire for Subject B

Subject B is also a teacher at the same state university in the Midwest as Subject A, but he is a member of the part-time faculty, teaching 3 or 4 sections of first-year writing each term. He holds a PhD in English, completed in 1982, and has studied the work of William Saroyan extensively, publishing a book and other scholarly work on Saroyan over the years. He has been teaching on a part-time basis at the university for three years, working previously at other institutions in the area and as a lecturer during his PhD work in another state. His language background includes a good reading knowledge of French with some speaking ability, fair skill in German and experience with Greek and Latin in his undergraduate education. He also knows a little Armenian.

On the MBTI, Subject B's reported type is INTJ (preferences for introversion, intuition, thinking and judging). In an interpretation session I did for him, he generally confirmed his reported type, though he said he has been making some effort to change his approach to life, particularly on the thinking/feeling dimension as well as on the last dimension, judging vs. perceiving. His scores on the instrument reflect clear preferences on all four dimensions. With introverts, though, and especially for someone who is trying to change, shifts in behavior may not be easy to see or capture. His introversion and intuition are certainly reflected in the fact that, at the end of our Myers-Briggs discussion, he said he was surprised by feedback he had gotten from another contributor to the book who read his chapter. He wasn't aware of the length of his draft (about sixty manuscript pages) until this reader pointed out that he had created his text originally as a single-spaced text and was proud to have kept it to thirty pages.

In terms of his writing behavior, Subject B reports that he probably spends around ten hours a week working on writing or document preparation. His prior training in writing included being a student himself in first-year composition in his undergraduate work, and hav-

ing a course on teaching writing in graduate school. He says that he likes to be very thorough when working on a topic, reading as much on the topic as he can, including complete collections of materials with the goal of "knowing the field" of the topic by time he is through. Once he has done some brain storming on his topic, he starts work on a new project by looking through his own book collection for sources, and then will make notes on these as well as lists from the bibliographies of sources at hand of additional materials that appear relevant to his work. Thus, unlike Subject A, Subject B begins with his source materials and references and builds his text directly from these.

When he begins drafting, Subject B begins writing and as the draft develops, he sees the direction it is going to take. When this vision for the whole project becomes clear, he will add headings to the document so he can see the categories of new material. He adds new material then, category by category in each of the headings. He generates new text on the word processor, but then prints out his writing so he can edit and add notes in longhand, repeating this process as necessary. The main goal is to get his ideas down on paper in one form or the other. The end comes when he runs out of time, and at that point, he says he will perform surgery on his draft, choosing parts that appear relevant to the topic and goals of the written piece. Conference presentations and feedback may lead to additional changes. The overall picture reveals that for Subject B, revision is deeply woven into every aspect of his writing process.

Task Questionnaire for Subject B

Subject B completed the task questionnaire with me just before he worked on his draft chapter for this book, following the same procedure used with Subject A. We discussed his answers to the questions listed in Appendix B; then, he worked briefly on the practice passage to understand what is required for a "think-aloud" protocol, and finally, he spent about 45 minutes working on his draft, reading it aloud and commenting on his plans for revision.

In response to the question about whether he had any additional thoughts after the background interview, Subject B indicated that he realized that using a computer-based word processor has had a major impact on his writing and revision. The impact of computers on revision is discussed elsewhere in this text (see chapter by Eyman). His usual working procedure for revision of drafts is to print out his text,

read it carefully in its paper version, planning changes, and then go back to the computer to make the planned changes to the text on the screen. This strategy, again, shows how revision is thoroughly integrated into the way he works. His topic is creativity and revision and because it is a new area, he has read extensively before beginning to draft the chapter, spending about two hours a week for the past six to eight months on this project.

With respect to audience, Subject B understands the readers of the book to include graduate students as well as professionals in the field of Rhetoric and Composition Studies. His thinking about the audience's needs or his assumptions about the readers is a bit fuzzy, he says. He thinks they are probably intelligent people who just don't know very much about literary theory or creative writers. Thus, the readers of this essay are not very knowledgeable about his topic, but they are more informed than average people one might find in the street.

On the question of topic/thesis or main idea, Subject B said his topic is creative writers and revision. When he thinks about imaginative writers, he asks the question, what areas does this touch on or what questions does it raise? The chapter is about the nature of creativity and whether there is creativity in the act of revision. Is the creative moment in drafting of a text or in revising? Subject B seeks to review the theoretical/psychological literature on creativity and to compare these sources to the actual revision practices of imaginative writers. The research he examined for his chapter also reflects the general claim of this book that many new findings are shedding light on how writers work at revision. Prior to beginning work on his own material, Subject B practiced the think-aloud procedure using the weather passage (see Appendix C of this chapter).

Observation Report for Subject B

Because he had brought a printed version of his chapter and did not have his computer disk to use, Subject B's revision observation consisted of him reading a big chunk of his text aloud and commenting on it. He said that his normal work strategy would be like this: having a draft, printing it on paper and planning for changes that need to be made when he goes back to the word processor. He noted that the observation is a little different than his normal work strategy, and that the work of reading through the manuscript and marking sections to

change on the paper copy is one that he would normally follow much later in the overall process of writing and revising.

After making a few changes to the first four paragraphs, he comes to the fifth paragraph. Here, he observes features in his own writing that he does not like: the use of the phrase "chicken and egg" in the opening sentence of the paragraph, which reads as follows: "This is a 'chicken and egg' scenario which strikes one in engaging this area of research." He judges this phrase to be "a little homely" and circles it for later rethinking.

He is reasonably well satisfied with his paragraph and moves on to read the next part. Here, he finds his own writing variously unfocused and too long. He is also not sure that the issues he discusses here need to be included. In this part, Subject B noted that this project has taken on a life of its own and he is not sure but thinks it might develop into a book-length study of creativity and revision. He says he generally does not have trouble producing a manuscript of the requisite length, so he is looking to limit his discussion in this draft. In the rest of his think-aloud, he comments at a number of points on sections he might omit from this chapter, perhaps for use in his own book project at a later time, partly a by-product of our discussion of the length of his chapter. Subject B's thinking about a second writing project points yet again to the fact that revision bears on every part of the writing process, from creative beginnings to conceptualizing a major project to content and organization to choice of words and phrases.

He moves on to read the beginning of the next section. The first paragraph seems okay to him, but when he gets to the second paragraph in "The Psychology of Creativity" section, he is clearly rethinking his writing. Here's the paragraph:

> Most of these psychological studies have considered artists as a general category—composers, painters, sculptors—as well as writers. And scholars such as Jacob Bronowksi emphasized the similarities between the greatest scientists and poets—he wrote about William Blake as well as Albert Einstein and saw their creative activity as being essentially similar. Yet there have been virtually no studies dealing specifically with the creative process of writers. Usually writers form a subset of the larger category of artists to be considered. Empirically, then, it would make most sense to begin with the

> testimony of writers themselves when attempting to con-
> struct a theory of literary creativity and revision however
> few scholars have actually done so.

He changes the phrase "essentially similar" by deleting "essentially" and then alters "virtually no" to "few," handwriting both of these changes on the page. These changes may reflect a need to add some hedging to his phrasing. It is typical for writers who prefer INTJ in their personality according to the MBTI to make very definitive statements, but a professional writer, even without explicit metastrategic awareness would revise to soften unqualified claims in just this way, according to Jensen and DiTiberio (174–75).

He puts a horizontal line in the right margin next to this paragraph, adding one of his question marks, and also draws a line under "however few scholars have actually done so" at the end of the paragraph and puts a question mark next to these words as well. In his comments, he says that there are a few problems here. First, he is concerned about the accuracy of his claims. It isn't that there are "no" studies, but that they are not sufficiently detailed for his purposes. There is new research, in a book he just got, that he will add on creativity and brain studies, based on the work of Alice Flaherty, whose name he writes in the margin. However, he is also concerned about the overall length of the chapter and says he will have to decide whether this paragraph includes "too much information." In contrast to Subject A, Subject B was very focused on his source materials as the focus of his discussion. Subject A was much more concerned with exploring her own ideas as the starting point of her draft process.

In this section, as part of his commentary, Subject B observed that he was struggling to understand his own ideas, and that he saw that he was trying to pull together two ideas: first, that creative writing comes easily to writers and second that writing is a kind of play. Revision, he notes in the text, counters this idea, since it is "hard work!" However, this subject's choice to focus on the role of revision in creative writing opens up yet another relatively new area of investigation in revision studies. His observation about the workload of revision, at the top of page 8 of his draft, came at the end of the audio tape I used to record this revising think-aloud protocol, and is the end of the observation session for Subject B.

Analysis of Revising: Subject B

This think-aloud and the interviews prior to it reveal that Subject B has a great deal of metarhetorical awareness, typical of professional writers like those I studied in *Revision Revisited.* In the interview, he describes his writ-

ing processes in great detail, acknowledging his use of the computer for word processing. He also notes the fact that the chapter he is preparing for the book is somewhat more structured and schematic than his usual writing. In the think-aloud portion, he comments at several points about the organizational structure, about where he might add, delete or rearrange elements, reflecting an awareness of his processes as a writer and the impact of revision on every part of his work. Finally, his observation during the think-aloud that his reading and planning for changes is a strategy he does use, but ordinarily at a somewhat later point in his overall writing process, reflects a writer who knows his own strategies for successful writing.

Subject B's responses to the questionnaires and his think-aloud do not show any metastrategic awareness, the second kind of awareness professional writers have. Like some of the other professionals I have studied, Subject B had not taken the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. He was unaware of his type preferences and did not use them in his comments on his writing strategies or in his revising. However, it may be useful to note that Subject B's work on his chapter is consistent with his type preference for intuition, the preferred type for writers. Many of his comments, such as when he says he is "like a squirrel gathering nuts" as he accumulates paragraphs, quotes, source materials and so on, suggest a "big picture" view that is typical of writers with a preference for intuition. Like Subject A, the lack of metastrategic awareness may account for some of this subject's difficulty with drafting, since his concern was to present the large landscape of creative writing and the role of revising in it. The result was a very long draft with many references that he had to edit several times to be somewhat more focused and less complete.

In terms of the third awareness found in expert writers, metalinguistic awareness, Subject B's work in planning his revisions shows only a little of this type of awareness. He does say at one point that a sentence is "a little homely" and he makes some changes to individual words and sentence structures as he goes through the text. However, little of what he says suggests a direct or specific sensitivity to language of the kind seen in some other professional writers. In his reading of this chapter, Subject B pointed out that this was a very brief observation of his revising, which normally includes much more attention to language issues (i.e. metalinguistic awareness) at a later point in his

process. This comment raises the critical point that inevitably, brief observations of writers' processes provide only snapshots of the whole.

Turning to the four skills found among the expert writers I studied, Subject B does not show particular skills in collaboration. He reports in response to the background questionnaire that he rarely collaborates when he writes other than in the sense of making use of editorial comments provided by the editors of professional journals as he prepares work for publication. And in terms of genre, as noted previously, he is aware that the chapter he is preparing is somewhat different than other kinds of writing he typically does, such as academic conference papers. However, neither collaboration nor genre is a particular skill revealed here.

With respect to text and context, Subject B's responses to the background questionnaire and task questionnaire do not show marked audience awareness or concern. However, in introducing his many and varied source materials, he does make sure to provide the context for his sources to make clear their relevance to the ideas he is trying to present. His use of sources is highly polished and flexible as he uses both direct quotation and paraphrase/summary to integrate the ideas of psychologists, literary critics, creative writers and others in support of his own ideas.

Finally, in terms of tools, Subject B does not show much use of tools since he was mostly reading and reflecting on his overall presentation. He did say at one point that he thought he probably used and relied on the word processor to a greater extent than he had previously thought. Other than this comment, and perhaps because he was not working on the text on the screen, this think-aloud does not show any particular use of tools.

Cross-Case Analysis

Taken together, the work of these two professional writers shows chiefly that they have a very high level of awareness of their preferred techniques and strategies for writing, which I have called metarhetorical awareness. These writers know how they work. They may not have the formal terminology to describe or account for their techniques, such as Flower's term "satisficing" (46, 48) but they clearly do know how they work. Their approaches are consistent with their shared preference for intuition in terms of the four dimensions of personality. Both writers

focus on overall organizational structure to a great degree in these writing sessions. Their metarhetorical awareness is also suggested by their similar uses of metaphors to describe or explain their processes. Both writers have a clear preference for intuition, so they characteristically can see the broad issues and connections in their ideas and are likely to notice patterns that the metaphors reflect.

These writers started from very different points with their drafting and revising activities, with Subject A concentrating much more on trying to shape her own ideas without reference to source materials. Subject B began with his sources and developed his draft by presenting them, not so much to the exclusion of his own ideas but with much more of a focus on marshalling the sources to support his points. A reader of this chapter in an earlier draft noted that expert writers may not have a plan at the outset because they see a draft as a starting point for a piece of writing. If they don't do much or any pre-writing planning, this approach is less problematic than it might be for novice writers who are less likely to revise effectively. This observation suggests that in teaching, revision strategies must play a much greater role in the writing classroom and require more focused and direct teaching. In particular, as I argued in *Revision Revisited,* the teaching of revision should be more concentrated on helping novice writers build the three kinds of awareness I have described.

Finally, the work of these two writers reflects the truth of the observation found by Subject A in Sudol's book on revising, that revising touches every part of the writing process. If writing can be divided into prewriting, drafting and revising, these writers show that much revising can go on in the prewriting stage, as is true for Subject A. Her approach entails a "discovery draft" (Murray) that is not truly the beginning of a piece but that may get revised into a beginning. There may be several such discovery pieces before she begins the real work of writing. For Subject A as well as for Subject B, prewriting and drafting both entail revising as the text unfolds. Thus, it is clear here and everywhere in this book that revising is thoroughly integrated into every part of the writing process. In addition, particularly in the case of Subject B, the studies he reviewed for his chapter are part of the new findings about writing processes and strategies that shed light on how writers revise successfully. Because he has looked at highly respected creative writers, Subject B's work brings new insights about revision to bear on the teaching and learning processes.

Pedagogical Suggestions: A Summary

This chapter has reviewed the findings on the revision strategies of professional writers, showing that they have awarenesses and skills usually lacking among novice writers. The professional writers whose revising has been presented here show particularly strong metarhetorical awareness. Other professional writers I have studied and reported on in *Revision Revisited* show very high levels of metarhetorical, metastrategic and metalinguistic awareness. In addition, professional writers have strong skills of all four kinds I have described. Naturally, in teaching, the focus tends to be on developing novice writers' skills rather than on their awarenesses, partly because it is easier to focus on skills and partly because there is only so much teachers can do in a semester or even a year of writing instruction, in, for example, first year composition courses.

Teachers of writing, at least at the college level, typically focus their work on developing writers' skills—collaboration, genre, text and context and tools. Instead, it should be clear that the skilled writers whose work has been discussed here are skilled in part because of their fairly strong levels of metarhetorical awareness. To develop metarhetorical awareness, the many kinds of reflective writing tasks are most useful. Teachers might also have students read the work of writers who have reflected extensively on their own processes, such as Annie Dillard and Anne Lamott. When students create portfolios of their writing and reflect on their development and progress as writers over a semester or year, the resulting insights can serve to help students' developing metarhetorical awareness.

To encourage metastrategic awareness, teachers might incorporate the concepts of personality preference into their work, with or without the direct use of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. In most educational institutions, particularly colleges and universities, it is easy to find someone on campus who is licensed to administer, score and interpret the MBTI for students. Understanding personality preferences and their impact on writing behavior can give student writers useful approaches to writing and revising. Use of the work of Jensen and DiTiberio and the more popular and accessible version of their research by DiTiberio and Jensen can be useful for teachers and directly or indirectly for students. The educational implications of personality

type are thoroughly explored by Gordon Lawrence in *Teacher Types and Tiger Stripes,* another useful resource.

Finally, teachers can help build language sensitivity by discussing particular aspects of language formally in class and tapping into computer tools to help with word choice, sentence structure and organizational issues. To help student/novice writers become more like professional writers, teachers should help them build all three kinds of awareness that those writers possess. Doing so will help novice writers become skilled and expert at writing. If revising touches every part of the writing process, developing students' skills in revision will make them better in every part of writing. The new research discussed in this chapter and the others in this book suggests that we are moving toward a deeper understanding of writing processes that expands the concept of revision. These new insights can and should be shared with students learning to write.

Appendix A: Background Questionnaire on Writing and Revising Strategies

1. Taping: ok? Y n

2. Subject name and today's date:

    Mbti Type Preferences And Scores:

    Self-Id Preferences If Different:

3. Languages spoken or known and level of ability:

4. Position/official job title:

5. Length of time in job:

6. Highest degree and year of award:

7. Approximate amount of time spent preparing documents:

    Per Day? Per Week?

8. Specific training in writing in or before present job/when?:

    courses

    seminars

workshops

other

9. How much collaborative work do you do in document preparation?

10. Describe your writing strategies or habits. . . .

paper vs. wp

use of dictaphone

do you have an editor or typist or other person who looks at your writing?

11. Describe your approach or process for writing generally. . . .

prewriting

drafting

final copy preparation

use of spell check/machine-based editor

Appendix B: Questionnaire for Revising Session

1. Name and date:

2. Any thoughts about process since first interview or observations, comments, etc.?

3. Title of chapter?

4. Is there research involved in this document, and if so how much and what kind?

5. Is there a model for this document or a pattern followed?

(If so, ask for copy of model or pattern document.)

6. Length parameter (# of words, pages or time):

7. Time spent on this document to date:

8. Audience for document:

9. Audience needs/writer's assumptions about audience:

10. Topic of document/thesis/point/main idea:

11. Purpose/use of document:

12. Focus of revision (rhetorical, technical, design/mechanics):

13. Definition of readability?

14. What will make this a readable document?

Appendix C: Practice Passage for Think Aloud.

If this were your draft, how would you change it?

> The repeated blasts of Arctic air are hard on the hands and face. The weather has been pretty lousy lately. It has been cold, windy and the typical gray of Michigan in the winter. The days have been getting longer, so there are more hours of daylight, but the solid gray of the sky has been depressing. Mornings are still very dark and cold. At this point in the winter it always seems like spring may never come. There are few visible buds on the trees but few birds are around. On the plus side, the absence of birds means no loud chirping in the mornings, but there is also little sense of spring coming on.