

RECLAIMING THE INVISIBLE: UTILISING ALPHABETIC AND MULTIMODAL  
PROCESS JOURNALS IN RESEARCH AND WRITING INTENSIVE CLASSROOMS

Rebecca C. Conklin

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Department of English Language and Literature

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For Joe and for my parents

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## ABSTRACT

### RECLAIMING THE INVISIBLE: UTILISING ALPHABETIC AND MULTIMODAL PROCESS JOURNALS IN RESEARCH AND WRITING INTENSIVE CLASSROOMS

by Rebecca C. Conklin

This project considers the use of multimodal and alphabetic process journals in writing and research intensive classrooms, particularly in a First-Year Composition (FYC) context. It uses current research from the field of writing studies to consider the instructional applications, pedagogical benefits, and future improvements of process journal practice. Specifically, it looks at the history and theory in the field of writing studies that supports the process journal practice, the benefits for student learning, the benefits for instructional development, and the potential to use genres such as reflective writing to re-frame FYC contexts as unique discourse communities tied to the larger discourse of writing studies. The researcher also highlights areas where additional and more expansive research is needed.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The writing process is an iceberg. Floating at the top of the water is the written product. Beneath the surface are the strategies that writers use to shape, however slowly, that final product for a reader. Just as icebergs have been detrimental for sailors since humans first took to frozen seas, so too is the unexamined iceberg of the writing process detrimental to the development of practice. Many writers are themselves unaware of the vast complexity beneath the surface of a written product – whether an email, a letter to the editor, a business report, or even a carefully crafted text message. The way we think about and talk about writing as a society feeds this erasure of the underside of the iceberg; we are taught to see successful writers as blessed with natural talents that cannot be crafted or learned (Brandt). This framing of writing as natural talent ignores the majority of the iceberg and, in doing so, demotivates writers from developing a personal practice, making writing for many a space of anxiety, doubt, and self-loathing.

The field of writing studies has been working diligently over the past five decades to undo this major misconception about the writing process, using research and pedagogy to dive deep below the surface and explore with writers the value and beauty of the process that pushes the product into view. In my first semester teaching First Year Composition (FYC) as a Graduate Assistant at a mid-sized, regional, state school I was drawn to the composition theories and classroom practices that helped to illuminate the writing process. I thought of it as reclaiming the invisible—a “re”claiming because the process exists whether we are aware of it or not. Students in my classes already had writing processes—many just didn’t know it. I was also drawn to these process-focused approaches because I felt they were missing in my education as a writer; I

wanted to learn, along with my students, how the mapping of the iceberg below the surface might help me to grow as a scholar and writer. This fascination became my research focus for the two years of my master's program, and has culminated in this project—just a tiny piece of the processes I utilized in composing, revising, and re-envisioning the aims, discoveries, and insights of my work.

This project draws heavily from the fields of composition and rhetoric and writing studies. I refer throughout the following chapters to the field of writing studies in particular, because my work has been most directly influenced by Downs and Wardle, the founders of the Writing About Writing (WAW) approach; they refer to the field as “writing studies.” I came to the work of Downs and Wardle primarily through my interest in the process and post-process approaches to the study and teaching of writing. As Chapter 2 will explore in more detail, the WAW approach developed from the insights and understandings of the process/post-process approaches of the 1980s and 1990s (Anson; Burnham and Powell; Dethier; Downs and Wardle; Kent; Pianko). Composition and rhetoric bring to this project a perspective that privileges the context, purposes, and audiences of writing, considering how the process journal might help to better understand rhetorical framings, generic constructions, and the reader-writer relationship. Developing out of these roots in writing studies/composition and rhetoric is an interdisciplinary exploration of the uses of reflective writing. It draws on current scholarship in social work and medicine to see how insights gained in professional development contexts might help to re-frame or re-shape the practice in FYC contexts. The project also draws on linguistic discourse analysis by way of genre in order to reconceptualize FYC spaces as unique discourse communities with distinct genres. What began as a way to bring WAW into my classroom blossomed into an interdisciplinary investigation of reflective practice in FYC.

It is rare to find a classroom practice that can help teachers as much as it helps students. Instructors tend to view writing as a way for students to build skills, gain literacies, and demonstrate their learning to the instructor. It is more rare for instructors to consider the ways in which students' writing might help them to become more effective in their own practice. Process journals (informal, open-ended journals that ask students to reflect on and plan their particular processes and obstacles for a target assignment) have the unique ability to support students in their learning and instructors in their teaching. This research considers the practice of six once-a-week process journals as they supported students' development of an eight-to-twelve source research paper in FYC.

### Reflective Writing in Composition Spaces

One of the many goals of writing studies is to support transition from high school to college, thus identifying pedagogical methods that might allow students to *build on*, rather than abandon, the essential skills they developed in high school. Research on reflective writing within process or Writing About Writing (WAW) approaches to composition instruction have found that students can not only build bridges from spaces of prior knowledge but can also transfer those bridges to future writing tasks and situations (Cisero 236; Downs and Wardle 576; Horning 5; Norton, Owens, and Clark, 425, Pianko, 274; a. Wardle and Downs 294; b. Wardle and Downs, 488; Yancey). This combination of bridgework and transfer helps to make the early transition to academic and discipline-specific writing more approachable.

Definitions of what constitutes reflection abound, but education philosopher John Dewey and prominent composition scholar Kathleen Blake Yancey provide the most relevant definitions for the scope and objectives of this research. Despite their work existing almost a century apart, common themes exist between their approaches to reflection on educational spaces. Dewey

defines reflective thought as “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (12). Reflective thought is a building block of reflective practice. Rodgers aptly summarizes Dewey’s position on reflective practice, whose criteria define it as (1) a meaning making process (2) a rigorous way of thinking (3) an act occurring within community and (4) a set of implicit or explicit attitudes (845). This definition expands to all formal and informal educational situations and contexts. Kathleen Blake Yancey defines reflection within the writing context specifically. Her definition comes in three parts (1) projection: “goal setting, revisiting, and refining” (2) retrospection: “the articulation of what learning has taken place, as embodied in various texts as well as processes used by the writer” and (3) revision: “text revising in light of retrospection” (Yancey 6-7). A combination of these two definitions/ approaches provides a picture of what reflection should look like in the writing classroom.

However, the open-ended nature of much reflective journal writing in the composition classroom has, until recently, precluded sustained pedagogical research and left justification of the practice to common sense and anecdotal research. The need to better understand best practices for reflective writing in the classroom has led to more critical research and discussion among scholars in the field. For example, Dymont and O’Connell find that many students resist actual reflection in reflective writing or discussion, focusing instead on a straightforward narrative of events (234). They outline that clarity of expectations, initial training, responses and feedback, and even grading could enable and motivate students to partake in more effective reflection (234-241). Similarly, Mills highlights the paradox between the intended openness of reflective activities and the guidelines needed to make those reflections useful to students and instructors, connecting this to various temperaments of students in the classroom (685-688).

According to Mills, not only does reflective writing need to provide more specific frameworks, it should also provide multiple frameworks that function for distinct personality types (688). Additionally, Greiman and Covington's research with student teachers finds that, even with a group committed to the value of reflection, effective reflection proves difficult without varied modalities and clear scaffolding. This project extends the existing research on reflection in educational spaces, in an attempt to test and determine best reflective writing practices for distinct contexts and diverse learners.

Journals and other forms of reflective writing have been used in composition classrooms since the rise of the process and expressive movements in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The process movement focused on the processes (such as invention, drafting, and revision) that support the completion of final products (Leahy 110). On the other hand, expressive pedagogy sought to connect students with the personal, social, and emotional elements of writing (Burnham and Powell 113). Although these two approaches have distinct pedagogical aims, many of their classroom approaches are shared. The tools utilized by process practitioners to break down the writing process, such as "freewriting, journal keeping, reflective writing, and small-group dialogic collaborative response," were often borrowed and adapted from the strategies developed by the expressive movement (ibid). It is through this pedagogical synergy that we can see how the process movement developed along with expressive pedagogy. The writer's connection with and development of their own voice is critical to the expressive approach, and practitioners used the writing process to help writers bring this out (ibid 117). Likewise, as the process approach moved away from a product-focused pedagogy, practitioners utilized the freedom gained through expressivism to help writers engage with their unique experience of the writing process. In this way the 1960s and 1970s proved to be radical times in

the transitional development of writing studies as a field and the refinement of its pedagogical approaches, which continue to be used in composition classrooms today.

In addition to the process and expressive foundations of journal-writing in composition classrooms, scholars throughout the field of writing studies advocate the use of journals and reflective writing in the classroom as a way to bring students' lives to their texts and to make writing a daily habit (Cisero; Downs; Downs and Wardle; Miller; Murray; Palmeri; Rethier; Shipka). Common forms of journals include daily/observation journals, research journals, and reader response journals. Daily observation journals ask students to connect with the world around them in reflective and meaningful ways by having them write about something significant each day. Research journals include notes on sources, sources to track down, and initial invention and drafting of prose (Glenn and Goldwaite 173-173). Reader response journals aim to improve students' reading comprehension and engagement with texts by having them respond (openly or with guiding questions) to the readings they complete in the target class.

Like most other forms of journaling, process journals also came with the rise of the process-movement in the 1960s and 70s (Huot 45). A process journal asks students to reflect on their processes of planning, drafting, and writing as they relate to a particular assignment or series of assignments. For example, as it appeared in my assignment sheet for a FYC course, students were asked to "to think more intentionally about the methods [they] use in the process of researching and writing" (See Appendix I). To meet this goal, students might discuss their time management and planning strategies, obstacles they have encountered and how they plan to address them or develop a new route, or how this paper compares to another paper they have written, thus grounding the new experience in something more familiar. Like most journals,

process journals can be open-ended or they can ask students to respond to a set of guiding questions that might target particular aspects of the assignment students need to focus on.

Journals and other forms of reflective writing have been written about extensively in writing studies research since the 1970s (Cisero; Dodd; Downs and Wardle; Dymont and O'Connell; Murray; Yancey). However, the specific form of process journals this research focuses on haven't received significant scholarship or recognition in the field the way that other types of journaling practices have. In 1987 Anne Dodd wrote an article about "writing logs," detailing the ways in which the logs helped her identify the needs of her students, and her description of the aims, strategies, and purposes of "writing logs" align closely with the process journal as defined in this research. In 1988, Brian Huot published a piece in the *Iowa Bulletin* with the visionary title, "Process Journal or Writing About Writing" in which he lays out the benefits of the process journal in composition classrooms:

I hoped that having students write about their writing would help to focus the attention of the class on the process rather than the product of writing, and that the process journal would help me to see the problems students were having producing their texts, problems which are not always visible through an examination of the texts themselves (Huot 44).

While there is much research on the merits of reflective writing more generally, beyond these two articles, there does not appear to be any additional scholarly research on the specific topic of process journals.

The scope of this project and the literature review described in Chapter 2 and the research in Chapter 3-5 is intentionally limited to face-to-face pedagogical practices. While I have taught in high school and college classrooms for years, I have yet to conduct classes fully online. Additionally, I have not received online instructional training through my institution. For these

reasons, I am unfamiliar with the detailed infrastructure of online learning in higher education and do not feel comfortable attempting to make connections to or claims about the transferability of this research to those contexts. I do make reference to the online learning management system (LMS) my institution uses, but only in the capacity of expanding and managing face-to-face instructional models. As online pedagogy is an emerging and rapidly changing field, more research should be done by those more intimately aware of that context in regards to the applicability and challenges of process journals for online writers and learners.

### Outline of Chapters

The project is broken up into four body chapters. Each takes a look at a distinct aspect of the process journals, although there are themes that run throughout. Chapter 2, “Process Journals in FYC – Theory, Practice, Methods,” provides a literature review of the uses and benefits of reflective writing in the composition classroom from the perspective of three major composition approaches that informed this practice and study: Process, Writing About Writing (WAW), and Multimodality. Finally, it lays out the methodology used to construct the study of this classroom practice over four semesters. Chapter 3, “Process Journals and Writer Outcomes,” considers the ways in which process journals can help students to reframe the writing process as iceberg metaphor to explore and interrogate their writing processes. It explains, using excerpts from the process journals, the primary benefits observed for student learning; time management and planning, metacognition and metacommunication, transfer of knowledge and skills, demystifying the writing process, and the development of multimodal literacy. Chapter 4, “Process Journals as Formative Assessment – Improving Instruction and Learning,” looks at the process journals from the perspective of the instructor, establishing the ways in which the practice might help to develop teaching practices in the moment and over the course of a few semesters. It describes

two major benefits in this direction: enabling quick adjustment of instruction to address obstacles and or misunderstandings and helping to identify what parts of the transition to academic writing students are having the most difficulty with. Finally, it connects the current research in WAW to its applications in the use of formative assessment in the FYC classroom. Chapter 5 “FYC as Discourse Community: Reflective Writing and Epistemology,” argues that reflective writing constitutes a distinct genre in FYC spaces across institutions, and that by considering this and other genres that exist in FYC we can come closer to understanding FYC as a discourse community unto itself. In the chapter I argue that reframing FYC as a discourse community provides a better set of descriptors for what occurs in those spaces among writers, and also gives us new avenues for inquiry and scholarship.

## CHAPTER II

### PROCESS JOURNALS IN FYC – THEORY, PRACTICE, METHODS

Pedagogical Foundations: Writing About Writing (WAW), Multimodality, and Reflective Practice

#### *Writing About Writing: Changing the Focus of FYC*

WAW developed as an extension of the discursive struggle between process and post-process approaches to the teaching of writing. The process approach, established in the early 1970s, changed the focus of writing instruction from the written product (a final draft handed in and evaluated by the instructor) to the processes that students used to develop those final products (Anson 223). This prior focus on the written product is commonly referred to as the “current traditional” approach. For process theorists, there was less concern with the state of the final product and more with showing students how strategies such as invention, drafting, and revision might develop their writing skills across contexts and rhetorical situations. The post-process approach developed as a critique of the process movement, criticizing the process approach’s attempts to codify the writing process using social-scientific methodologies, such as observation and survey (Kent 2). Post-process theorists felt that process approach wrongly aimed to develop a “Big Theory” of writing, one that would determine the optimal process all writers should follow. In contrast, post-process saw writing as paralogic, meaning that no “codifiable or generalizable writing process exists” (Kent 1). Rethier claims that post-process approaches replace “prescriptive pedagogy (subject, formulate a thesis, outline, write, proofread)” with a “descriptive discipline whose members teach ‘process not product’” (620). Here Rethier speaks to the perceived rigidity of “current-traditional” composition and the ways in which the process approach continued some of the same approaches they critiqued, namely those that prescribed

the same writing process to all students. Rather than seeking to define the ultimate writing process, the post-process approach seeks to describe, as Rethier would put it, the numerous approaches to the writing process so that writers might come to understand not only the complexity of the writing task, but also the uniqueness of each writer's approach to it. There is debate as to whether this distinction between process and post-process approaches is valid, as there was a plethora of research coming out of the process approach—some looking to define a specific approach to the writing process, some looking to describe the diversity of writing processes (Dethier 89-90). Essentially, both the process and post-process approaches places the *experience* of the writing process at the front and center of each writing task/project, and other skills like genre knowledge or mechanics are folded into the pedagogy as required for each writer's process. It was from this massive transition from product-based pedagogy to a process-based one that WAW developed in the early 2000s.

While process, post-process, and WAW may seem disparate approaches to the study and teaching of writing, there has been a steady discursive development from the foundation of writing studies as a field in the 1960s. Process began with a focus on the behaviors of writing, or the processes, so that it could begin to form pedagogical principles from empirical methodology borrowed from the social sciences. Post-process critiqued the objectivity with which process treated the paralogic (unable to be codified) nature of thinking and writing, and launched critiques that enabled the field to move on to more interesting insights in writing studies pedagogy, such as the social-rhetorical contexts and motivations that shape writing. WAW has since developed the insights from both process and post-process to include what they see as more realistic approaches to the teaching and learning of writing, including accepting the paralogic nature of communication and rejecting the reified notion of the universal academic discourse.

Post-process approaches played a key role in the transitions between process approaches and WAW, acting as a bridge from the overly objective aims of the process approach to WAW's more nuanced understandings.

In 2007, the first publication using the WAW designation appeared in *College Composition and Communication* (Downs and Wardle "Teaching" 552-584). WAW calls for a holistic reconsideration of the aims of first year composition (FYC) based upon the body of knowledge developed by writing studies over the past fifty years. In many ways, WAW builds on the knowledge gained from process and post-process approaches to the teaching of writing. WAW calls for a focus on process over product, supports that writing processes are paralogic and considers both the social and cognitive contexts and motivations for writing. In addition, it seeks to provide more realistic preparation for the diverse contexts in which students will write in college. Downs and Wardle, and WAW by extension, see writing as situated, motivated, contingent, material/embodyed, and epistemic. As such, WAW seeks "to improve students' understanding of writing, rhetoric, language, and literacy in a course that is topically oriented to reading and writing as scholarship inquiry and encouraging more realistic understandings of writing" ("Teaching" 553). In addition to a new instructional and pedagogical focus, WAW works to redefine the goals of FYC courses. They argue:

If composition is understood as an entry point rather than as an inoculation, it can focus on accomplishing an obtainable goal that lays groundwork for the remainder of students' writing education: teaching students flexible and transferable declarative and procedural knowledge about writing. (Downs and Wardle "Writing" 280)

Additionally, WAW seeks to move away from the goal of preparing students to partake in a universal academic discourse, specifically because, as they argue, no such discourse exists. This

particular critique of a universal academic discourse began with Rose in 1985, as he critiques the exclusionary practices of discourse in the academy and argued for more realistic goals in terms of preparing students for higher level academic work (397-398). To this end, Downs and Wardle observe that “asking teachers to teach ‘academic writing’ begs the question: which academic writing—what content, what genre, for what activity, context, and audience?” (Downs and Wardle “Writing” 556). WAW seeks to extend the flexibility of developing knowledge about writing so that it might achieve greater transfer across contexts in the university, and also resists the reification of a universal academic discourse for which students should prepare.

The development of WAW has been met with some resistance within the field of writing studies. A major critique of the approach is that Downs and Wardle teach WAW by using content from the writing studies field. For example, they might have students read and write about the seminal articles within writing studies as the occasions for major assignments. Some scholars and practitioners see this as inherently void of content, while others feel that this privileging of content from writing studies takes away from the value of other approaches to content, such as literature or current events. Downs and Wardle have addressed these critiques in the years since their founding article was published, explaining that their example of a WAW syllabus used writing studies content, but that it is possible and valuable to teach a WAW syllabus with different content, such as current events (Downs and Wardle “Reflecting Back”). They argue that it is less about the content of the material and more about what parts of the writing process are addressed and how they are addressed. Certainly, it would be difficult to call a course WAW if it didn’t focus on literacy, rhetoric, process, and multimodality. But, as in the case of the syllabus I taught in FYC, the content does not need to be writing studies specific so

long as the pedagogical decisions support the aims and objectives described in the paragraphs above.

Process journals meet the goals of WAW pedagogy in important ways. First, they are literally “writing about writing.” In process journals, students take time to reflect on writing in the broadest sense of the definition, to include invention strategies such as mindmapping, outlining, or note-taking to drafting and revision. It allows students to see that the “writing” process begins with the first idea and continues through many modes until the project has reached its fullest expression. Another way that process journals meet the goals of WAW pedagogy is by supporting the openness of writing processes, and allowing students to determine what steps to take, what obstacles to battle, and what strategies work best for them. Other approaches to process-based teaching, for example modeling one’s own process only, can limit students in their ability to experiment with invention and drafting strategies or even make students believe that there is one “right” way to go about writing. Finally, process journals help students to develop skills in writing and critical thinking, regardless of the academic or professional discipline they will eventually write in. In this sense, the process journal supports Shipka’s notion of a “toolkit” approach to writing instruction, in which students consider “the array of tools, supports, or meditational means they use throughout the process of completing a particular task or objective” (215). This approach enables transfer from one context to another, and helps students to see the tools they can use to complete a number of diverse tasks across various contexts. In the end, process journals help students to reflect authentically on writing as a process unique to each person and to carry these unique approaches to new and different contexts and disciplines. For these reasons, process journals are aligned with the main objectives of WAW pedagogy.

*Multimodality: Expanding the Definition of Composition*

Pedagogically, multimodality generally refers to the incorporation of multiple forms of communication (written, auditory, visual, kinesthetic, etc.) in the classroom. In the twenty-first century, it is often assumed that multimodality necessarily entails the use of advanced technology, although this is not always the case. Both interpretive dance and cinematic documentary count as multimodal products; anything that moves beyond written words on a page is multimodal. Multimodality has important implications for twenty-first century learning: literacy is changing in the face of new media and new technology; researchers increasingly understand metacognition (thinking about thought) and metacommunication (communicating about communication) as instrumental to the learning process; there are new findings that support the overlap between aural, speech, and written text; and theorists continue to question what counts (or what should count) as meaningful contribution to academic discourse (see Bowen and Whithaus; Dunn; Palmeri). These issues and questions make multimodality an important consideration for modern composition classrooms, although the theory and practice of multimodality has already had a long history in the field (Palmeri 7).

Practitioners of the multimodal approach to composition pedagogy recognize that changing definitions of literacy are altering the practices and objectives of classrooms across the world at all levels of learning. In Harvard's 1885 inaugural first year composition course, "literacy" meant literacy in the Western Canon and the Classics, perhaps Latin or Greek, and the epistemological theories of the academy at the time (Coxwell-Teague and Lunsford xiii). Today, educators largely recognize that students come to classrooms with their own literacies of the word and the world, and that learning happens best when educators are able to meet students in the space between their personal literacies and the expectations of the academy, which are

constantly in flux. Additionally, knowledge of computers, internet, and other emerging technologies often determine one's social and economic outcomes outside of school. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) notes that "today our students are living in a world that is increasingly non print-centric" ("Nonprint Media"). Miller and McVee argue that "through producing and interpreting print, nonprint, and print-mixed representations in the digital world, people have developed new social literacy practice" (1). Issues of access and accessibility make it important for schools and teachers to take on the task of teaching multimodal literacies for twenty-first century realities. As the NCTE observes, "in personal, civic, and professional discourse, alphabetic, visual, and aural works are not luxuries but essential components of knowing" ("Multimodal Literacies"). Providing access to and instruction in multimodal ways of thinking and knowing ensures that all citizens can fully engage in social, political, intellectual, and economic realities that await them in the "real world."

However, some scholars have argued that mere access to technology is not enough. Adam J. Banks makes an important point about "critical access" to technology (42). He says, "members of a particular community must also develop understandings of the benefits and problems of any technology well enough to be able to critique, resist, and avoid them when necessary we all as using them when necessary" (ibid). Banks makes the call for educators, administrators, and community leaders to think deeply, slowly, and critically about the integration of technologies in educational spaces; effective uses of technology do not equate usage with learning, nor access with impact. Any multimodal approach to education should consider if there is merely access to the technology needed, or if that access can be made "critical" in the sense of achieving the social, civic, political, intellectual, and economic empowerment and impact it sets out to.

In addition to its impacts on civic and political empowerment, multimodality has been shown to support metacognition and metacommunication in unique ways. Metacognition, thinking about how we think, and metacommunication, communicating about how we communicate, serve students in ways that direct instruction is often unable to. Just as Patricia A. Dunn argues, “coming to know is an active, challenging process that requires self-awareness and metacognition” (52-53). By breaking down their own thinking and communicative processes, students are able to see how their thinking and communication works (for example, what implicit decisions they make). This reflective process helps them to more effectively shape their thinking and communication to various contexts, conditions, and purposes. Additionally, there is evidence that multimodal activities in the classroom help students develop stronger written products (ibid 54). Palmeri asserts, “if we limit students to only alphabetic means of invention and revision, we may unnecessarily constrain their ability to think intensively and complexly about their work” (44). Including multimodal practices in any classroom can help students to achieve civic, social, and cognitive aims; however composition classrooms have particular need for multimodal inclusion.

The traditional focus of composition classrooms has been written (alphabetic) products in various genres that generally help to prepare students for the expectations of higher-level and writing-intensive courses they will experience throughout their post-secondary academic careers. Flower and Hayes found that multiple modes of thinking and planning go into the production of alphabetic writing, and that instruction should highlight, support, and utilize this (Palmeri 32). By including multimodal teaching and learning practices in composition classrooms, even those that continue to use alphabetic products, we enable students to utilize the wealth of resources they bring to the writing process. One critique, however, of the multimodal turn in composition

is that it often is not explicit enough in the way that it teaches theories of multimodality. Jennifer Grouling and Jackie Grutsch McKinney note that much of the multimodal work done in composition classrooms at Ball State University, whose composition master syllabi require it, use multimodality to present traditionally composed texts, rather than centering multimodality as a type of composing in itself (60). For example, students were using multimodal presentation software to present a major paper to the class after the paper was complete.

To increase scholarship and pedagogical approaches, researchers and practitioners of multimodality continue to push the boundaries of composition. For example, in “Back to the Future; The Pedagogical Promise of the (Multimedia) Essay,” Erik Ellis uses his classroom to explore the similarities and differences between a traditional alphabetic essay and a multimodal project by having students write and then remix a traditional essay into a multimodal/multimedia one, mostly through the creation of a documentary-type video. Through this approach, which begins with traditional composition and then centers multimodality through the remix, he and his students are able to explore their own composing processes, the ways in which certain stories are better told through different media, and the shifts in audience-related needs when going from one media to another. Not all multimodal approaches to writing instruction require this much attention to the multimodality itself, but Grouling and Grutsch McKinney’s warning remains—composition pedagogy is not truly multimodal if the multimodal component is presented in a way that only works to support the alphabetic product without deeper investigation into the processes, challenges, and benefits of multimodality as a composing method in its own right.

If composition instruction focuses on the explicit investigation of multimodal practices in the invention, drafting, and revision of written work we may help students to refine and utilize those processes more effectively in the future. The multimodality included in the process journal

practice centers multimodality as an option within the writing process. While it doesn't ask students to explicitly reflect on the multimodal option itself, as Grouling and Grutsch McKinney might advise, it does present that option as an end in itself, as having value on its own terms as a distinct part of the writing process. Offering that writers might record themselves freethinking about the paper, engage in a interview with a friend about their progress, or record a phone conversation where they are talking out their next steps, all help writers to see that the writing process can occur organically, through conversation with others or internal self-reflection. By purposefully utilizing those strategies in planning and development, writers build confidence as well as sustain a feeling of forward progress, for example on a challenging and long-term research assignment. An instructor looking for further promote the use of multimodal approaches to the writing process could, as Grouling and Grutsch McKinney suggest, have students use both alphabetic and multimodal journals, and explicitly reflect on what one afforded that the other did not and vice versa.

*Reflective Practice: Framing Writing Development as Professional Preparation*

Reflective writing, such as the process journal, when used with extended or continuous learning as a goal, can be considered a form of reflective practice. According to Bolton, reflective practice entails, "paying critical attention to the practical values and theories which inform everyday actions, by examining practice reflectively and reflexively. This leads to developmental insight" (xix). "Developmental insight" should be a foundational goal of composition classrooms, since transfer of knowledge from FYC to new writing classrooms and occasions is a proven pedagogical challenge for the field (Bergmann and Zepernick; Beaufort; Downs and Wardle (2007); Frazier; McCarthy; Nelms; Perkins and Salomon; and Dively; Rounsaville, Goldberg and Bawarshi; Teich; Wardle). Professional education and training

programs, such as nursing and teacher education, have increasingly relied on and studied the use of reflective writing as one method of supporting reflective practice (Boud; Charon and Hermann; Donohoe; Greiman and Covington; Hiemstra; McGuire; Mio and Barker-Hackett; Wear). The scholarship in these areas shows that, for optimal impact on professional development, reflective writing needs to support not just the transfer of knowledge and skills, but also the metacognitive transfer of a process of critical thinking required in novel situations not covered by professional education and training. FYC and other composition classrooms should share this concern with transfer of skills, and a focus on learning one's own "writing process" as professional development is appropriate for composition's development of best practices in reflective practice.

Gloria Ibarreta and Linda McLeod, writing from the field of nursing education, cite the importance of reflective journal writing in "process-oriented" curriculum, as is found in nursing education (134). In nursing, the process-oriented curriculum is defined as a shift from "training to education; technique to understanding; strict content to clinical decision making; and product line thinking to value-based human caring education" (ibid). Their focus on process is relevant to composition classrooms, which aims to help students understand the fundamental nature of writing processes, and how consciousness of this builds skills across the curriculum and outside of the university. As Ibarreta and McLeod make clear, transfer of skills to changing situations and environments requires a critical and flexible understanding of process (136). Charon and Hermann, also writing from nursing education, find that the process of reflective writing itself helps to build this reflective ability, which is critical for improvement and development over time (6). Similarly, Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) classes benefit when students enter class with this focus on situational flexibility and

development. Both WAC and WID move away from a focus on learning writing skills to the development of discipline-specific content knowledge, as Chris Thaiss and Susan McLeod define, the “particular discourse features and rhetorics used in writing about that content” (284). Because of the pedagogical foci of WAC/WID classrooms, it is crucial that FYC classes teach not only the critical understanding of genre and conventions, but also focus on the development of reflective practice to better prepare students for new and more demanding writing contexts.

Writing from the field of social work, McGuire argues that when promoting reflective practice, “providing academic content alone may not provide the problem-solving skills necessary for practice in a complex world in which practitioners must analyze, evaluate, and revise knowledge” (93). Instead, it should be connected directly to realistic practice. In this sense, the aim of reflective practice should be focused on skills over knowledge, thus developing the critical thinking scaffold needed in changing practical environments. For FYC classes, practice is easy to come by if the instructor is intentional in identifying practice for students to reflect on. For FYC, practice is not found only in blank word document waiting for fully-formed paragraphs, or what most students conceive of the “practice” of writing. It includes all of the steps, both major and minor, that move a students toward the production of that final draft. In this way, reflective writing such as the process journals in FYC, can help students to redefine their writing practice, which in turn will better prepare them for the more complex writing tasks to be found in their majors and their professions.

## Methodology

I developed the process journal assignment in my ENG 101 (First Year Composition) course at a large regional public university in the Midwest, in order to support the development of a 1,750-2,500 word, eight to twelve source research paper. The majority of my students were

first-and second-semester first year students. For the freshman class of 2016, my first semester using the process journals, 3,462 of the 4,092 enrolled freshman, were classified as FTIAC-- First Time in Any College (“Fall On-Campus” 1). My research on this project spans three semesters and five sections of ENG 101. The classes met three times a week for fifty minutes each session. The students worked over three drafts to finalize the paper, spanning a total of six weeks of planning, researching, and writing.

Some students had experience with this kind of writing, mostly in the form of a final senior thesis in their twelfth grade English classroom. However, incoming students are able to place out of the ENG 101 through an writing measure called the CLEP test. Additionally, as it becomes more common for high school students to dual enroll in basic college courses during high school, some will obtain college credit for FYC classes before enrolling full time. Because of this, many of the more “prepared” students skip FYC. As such, most of the students in my class had no experience with a major research paper, and were unfamiliar with the expectations of such a paper.

I developed the process journal assignment because I wanted students to actively reflect on the choices they made and strategies they used in research and drafting processes, learn about and practice using the resources available to them through the library, and also learn from each other and adopt new strategies that might be more effective than those they came to college using. Additionally, a pedagogical focus in my classroom is collaboration and community. The process journals presented writers as each others’ support lines, in addition to the support they might receive from me. I felt that an open-ended process journal would most effectively meet these diverse needs and objectives.

With the help of Blackboard, the learning management system used throughout my institution, I formed online learning groups based on students' research topics. Students could choose their research topics from a list of five (food, higher education, the American Dream, gender, and technology) coordinating with our use of the *They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* composition textbook edited by Graff, Birkenstein, and Durst. For the first semester of the research, I shared optional "Guiding Questions" (See Appendix B) to provide suggestions if they were struggling to find what to discuss, a common problem with open-ended journal assignments. I decided to stop this practice when I realized that some students were parroting the questions given, rather than more deeply connecting with the reflective practice. They shared their process journals with each other every Sunday night through Blackboard group file uploads, and then discussed them in class for twenty to twenty-five minutes each Wednesday. In these in-class groups, students were able to trouble-shoot problems, compare and share strategies, and even help each other with tracking down useful resources since, whenever possible, the students in the groups were all researching the same topic. These in-class meetings were also an important time for me to check in with students once a week, and I circulated through the groups listening in and answering questions.

This social component of the process journal was essential for the practice, as it created a more authentic audience and helped to build a community of learners. Many students mentioned in their journals that being able to see others struggling with the same things they were was both comforting and motivating, and that they were able to try out some of the strategies others used to conduct and organize their research and writing processes. At the end of each of these open-discussion sections, I passed around short reflection questions (See Appendix III) that aimed at

particular issues I wanted students to reflect on or share with me regarding their processes that otherwise may not have been covered in the process journals.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCESS JOURNALS AND WRITER OUTCOMES

As the previous chapter aimed to establish, pedagogical research supports the practice of reflective writing in composition classrooms. Both theory on writing development and empirical research of reflective writing practices support the benefits of adopting such practices within FYC contexts. Within my classroom, the benefits to writer outcomes clustered around five main areas; time management and planning, metacognition and metacommunication, transfer of knowledge and skills, demystifying the writing process, and the development of multimodal literacy.

These benefits directly connect to the iceberg metaphor described in the introduction. Most writers are unaware of their writing process until someone brings it into question, until someone points below the water's surface and suggests they go exploring. This questioning itself brings about awareness, but what the process journals aim to do is to capture the geography of what lies beneath. In this way, the writer becomes an aquatic cartographer. The maps they produce help to make their own process clear to themselves; by sharing these maps with others they contribute shape and language to a previously muted conversation about process.

In order to find themes among students' journal responses, I used a coding method to make sense of the data. In the first semester of using the process journals I coded all twenty-two student-responses for each of the six process journals. From that data set, these themes (the benefits of the practice) emerged. In later semesters I compared the initial themes with additional coding and found that the initial themes continued to represent the main findings across semesters. The excerpts shared here from students' journal responses were chosen on their ability to make sense out of context and to communicate or represent clearly the theme being explored.

## Time Management and Planning

As I came to learn through the process journals, many of the writers in my classroom had never before worked on such an extensive research paper. They were nervous about the word-count (1,750-2,500), the number of sources that had to be included (eight to twelve), and the amount of time they had to work on it (six weeks). The process journals, in this way, gave them a way to check in with themselves each week, monitor the progress they had made, and anticipate the goals for the upcoming week. As I saw the practice unfold in the classroom, I realized that it helped transfer what writers perceived as a linear set of draft deadlines into a more circular perception of the assignment timeline. The writers worked on their journals each weekend and met with each other mid-week. Writers frequently commented in class that these regular dates and meetings helped them to track the passage of time, and consider how much they still needed to accomplish versus the time they had left. By writing about the previous week's progress and anticipating the coming week's goals, writers were able to better identify and solve the obstacles that got in their way. The following examples from student journals show the ways in which students used the process journals to control their time-management and planning for the target assignment.

Each week writers came back to the same question and the same reflective space with their peers: "What did I do this week and where am I planning to go?" As Zander notes in his process journal for week four<sup>1</sup>:

The hardest part of this paper has been keeping my ideas together over an extending period of time. With work and 4 other classes it has been hard to keep all my ideas fresh

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<sup>1</sup> I have kept writers' original writing; I have not corrected or edited the journal responses. Students' names have been changed to protect anonymity.

in my mind. I think I need to start writing them down as they come to me instead of forgetting about them and having to spend more time when I do sit down and work on the paper.

Here Zander identifies something he has been struggling with throughout the first four weeks (organizing his ideas), and then identifies a way in which he might be able to overcome his obstacle (keeping better research notes). In the week two process journal, Sam considers how she might retry an organizational strategy she didn't care much for in the past:

I think that my way of writing this paper is going to have to follow outlines or notecards. As much as I hate notecards in my old research papers, I think I might have to give them another chance. It would be an easy way to organize my information and remember what came from what source.

Sam considers the benefits and disadvantages of the notecard strategy as it fits this particular assignment, and determines a way she might be able to make the strategy her own, rather than something a former teacher told her to do.

For the final (sixth) process journal, I asked writers to reflect on the role the process journal played in the development and completion of their research paper. Many writers chose to reflect on how the process journal helped them overcome the obstacles and better manage their time over the six-week period. For example, Brett considers how the act of writing about his process helped him see his process in a new way:

Sometimes by just writing out the steps I'm taking in conducting my research I would catch myself doing [research] in not the most effective way. I would have little epiphanies that would help me realize a better way to conduct my research and an overall better way to go about writing my paper.

Sam echoes this experience in her final process journal, and notes that the journals helped to calm a busy mind:

I think that these journals have helped me to stay on top of the tasks that I needed to complete throughout the week. Writing through all of my thoughts about the paper helped me to sort everything out that was swirling around in my head.

Caden also notes the ways in which the process journals helped him to more effectively plan and strategize his writing and researching process, especially in identifying struggles and working to overcome them:

Not only did looking at other classmate's journals help me, but when I was writing my own, I was able to actually look at my paper and say "alright, so this is what I'm struggling with, and this is what I do to try to fix it". It forces you to really look at the whole process of building a research paper, and everything that it entails.

As the students' responses show, the process journals created a sense of circularity in what might normally be conceived as a linear process. This circularity itself prompted reflection, as students found themselves consistently positioned between past experiences and future anticipations.

#### Metacognition and Metacommunication

Writing About Writing stresses the importance of metacognition and metacommunication in the formulation of texts. In their process journals, writers demonstrated both of these skills.

The following examples from student journals show the ways in which students used the process journals to practice metacognition and metacommunication, either with and for themselves or for the larger audience of research group members and instructor. Reagan uses both metacognition and metacommunication as she considers how she might incorporate comments from the peer reviews on draft one in her fourth process journal:

The only thing that I have realized from my peers comments is that sometimes [the paper] doesn't flow very well. I go from paragraph to paragraph with little to no transitioning. I really need to work on synthesis and including transitions from my paragraphs. This includes explaining how each paragraph connects to each other. Not only do they need to connect to each other, but they also need to support my thesis.

By considering what her peers have said about her paper, she identifies the ways in which she can address these issues in her paper. She goes into detail about how to achieve that, and sets goals for what her revisions might look like in the end. This demonstrates metacognition in the sense that she thinks about her thoughts and planning on the topic, and metacommunication because she discusses what her peers have said as they relate to her plans for her paper, and how her paper will be more effective for a reader with these changes.

In process journal three, Malcolm considers similar issues in his paper, as he needs to specify the focus to better meet the objectives of the assignment:

I've changed [the organization of my first body paragraph] due to [the reorganization] allowing me to incorporate more from my sources and talk more about technologie's effects on humans in a broader scope, from reading, writing, though processes and human interaction in general. This expansion of my topic from a precise effect to a broader effect I feel will allow me to write a stronger and more in depth paper, than I would be able to with such a specific effect.

Here Malcolm is metacognitive about the ways in which these changes will affect his writing, and also about how to go about achieving these changes. In this sense, it is also an example of metacommunication, because he writes about how he might more effectively meet both the needs of the assignment and the needs of his audience.

In their final process journals, many writers reflected on how the journals helped them to think about their papers in new ways. Reagan says of the process journal assignment as a whole:

It really made me think about what I was doing while writing this paper...I feel as though these process journals did a good job of making the writer think about what they are actually doing...By giving hard evidence of your struggles to find research to fine tuning your paper to be the best that it can be is very cool. Overall, the process journals are a great tool in being self aware of the writing process.

She identified the ways in which the process journals made her think about her thinking in planning the paper (metacognition) and how it helped her to become more self-aware of the writing process as it unfolded. Theo considered the role that the weekly Guiding Questions had on his ability to push his metacognition:

As i said before, i feel like the guiding questions were very helpful because they made me think more in depth to my paper and to think more about the strategies that i should use both in the writing and the research of my paper.

Overall, the process journals helped writers to metacognitively reflect on their papers, and helped them process the additional forms of communication (peer discussion and peer review) that were additional aspects of their development of the target assignment.

### Transfer of Knowledge and Skills

In addition to the process journals' positive effects on writers' planning, time management, and metacognition and metacommunication, the process journals revealed that writers were actively engaged in tri-directional transfer of knowledge and skills. They transferred knowledge between each other, from one class to another, and anticipated transfer of learned skills to future classes and contexts. Student-to- student transfer was the most prominent, aided

by some of the Guiding Questions I asked each Friday. For example, in his second process journal, Toby set out his plan for the week, and credits this plan to his research group mate Sam:

So thats how my friday class period went heres how i plan on continuing my work via list form (credit to Sam)

- a. I need to continue the search for sources
- b. Further examine said sources
- c. Maybe outline how i plan to layout my paper And finally start A3D1”

Come monday class period i shall probably steal some more of Sam’s tips/ideas since they were very helpful, and its allowed!

On the first day of group discussion about his process journal, Toby was both surprised and elated when I encouraged them to “steal” strategies and tactics from each other. Because we were in the process of learning citations, Toby would always cite who had given him the idea or strategy in his process journal. In his final process journal he reflects:

Honestly these journals were actually helpful for this projcet. It helped me stay organized and scheduled. like i actually benefited from seeing everyone else methods.

Actually being able to take others stretegies helped immensely.

In this way, the process journals helped Toby add a few strategies to his toolkit for research and writing that, ideally, he will take with him to future classes and contexts. Reagan, in her third process journal, explicitly transferred knowledge from one of her other classes to the objectives of the assignment in my class. She explains:

I learned in my communications class that you really have to be audience centered [when composing], and I feel as though this connects pretty well to this research paper. I need to

be audience centered in the way that I present the information to the reader, and make them believe what I am writing, and make them interested in what I am saying.

Here she effectively takes something she knows from another context (her communication class) and transfers it to this assignment. By having the time to reflect on her writing, she was able to consider and connect her knowledge from a completely different context.

Finally, a couple of writers explicitly considered how the skills they gained through the process journals might transfer into future composing spaces. Neil very simply states about the skills he learned in the process journal assignment:

This will not only help me for this research but also for the rest of my research papers throughout college.

Krista agrees, and even notes that she plans on using her process journal to support writing and research assignments in the future:

The process journals have helped A LOT going through this process and I probably will continue to do process journals when I have long assignments and kind of a crunched due date.

Tri-directional transfer was an important and useful result of the process journals for many writers in my class. They were able to learn from each other, to bring in outside knowledge and apply it, and to consider how these skills might be applied in future writing and research contexts. As was highlighted in the introduction, transfer is an important consideration in the justification of any classroom writing practice and is becoming a more pressing issue as WAC/WID approaches expand the complexity of what they set out to do (Thaiss and McLeod 297). When students enter WAC/WID classrooms, they may not know the rhetorical practices and preferences of that field, but they should be able to utilize the skills built and developed in

introductory writing classes to more effectively digest and apply instruction about these new and often specific rhetorical expectations within the discipline. This relates back to Shipka's notion of the "toolkit" approach to writing instruction; for students to be and feel successful in WAC/WID contexts, they need a developed toolkit. It might be that successful transition to WAC/WID contexts is less about the mastery of a specific skill set, but rather the development of critical ways of thinking and approaching the writing task. The process journals aim to build this vision of Shipka's toolkit, moving students away from a skills-and-drills approach to writing competency. While more research is needed to understand the long-term impact of this practice, the process journals in my classroom showed evidence of important within-class transfer as well as plans for future use.

### Demystifying the Writing Process

The righting of misconceptions and the demystification of the writing process are two major goals of the WAW pedagogical approach (Downs and Wardle 552). Theorists within WAW believe that a major obstacle to writing skill development is that many people have societally influenced misconceptions about writing and writers, such as the "tortured genius" who sits down and produces a masterpiece in one sitting. WAW believes that to help writers develop more realistic conceptions of writing, instructors need to make writing processes more public and work to correct misconceptions. By correcting these misconceptions and seeing others write, writers will be more prepared for the multitude of writing contexts and motivations that will arise in academic, professional, and personal writing. Because students shared the process journals in research groups, they could see how other writers struggled with and overcame obstacles in the process and also enabled them to learn new strategies from each other that might

help to organize the research and writing processes. For example, in his fourth process journal Toby reflects on how the peer review process impacted his understanding of his own writing:

reading all the other first drafts, i realized my first draft was a mess.

everyone elses blended their research well. they used sources and their own statements blended well. where as i kind of summarized the sources and how they were supportive of each other. i know for my draft two i am going to have to change a whole lot.

Here he has been given access to realistic model texts and was able to compare those to his own.

Within the supportive process journal group (the same groups that provided him with peer feedback on his draft) he is able to safely consider the ways in which his writing doesn't quite match the effective qualities of others, and he is able to consider how he might change that in the drafts to come. In ways similar to Toby, Catherine considers how the peer review and support from her peers helped her to see her writing processes and products in a new way:

[Peer review] helped me to see things I could improve on by seeing what I'm struggling with and how I could improve what I'm doing wrong. Also it was helpful to see what my peers were doing in their essays and how I could use their ideas and better my paper....It gave me not only a time to reflect but the chance to hear the issues my peers were having as well. It made more comfortable knowing the problems I faced so did my peers.

Through the process journals, writers in my class were exposed to a wide variety of writing processes and products, and in this exposure they were able to reconsider their own identities as writers and thinkers. By seeing others struggle and succeed, or even sometimes struggle and fail, they were able to realize that successful writing does not happen because a "gifted" writer does it. They were also able to see that when instructors engage in the messiness of the writing process with them, students develop the courage to take more risks and fail with purpose, since

they are always coming back to the writing task and revising previous work. Students come to see that successful writing happens because writers are aware of the processes that work for them, and unafraid to admit when they are struggling so that they might be better able adjust their strategies.

Process journals clearly have the potential to guide emerging writers through new and challenging writing contexts. They can help writers to plan and manage their time over a longer-term assignment, support writers' metacommunication and metacognition, and enable transfer among writers and from/to other contexts, and demystify the writing process, clarifying its misconceptions.

#### Development of Multimodal Literacy

As was explained in the methodology section, writers were free to choose or alternate between alphabetic or multimodal journals. By multimodal I primarily meant video or voice recordings that would be uploaded by file or link to the Blackboard groups, although I encouraged writers to speak with me if they had any other ideas (jokingly demonstrating how an interpretive dance might meet the goals of the process journal—they weren't buying it). Some writers exclusively did multimodal journals, while others switched between the two as was convenient for them. Out of the 150 students who worked on the process journals over four semesters, 15 did at least one multimodal journal. From those, I received some very creative multimodal responses. Ironically, given the alphabetic requirement of a master's thesis at my institution, it is not possible to effectively share these multimodal responses in their original form, but I can provide descriptions. For example, one student used a pre-loaded Mac filter on her camera that made her look like a hologram, and then she held a light saber throughout her discussion of that week's progress. While this creative twist may seem inconsequential to the

goals of the assignment itself, she mentioned to me in a conference later the next week that being able to be creative with the journals made her excited about doing them. Her choice to hold a light saber made her feel more powerful, and more confident about taking on the challenges to come. This type of expression would have been difficult to reach in a traditional alphabetic journal.

Other writers chose the multimodal journal for reasons of comfort and efficiency. The idea of having to write *something else* in addition to all of the writing they were already doing was a sad prospect, so many writers got into their pajamas and talked to the camera like it was a close friend or roommate. This type of honesty and vulnerability helped to create intimacy and cohesion between research groups, as they no longer felt they were in competition with each other or like they had to be self-assured and confident throughout the process.

One particularly humorous multimodal response came from a student who made video recordings each week. As the semester progresses, the viewer can see the stress accumulate—along with his beard. And then by week six—all of the hair on his face and head was gone, his voice light and excited once again. The paper deadline had passed, he had finished, and he lived to tell the tale. With his permission, I show this series of videos to my classes now to show the fun one can have with the multimodal option, and to realistically prepare them for the rigor of the coming weeks.

## Challenges

No practice is without obstacles and challenges, and there are certain aspects of this practice that need to be taken into account when adapting it to new instructional contexts in terms of writer outcomes. First, many writers ended up feeling like the weekly journals added

too much writing to an already writing-heavy assignment. For example, in his final process journal, Niles laments:

The process journal was initially helpful in the research process but now I feel like it just takes away from time I could be writing my paper. I have a lot to do tomorrow including revising my paper and much more for other classes.

Caden offers a solution in his final process journal to what he saw as the same problem:

...at times it does feel like busy work, as I can tell by the amount of people who forget to turn them in on time, me being one of them. Maybe if there wasn't one to turn in every week, it might be a little easier. Like maybe a beginning, middle, and end journal. I think that is more manageable.

Instructors should consider the optimal times to ask for process journals, and understand that perhaps each week is too often for writers to produce meaningful and helpful content in addition to the demands of the target assignment. As Caden suggests, a beginning, middle, and end check-in might help to keep writers' attention and enable them to make the journals more useful for their research and writing purposes. The in-class weekly check-ins could still be used, and the short guiding questions responses could help to keep the instructor in the loop between process journals.

Second, the "requirements" of the journal must meet writers' capabilities, given the demands of the target assignment. There were few requirements to the process journal assignment, but word-count was one of them. I suggested 300-500 words, but now realize this may be too many. Theo and Zander agree with me:

I didnt like that the process journals were so long. I found it hard some weeks to reach the 300 word minimum. I felt that with this minimum 300 words rule i was sometimes adding "fluff" to my journal. -Theo

These Process Journals worked for me at the beginning of the assignment, while I was organizing my ideas and gathering all of my sources. Towards the end I found that I did not have much to put towards my process journals and I was just typing the random thoughts that were coming to my head. -Zander

Having seen the way that writers compose in their process journals, I realize now that process journals can be effective even at 100-200 words. If students are focused in what they want to get out of the reflection, then a shorter reflection is actually more effective. However, some students write to learn and in this case, a longer reflection journal in which they write to learn more about their process and current challenges would be more effective. As such, it is recommended that the instructor provide feedback based on the effectiveness of the reflection rather than the length of the response. Provide a broad range for students to follow (100-500 words) and then see what they do with it.

Additionally, the journals can be effective as bullet-point lists or outlines, further degrading the importance of word count. Encouraging writers to experiment with different styles and approaches and to see this as a truly open writing assignment may keep them engaged and keep it from feeling like the ever dreaded busy-work. Framing the process journals, and reflective writing in general, as a type of formative assessment can help the instructor to better conceptualize the purpose of such work in the syllabus, and connecting this to instructional transparency can help students also get on board with the project. This issue is taken up in full in the following chapter.

Finally, I was surprised by how many writers chose the alphabetic route (almost 90%), given that a common piece of feedback on the journal assignment was “it was just another thing to write—I’m so tired of writing!” A major contributor to this turned out to be fear or confusion regarding how to use technology. I took for granted that my writers are part of what we call the “tech” generation; I thought that if I had an idea that utilized technology they would be able to match or surpass my savvy without any explicit instruction. This was not the case.

Providing writers with mini-lessons on the technological options for process journal responses is crucial. I always feel pressed for time in my 50-minute sections, so when it came to deciding to teach content or technology, I chose content. In the future, I hope to draw on the skills and abilities of key writers in my classroom to demonstrate how to use various video and voice recording options, to build excitement and confidence in writers who are less technologically-inclined. Some institutions have recognized the disjuncture between the promise of technology-driven curricular initiatives and the reality of undertrained staff and students. Checking to see what kinds of institutional resources are available to you is another potential solution. Education and training for technology can be found in diverse places throughout the university: the library, writing centers, technology seminars hosted by teaching and learning seminars. For those teaching in contexts with more face-to-face contact hours, teaching the technology and exploring the resources would certainly get more writers to experiment with the multimodal option. For those stuck in my boat, make technological instruction a priority whether you do it yourself or enlist the help of other writers in the class or connect students to institutional resources. Dedicating one class period to this will help writers gain the multimodal skills that will allow for more free participation and experimentation, and will offer them a new arena in which to explore their unique voice and creative potential.

## CHAPTER IV

### PROCESS JOURNALS AS FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT – IMPROVING INSTRUCTION AND LEARNING

As Chapter 3 showed, reflective writing, specifically in the form of process journals, helps writers in a number of ways. Additionally, process journals are unique in the sense that they help instructors to modify and improve instruction over the course of the target assignment and from one semester to the next. In this way we can understand process journals as a type of formative assessment. Assessment, in general, seeks to understand what a learner has gained from instruction. Many forms of assessment are summative; that is, they seek to “evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional unit by comparing it against some standard or benchmark” (Heritage *Formative Assessment* 18). Exams and final papers are examples of this kind of assessment. Formative assessment, on the other hand, is “any information, process, or activity” that helps students learn by providing feedback that continues the development of a knowledge or skill set rather than the evaluation of a final product, such as a paper or an exam (Irons 7-8). It’s not that papers and exams are always summative assessment, it’s more about how the instructor uses the activity in the learning process and the type of feedback given in response to the activity.

The current literature on formative assessment highlights the benefits of such assessment for learners. Students are more likely to be open about concerns in formative assessment and will also be more likely to enter dialogue with classmates and teachers to express these concerns (Black; Black and Wiliam; Gibbs). Heritage shows that formative assessment helps to build metacognitive skills (2013; 14). Knight argues that because the stakes in formative assessment are lower, students are more willing to take risks leading to a decrease in fear of learning and the development of a growth-mindset toward new and difficult tasks (cited in Irons, 17). The use of

careful formative assessment in the composition classroom can help writers in all of these directions: utilizing dialogue, building metacognitive skills, and taking risks in challenging tasks. It must be noted that these benefits align closely with the main pedagogical aims of Writing About Writing (WAW), and this relationship will be fully discussed toward the end of this chapter.

Leahy et al. establish the best practices for formative assessment in five parts. First, formative assessment should clarify learning intentions and criteria for success in the class. Second, it should help to engineer discussion, activities, and tasks that bring forward evidence of learning. Third, it should provide feedback that moves the learning closer to the target of instruction. Fourth, it should activate learners as instructional resources for one another. Finally, it should activate learners as owners of their own learning. The process journals as executed in my FYC classroom clearly demonstrate all of these best practices. The process journal helps students to better understand the intention of the target assignment by asking them to slow down and consider what steps they took or planned to take. By connecting the process journal to group discussion and weekly check-ins, students were able to touch base with each other regarding their understanding of the target assignment. Feedback for the process journals was given on a case-by-case basis. Some students received written feedback in the form of an email to check in about overcoming an obstacle. Others received feedback during weekly, informal chats with me in each research group. Others still received in person, direct feedback through optional conferences with me. The process journals certainly made students resources for each other and for themselves, through the very fact that the journals build on the social aspects of the writing process.

Drawbacks can exist in the implementation of formative assessment. For example, unless it is made clear by the instructor, students may not be aware that the assessment is formative, or that it provides a “helpful signal” about their learning progress (Irons 19). Without this, students may not be as likely to experience the benefits of formative assessment, such as taking risks or asking questions. Additionally, formative assessment is best implemented with the inclusion of immediate feedback to the learner. Irons explains that feedback on formative assessment should be easy to understand, valued, help to close the gap in understanding, show quality, be timely, and provide the opportunity for dialogue (44). While these criteria are also true for feedback on summative assessment, the context in which this feedback occurs in the learning process is key for formative assessment. Because formative assessment is meant to bridge the many small gaps that occur in the learning process before a larger summative assessment is made, things like the timeliness and opportunity for dialogue take on additional importance (Boyle and Charles 108-109). If an instructor were to provide feedback too late, or in a way that made students feel they were being more formally assessed, the benefits of the formative assessment approach could break down. Summative assessment should also ideally occur in a timely manner and provide feedback that continues the learner’s critical thinking on the topic, but often with the way that syllabi are organized the end of a summative assessment phase marks the end of the content category; the ability for the student to continue to improve on that particular task is unlikely. Formative assessment, on the other hand, focuses on the ability for multiple attempts, improvement, and the purposeful development of strategies in the learning process.

This issue of feedback is a constant struggle for overworked instructors. Especially for composition instructors, adding new sources of grading or feedback increases an already daunting amount of feedback-focused work. As such, instructors should carefully consider how

to provide feedback without overload. Discussing the process journals during conferences is one way to avoid the burden of providing written feedback, but not all students can make conferences regularly enough for this to be effective. Additionally, instructors with four or more sections of FYC know that it is impossible to meet with even a majority of their students in conferences regularly. In this case, target-conferencing may be a good approach—reaching out to students who appear to need more substantial feedback on their process journals (or, namely, on the writing processes documented within). Either way, navigating the appropriate course of feedback is an important component of making the most of process journals as formative assessment.

In my class, I did provide a “grade” for the process journal, but this grade was not based on the quality of the response. It was essentially a complete or incomplete grade that impacted a small portion of their class participation score (20% of their overall course grade). Especially in my first semester of teaching at the college level, I did not believe I would have the perceived authority or ethos in the classroom to motivate students to do ungraded work. Additionally, for the purposes of this study, receiving enough responses to analyze was paramount. I explained from the first day I introduced the journals that while there were suggestions on the assignment sheet about form and length and what might be covered, that these were essentially theirs to work with how they saw fit and that as long as the journal was complete and submitted in time for group discussion, they would get full credit for the attempt. The point in the grade book, however, never stood in as my feedback on the assignment and most of my efforts went toward finding ways to provide quality feedback for students in a timely manner, as the best practices for formative assessment suggest. I found that the participation points did motivate students to submit the journals, and that my qualitative feedback, in most cases, pushed them to continue to use the task to their ultimate benefit.

As was discussed in Chapter 3, one of the potential downfalls of assignments that are either ungraded or graded based on completion rather than quality is that students sometimes see them as busy work or are otherwise unmotivated to work on something that will not have a direct impact on their grade in the class. I found two key strategies to address this issue: scaffolding and connecting to “real world” writing processes. Instructional scaffolding, a notion founded by learning psychologist L.S. Vygotsky in the late 1970s, breaks down larger tasks and explicitly discusses the skills developed in each stage while working toward the larger, completed product. Beed, Hawkins, and Roller note that effective scaffolding takes place in a collaborative context, engages students at a level just above their independent abilities (what Vygotsky calls the “zone of proximal development”), slowly withdraws the instructional support over time, and that the goal of scaffolding is for the learner to “internalize the knowledge and to become independent” (649). This is exactly what the process journals set out to do; by providing a space for writers to actively interrogate their writing processes and by breaking down or making explicit the expansive possibilities of constructing or following an individual process, the writer becomes more aware of how their writing process impacts their written products. As the student responses from Chapter 2 detail, this explicit scaffolded instruction helps them to become more independent and more intentional when approaching new or more complex writing tasks in the future.

One of the strategies I used in my ENG 101 class to support the scaffolding of the process journals as formative assessment was modeling my own and other real-world writing processes. Some semesters I explored with them troubles and successes I was having in seminar papers for my graduate classes. The last two semesters of the class, I narrated the story of my thesis coming together. This was doubly explicit modeling, as I was able to speak about my

writing process and anecdotally about what I was learning from their work on the process journals. By speaking from experiences outside of their proximal development (about papers and projects more complex than what they currently faced) they were able to see that no writer fully perfects the craft or practice and that the writing process is always shifting given new tasks. In addition to my own process, I talked about how top academic writers meet in groups, keep writing logs and journals, and dedicate daily writing time (Goodson; Silvia). Connecting their tasks at hand (both the scaffolded process journal and the major research paper it was helping them get to) to “real world” writers’ strategies and struggles helped the writers in my class to reframe the purpose of considering their processes and the importance of the toolkit they were building through required writing classes like FYC.

#### Pedagogical Benefits of Process Journals

My research found that process journals provide multiple benefits in their role as formative assessment, including: enabling quick adjustment of instruction to address obstacles and or misunderstandings and helping to identify what parts of the transition to academic writing students are having the most difficulty with.

##### *Instructional Adjustment*

A major function of the process journal was making visible what otherwise would have gone unseen or unheard in the rushed and frantic contexts of composition classrooms. Many of the things that students wrote or spoke about in their process journals were things they would have been thinking about or doing anyway, but having them write and share with each other and with me gave me (and the students) a much better view into their identities as writers, their concerns regarding the assignment, and the places where they were experiencing frustration and

confusion. This is not to say that the process journal *made* these things come about, but rather that they enabled us all to view them out in the open and with a reflective and critical eye. For example, a major struggle for many of my students in the first few weeks of the assignment was learning how to use the various resources at the library. We spent two class periods in the library in the days after we began working on the assignment; one day in a research seminar with the English department's bibliographer, the other in a research workshop, where students actively researched as I worked with them to solve problems and brainstorm better strategies. Many students reflected on these days in their process journals, along with the continuing struggles they had in finding and incorporating source material. For example in his second process journal, Neil discusses his frustration with Smart Search, our library's research database:

I used both Google Scholar, and Smart Search to find my sources. At first I was very frustrated with Smart Search. It took me a while to learn how to use it effectively. The first two articles I went to look up the link took me to some page other than the article. Although I was eventually able to find the article, it was a frustrating maze. After a little bit of experimenting though I came to find out that Smart Search really isn't that bad and became very convenient and helpful.

By seeing the ways in which Smart Search proved problematic for Neil in the beginning before he was able to find a way out of that problem, I was able to ask him to share with the class how he managed to make the system more user-friendly. Jamie also had her fair share of frustration in using the university's library research resources, which she describes in her second process journal:

My Experience of looking through [our] library website was confusing. All of the different ways to search for things and the different search types was hard to keep track

of, but once I figured out how to search for specific things like subject, date, and credibility, it became much easier.

By seeing that multiple students were struggling with the library's resources and online databases, I was able to add a short demonstration in class on how to better utilize the resources and navigate the homepage. I used Jamie's real experience as my example, and we worked through the issues as a class and she shared the insights she gained in the process. Theo mentioned in his second process journal that he stopped using SmartSearch altogether and opted for Google and Google Scholar, both of which he was more familiar with:

I had trouble looking for sources using...smart search. A lot of the journals had links to broken threads or the article that would open was not the article I tried opening. I don't know why it was doing this, I've never had that problem before. I did a lot of of my research of using google.

By understanding his experiences, I will be better able to help students see the relationships between Google Scholar and the library's resources, and even help them reverse the process, using Google's search engine in coordination with the school's more scholarly resources. Without the process journals I may have picked up on utilizing resources as being an issue in the class, but I would not have known exactly what the issues were or how students taught themselves how to get past those issues.

In their process journals, students also posed questions or issues to their peers and to me about the intended content of the assignment, the assignment expectations, and the "right" way to complete it. For example, in his first process journal Toby reflects on the purposes of the assignment and how he is meant to go about achieving those.

I really [am] curious on what determines what makes a research paper better, and what is

the final goal of the paper. Like i know persuasive papers are supposed to persuade, and reflective papers are supposed to reflect on experiences. So is like a research papers goal to be able to Inform on said topic?

His question is one that brings into light issues of genre, context, motivations, and audience. All of these are important aspects of an assignment, and things that students should be able to define and apply within the development of their research and preliminary writing. I was able to bring these questions into class as we reviewed again the assignment sheet a week after we initially discussed it. Toby's questions were answered, and other students gained clarity on aspects of the paper they did not know were unclear to them.

### *Supporting the Bridge from High School to College*

A final positive effect of the process journals was the way in which the journals helped me to close the gaps between their high school experiences in research and writing and the ones they would have over the next four years in college. Some students compared how this paper stacked up to others they had written in high school or college, others expressed great concern over never having written a paper like this before. For example, Bret, a first semester sophomore, considered how he had never done a paper like this, even though he had been in college for two semesters.

This assignment has been by far the most research I have ever done in my writing career. I have never used so many, diverse sources. When I would do research papers in the past I would usually lock in on one or two sources. These sources would usually be two of the first I find I would just stick with the source even if the info was not the best. From now on I will have to be more particular in the sources I choose and not settle for the first thing I find.

In his classes in high school and college thus far, sources were not a major part of any assignment. He found this to be difficult and frustrating for this paper, but also realized that as he continued through college he would need to build these skills. Realizing that even some of the sophomores in my class may not have more experience than some of the first years helped me to put my assumptions of experience and ability aside, and focus on the needs of each individual student as presented in the process journals. Especially at such a large university, where there are thousands of courses offered each semester and there is not a clear trajectory for incoming students about what they should take when, the credit-hour or class distinction may give the instructor a false sense of security regarding the preparedness of students with more credit hours at the college level. The process journals as formative assessment help to chip away at these guiding assumptions, helping the instructor to respond to the student themselves rather than the contexts and situations that surround them.

While first-semester students come to FYC with varied experience of writing in high school, they are all in the same boat that this is likely their first major paper for a college-level class. Neil, a first-semester first year student, speaks for the other first year students when he writes:

For most of us this is the first research paper we are writing in college. Although there is a lot of help available, it is nerve-racking because we are no longer having “having our hands held” like we would have in high school.

Transitioning to a new context that lacks the support he received in high school was a source of anxiety for Neil. Sam, another first year, has a similar problem, although she was excited to be in a context with more freedom and less “handholding.” She explains that:

It has been almost a year since I have written a research paper. And I hated it last time because we were not even allowed to pick the topic. I hated note cards and I hated that my teachers kept forcing me to write the paper “their way”. It just never worked. So that’s where I am starting with this paper.

Many other students in the class echoed these concerns and anxieties about this large source-driven research paper. While it may seem that the process journal would be most helpful to underprepared, unconfident, or inexperienced writers, I found that the process journal could impact the way all writers viewed their approaches. Some of my most confident writers came to find they were using research and writing strategies handed down to them (by parents, teachers, siblings, friends), but had never stopped to consider other ways to approach the writing task. By finding the places they got stuck in the process, and revising those “sticky strategies” they were able to fine-tune an already functioning system. This also helped me to move past the “prepared/unprepared” or “confident/unconfident” dichotomies to more holistic views of my students and their developing writing processes. A nuanced understanding of each student allowed me to be more responsive to their needs and concerns in class, in comments on their drafts, and in conferences. By hearing their concerns and specifically the ways in which these concerns manifested themselves in their writing processes and attitudes, I was better able to empathize with them and provide more effective support when needed. Additionally, by hearing concerns from students who had already been in college for a semester or more, I was able to let go of my assumptions about students’ confidence and preparedness for researched, academic writing.

## Formative Assessment and Writing About Writing

As Chapter 1 detailed, Writing About Writing (WAW) is one of the major pedagogical approaches currently shaping the field of writing studies. WAW pedagogical approaches and the best practices of formative assessment complement each other. WAW calls for a focus on process over product, supports that writing processes are paralogic (not codifiable) and considers both the social and cognitive contexts and motivations for writing. As this chapter has shown, the use of formative assessment allows instructors to open up these pre-cognitive spaces for writers, allowing for experimentation and failure in the classroom. The “pre-cognitive” space refers to the underside of the writing process iceberg referenced in the introduction—the unconscious or pre-conscious doings of a writer mid-process. WAW also seeks to provide more realistic preparation for the diverse contexts in which students will write in college. In Wardle and Downs’ *Writing About Writing: A College Reader*, a textbook for courses that uses a WAW pedagogy, the scaffolding used in formative assessment is a focus of the structure and content of the book (ix). The content focuses on writers’ writing about their writing, seminal articles in writing studies, as well as the threshold concepts of writing studies and the common misconceptions about writing and the writing process. As my discussions of my own writing process helped students to understand the challenges of writers at all levels of experience, these readings too could help writers to see their own process from a new angle. There is an entire chapter dedicated to the writing process (“Processes: How Are Texts Composed”) as well as a critical chapter on Multimodal Approaches (“Multimodal Composing: What Counts As Writing”). While I did not use the Wardle and Downs textbook in my class, it certainly influenced the way I approached the execution of the process journals and how I might make them most effective for my own instruction and for my students’ learning.

In addition to creating new pedagogical approaches and toolkits, the WAW approach seeks to reframe what FYC courses aim to do. Downs and Wardle want both instructors or FYC and administrators who oversee these spaces to view FYC as an entry point to a much broader process of communication (here, writing) skill-building (“Looking into” 280). They argue that it does not serve students for FYC instructors to attempt to prepare them for “universal academic discourse” because this discourse does not exist; rather academic discourse looks distinctly different across fields. As such, the aims of FYC should move toward topics like reframing misconceptions of writing, interrogating the writing process, understanding how rhetoric shapes how communicative acts are received in different spaces. These new framings of what it means to teach and train writers in higher education often evade traditional genre-based teaching, where students learn “the forms” of the academy and then head on to major courses to reproduce them. Formative assessment provides interesting and unique places for students to experiment with the threshold concepts of writing studies and test their misconceptions while the programmatic structure of FYC programs across the country revise and revisit their core approaches. WAW certainly supports that critical and reflective learning about writing can happen in all conversations and tasks (whether big or small) in the FYC classroom, and that the building of these skills is more important than the evaluation of their products.

The six process journals helped both students and me as an instructor in the development and completion of a long, source-driven researched paper. By sharing their journals with each other and with me, they were better able to plan their course, think about their process, and gain ideas and strategies from others. As an instructor I was able to be flexible in my teaching in relation to student need, and was better able to keep track of the progress and attitudes of students throughout the six weeks of the project. While process journals may not *initiate*

strategies such as metacognition, they do bring those strategies to light and turn them in to products that can be understood and acted on. This, in the end, is the unique benefit of process journals in composition and writing intensive classrooms.

## CHAPTER V

### FYC AS DISCOURSE COMMUNITY – REFLECTIVE WRITING AND EPISTEMOLOGY

For many writers, First Year Composition (FYC) is one of the hardest classes in the first few semesters of college. Writers in FYC classrooms often report feeling as if they've been misguided or held back in their high school writing instruction because what is taught and expected in college is quite different and, on the whole, much more challenging. This is understandable; they have yet to grasp the epistemological foundations and justifications of academic writing and have yet to find a home in one or more of the disciplines. In these first semesters joining the academic “conversation” can be deafening, disorienting, and disheartening.

Considering the ways that writing studies as a field can help writers to understand and apply composition epistemology, or the *ways* we know about the learning and development of writing, might help students to place future, unfamiliar writing situations in an established framework of knowing. An important part of this move toward epistemological understanding is the conceptual development of FYC as a discourse community unto itself. This chapter establishes, through a qualitative genre analysis of process journals, that the discourse that occurs in FYC and other introductory composition classes meets the requirements to be classified as a discourse community. By understanding FYC as a discourse community, instructors and students can begin to tap-into the unique ways of knowing and learning that happen in these spaces across institutions.

A major finding of this analysis is that by looking at the process journal as a particular type of the larger genre of reflective writing, and seeing this genre as existing within a discourse community, we can see the FYC space in a new light. As the discussions of WAW and Multimodality have highlighted throughout this project, the foundational purposes of FYC are

under constant revision as scholars make new theoretical and pedagogical insights. Many scholars question whether the forms that FYC take on campuses across the country accurately reflect the knowledge established by the field of writing studies (Adler-Kassner and Wardle 5). This chapter argues that by reframing the FYC classroom (both individually and as a unit of learning across campuses) we can better describe the work we do and find new avenues for inquiry.

As the discussion of reflective writing in Chapter 2 established, the pedagogical leaning of the current research makes it unsurprising that not much literature currently exists that explores reflective writing as a genre in itself. It mostly focuses on the pedagogical applications and benefits of such writing, and how reflective writing can stretch critical thinking skills for application in novel contexts (Bolton; Boud; Charon and Nellie; Ciscero; Connor-Greene; Donohoe; Dymont; Greiman and Covington; Hiemstra; Horing; Ibarreta and McLeod; Leahy; Mills; Mio and Barker-Hackett; Pianko; Reece; Yancey). However, considering the clear definitions of what accounts for reflection and the copious body of critical literature within writing studies on the topic, such research is not only possible, but also necessary to expand the conversation and establish new routes for pedagogy and practice.

### Process Journal as Genre

Throughout this analysis, I argue that these journals, examples of reflective writing based on both Dewey and Yancey's definitions, constitute a distinct genre. According to Swales, a genre:

1. Is a class of communicative events (45)
2. Has a "shared set of communicative purposes" (46)

3. Has variance in prototypically (whether definitional or based on a family resemblance model) (49)
4. Has a rationale that “establishes constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their content, positioning, and form” (52)
5. Has “nomenclature” stemming from the discourse community the genre is in (54)

Process journals fit within these criteria. First, the journals represent a coherent class of communicative events; uploading the journals each week attaches the communicative event to a spatiotemporal point, a point that all students in the class experience together although from varied locations. Second, even though they are open ended, the process journals have clear purposes as set out by the assignment guidelines and, in many instances, the students’ own sense of rhetorical *kairos* and exigence. Third, the students’ responses show some variance, but within an overall realm of prototypicality. In most cases it would be easy for a student or instructor to blindly identify a process journal from another type of reflective writing. A process journal is unlike an expressivist journal, in which students connect with their unique experiences and voices, or a research journal (see Wardle and Downs), in which collects actual research notes from sources as well as personal notes about where the writer is in the process. The process journal guides students to write more specifically about their writing process, the decisions they make therein, and the changes they might make going forward. In this way, it would be easy to distinguish a process journal from other types of journal writing found in FYC classrooms, thus establishing Swales qualification of prototypicality. Fourth, the process journals share common rationality based not only on the assignment guidelines but also on the communication of group members in and outside of class. In fact, as the data presented in the methods section suggests, this rationality may make a communal shift given the influence of communicational

idiosyncrasies within the research group. Finally, the nomenclature for the genre stems from the parameters set in class discussion, in the assignment guidelines, and through communication between research group members. For these reason, the process journal fits the definition of genre set forth by Swales and can be linguistically analyzed as such.

#### FYC: A Discourse Community Unto Itself

Central to Swales' conceptualization of genre is that genres are created, disseminated, and transformed by discourse communities (9). Swales outlines the following criteria for discourse communities:

1. Has a broadly agreed set of common public goals (24)
2. Has mechanisms of intercommunication among its members (25)
3. Uses these mechanisms to provide information and feedback (25)
4. Has and uses one or more genres to further its common public goals (26)
5. Has acquired/developed and utilizes some specific lexis (26)
6. Has a "threshold level of members" with a "suitable degree of relevant content and discursal expertise" (27)

Given the reliance on genre for the existence of a discourse community, and vice versa, it is pertinent here to slow and consider the ways in which the FYC classroom, and the fundamental communicative experiences shared between FYC classrooms throughout higher education, might be viewed as its own discourse community.

Past research on discourse communities in higher education has focused on initiating college students both into the broad epistemological discourse community of "The Academy" and into the various discourse communities (specific academic disciplines) of which the academy is composed (Bizzell 192; Kent 439). College classrooms are conceived as "learning

communities” based on membership, influence, fulfillment of individual needs, and shared events and connections (McMillan and Chavis 9). While this conceptualization does accurately identify the most foundational aspects of an inclusive and productive learning environment, its lack of nuance in terms of communicative goals, shared languages and practices, and levels of expertise limits what can be said about the genres that come out of FYC classrooms.

This is where, I argue, the concept of a discourse community can more fully describe the intricacies of FYC spaces, while also allowing new avenues for scholarship regarding theory and pedagogy in FYC and its related spaces such as Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in Discipline (WID) (see Chapter 2 for a full discussion of these relationships).

Additionally, under the corporate model of the university, the explicit goal of higher education is to prepare students to enter specific professions (Chomsky). However, as WAW contends, it is not productive for courses like FYC to attempt to prepare all students for the professions they will eventually enter. Additionally, there is no “universal” professional world that we can prepare students for, just as there is no “universal academic discourse” that we can train first-year students in (Downs and Wardle “Writing” 556). When we add to this argument that most first-year students do not know what profession they will ultimately pursue, and that career change is standard for their generation, the professional preparation task of the corporate university model is untenable in spaces like FYC.

Rather, viewing FYC as a discourse community per Swales’ qualifications, students are encouraged to exist and engage more meaningfully in those spaces, resisting the temptation to view it as merely a “required” course or as a course that is meant to prepare them in some holistic fashion for their future majors or careers. By teaching to this model of a discourse community, not only are FYC instructors able to open places for authentic participation for

students, but also FYC scholars and practitioners adopt new frames and language to describe and shape the work they do. This analysis of the process journals as but one genre that shapes the discourse community of FYC aims to show what we can learn from such investigation and why this conceptual reframing is valuable to the work we do.

As has been stated, the focus of current scholarship on fostering learning communities or preparing students for discourse communities outside of the immediate classroom limits what can be said about FYC spaces as discourse communities. This gap provides space for research that considers the ways in which a classroom itself might be beneficially defined as a discourse community. In this analysis of the generic elements of process journals, I argue that for classrooms where the discussion and production of genre occurs at both literal levels (i.e. What defines a/this genre?) and meta levels (i.e. What does a/this genre *do*? For who? Why?), the classification of classroom discourse community provides the tools for a deeper analysis and develops a more nuanced picture of the generic relations between texts, authors, and audiences in FYC classrooms. If distinct genres can be identified in FYC contexts, of which the reflective writing meets such qualifications, then there is room to establish FYC classrooms as unique discourse communities with all the purposes, goals, communication, and expertise integral to those communities.

## Methods

### *Phase One*

Phase One of this qualitative genre analysis of process journals included both individual and peer analysis of textual data. My classmates in a graduate level linguistic genre analysis course provided the peer analysis. I randomly selected eight samples of the Week 3 process

journals from my Fall 2015 (one section) and Spring 2016 (two sections) of FYC. I uploaded the raw text files, without students' names, to a shared Google Drive folder for the class to access. My classmates provided analysis of the data using the Swales Move/Step analysis and aspects of the Martin and Rose framework for linguistic discourse analysis. A week after uploading the samples, I lead a seminar workshop in our graduate course where my classmates shared their major findings with each other and with me, after which I presented my initial analysis.

The consistency of the samples proved problematic for the analysis, as it appeared that nearly all of the samples followed a prompt. While I did not recall sharing a prompt with students, in the days following the seminar leadership I found that in the first semester of the course I in fact did. In anticipation of this finding the professor of the course shared some ways in which a genre analysis of prompted writing might produce unique and interesting results, specifically regarding students' adoption of course terminology and demonstration of key concept learning. As I considered these options, I realized I did not have the time or ability to frame the analysis in this way for this particular iteration of the project. I would have needed to track students' work as the semester progressed, but at that point in the Fall 2016 semester, I wouldn't have that opportunity until Spring 2017. This type of analysis would have also required a more complete data set; some of the process journal LMS uploads seemed to have vanished into the ether, perhaps from students transferring to another institution or manually removing the material.

### *Phase Two*

Phase Two set out to address the issues that arose from Phase One of data collection and analysis. As I had just finished the process journal assignment with my Fall 2016 students (2 sections, N= 43) at the beginning of Phase Two, my memory was more clear about what

decisions I had made in the classroom regarding sharing guiding or framing questions and what I had discussed on the Fridays before process journals were due. I gave students a set of guiding questions for the first journal (out of four), so I decided to remove these from the potential data set. I also wanted the ability to track individual students' writing and approaches over the course of the process journals; I therefore needed to analyze research groups where all students had completed journals two, three, and four. I chose one group of four students from each FYC section that met such criteria, resulting in a data set of twenty-four journal responses from eight students.

My analysis utilized two key approaches to linguistic genre analysis; Swales Move/Step approach and Martin and Rose's frame for analyzing periodicity in discourse. The Swales Move/Step approach was important because I wanted to see if students' writing tended to utilize the same general moves even though there were no specific guidelines for the process journal aside from the assignment sheet (Appendix A). My theory was that if students did tend to use the same moves, it might reflect an underlying influence of the research group discourse community on the purposes, rationale, and prototypicality of the genre (Swales 46-52). Martin and Rose's frame for analyzing periodicity would help explore, linguistically, how students packaged "waves of information" in which the discourse "crests to form a regular pattern" (189). By understanding how students construe the information flow of a series of experiences that happened only to them for a wider but known audience, we might begin to uncover the significance of providing an authentic audience in the practice of reflection.

#### *Swales Move/Step and FYC Process Journals*

In my analysis, I found that the process journals in my FYC class followed five broad moves with some required and optional steps included within them. The five major moves I

identified through this analysis are: progress stating, source explaining, process describing, challenging identifying, and goal setting. The moves did not occur in any particular order, but have been listed here in the order that makes most logical sense for a reader lacking full context. Not all moves occurred in all journals, although an instance of each move occurred in at least one of all three journal samples for each student. This finding suggests that there may be communicative influence among group members, as particular moves were used in earlier journals by some and later journals by others.

While the Moves/Steps presented below are representative of my holistic data analysis, I have provided examples of the moves and steps from just one of the research groups. I felt this would help the reader to better conceptualize the moves made by various writers at specific points during the research process. The students' writing is original; I have not altered to correct for mechanical errors. I have, however, used brackets where a more specific word or phrase is needed for complete understanding out of context.

Figure 1: Move/Step Analysis of FYC Process Journals

Move	Step(s)
Move 1: Progress Stating	n/a
Move 2: Source Explaining	1. Background/context on source(s) (required)
Move 3: Process Describing	n/a
Move 4: Challenging Identifying	1. Describing the challenge (required) 2. Considering a possible/enacted solution (optional)
Move 5: Goal Setting	1. Describing concrete/immediate goals 2. Describing broad/future goals

### Move 1: Progress Stating

- Now that I have better sources that I'm familiar with, it will be a lot easier to synthesize. (Tamara PJ4)
- I am finally for sure decided on the topic I will write about which is college. (Alison PJ2)
- I have found the eight sources and have finished them and wrote them in this order. (Bailey PJ4)

### Move 2: Source Explaining

#### *Step 1(required): Background/context on sources*

- I found some interesting sources for my newspaper articles from the web. (Francis PJ2)
- I have 8 sources. The names of my essays out of the book *They Say I Say* are "Should Everyone Go to College" by Stephanie Owen and Isabel Sawhill, "The New Liberal Arts" by Sanford J. Ungar, "Two Years Are Better than Four" by Liz Addison, and "College Prepares People for Life" by Freeman Hrabowski. The book I will be using is "The Real College Debt Crisis" by William Elliot with MeLinda K. Lewis. (Alison PJ2)

#### *Step 2 (optional): Evaluation of source in relation to assignment goals*

- I found my book source on Friday in the library; it seemed useful at the time, but now I am not sure it will be a good source to use. (Francis PJ2)
- [This book] has many good reviews from credible sources so I believe it is a good resource for me to use for my research paper. (Alison PJ2)

### Move 3: Process Describing

- After making a game plan on how to tackle my research project in class on Wednesday, I felt pretty confident about my progress on the paper, until I started writing. My plan was to have my draft one completed by Sunday night and to have time to edit it on Monday. As I began working on my paper on Friday I encountered some difficulties. I realized that I had not taken the time to read my sources thoroughly, to have a good understanding of what I want to include in my paper. So, I spend my Saturday looking at my sources and making side notes as I went along. (Francis PJ3)
- As a writer, I believe that I have changed the way I approach writing with this assignment. While working on this assignment, I have realized that creating outlines is the best way for me to get a paper done, and figure out what I want to talk about. Before, I would just start forming paragraphs, and that wasn't really going anywhere, but now creating the outline really helps me understand what I want to talk about. (Tamara PJ4)

## Move 4: Challenge Identifying

### *Step 1 (required): Describing the Challenge*

- From the beginning I was not very familiar with my sources, so writing the first draft was very difficult for me. (Tamara PJ3)
- One thing that I am struggling with is finding a good peer-reviewed article. I used the libraries' smart search engine to look for my article, but I didn't find anything about my topic. (Francis PJ2)
- I am still intimidated by the fact that there has to be eight sources I only used one or two sources I am kind of scared I will forget to include a source because I was trying to get everything in my paper. (Bailey PJ2)
- Also, I had a difficult time with correctly citing the sources I used in my paragraph. (Francis PJ 3)
- I am having a little bit of a hard time finding a book as an outside source. I think that I found one that I like, but I still want to keep looking to see if I can find something else. (Tamara PJ2)

### *Step 2 (optional): Considering a Possible/Enacted Solution*

- I am still intimidated by the fact that there has to be eight sources I only used one or two sources I am kind of scared I will forget to include a source because I was trying to get everything in my paper. (Bailey PJ2)
- Once I find all my sources for my annotated bibliography part two, I think it will make the writing process go more smoothly. (Francis PJ2)
- ...going over [citations] in class on Friday and being able to ask questions was very helpful to me. It made me realize I had to go back and fix a lot of my in-text citations. (Francis PJ 4)
- I finally discovered why I was having such a hard time finding sources, and it was because I was looking in the wrong place. Before, I was looking in a database through the library that was very specific, instead of smart search, which is more general. Once I started using smart search, I was able to find a lot more sources that really helped my paper. (Tamara PJ4)

## Move 5: Goal Setting (at least one of the following moves is required for this step)

### *Step 1: Describing Immediate/Concrete Goals*

- I am still looking for the two newspaper articles, the one book, and the one peer review journal. (Bailey PJ2)
- Later this week I am planning on going back to the library to look for more sources that will help me with finishing my paper. (Francis PJ3)
- I think I will most likely go and find more sources to add to my paper to make it more full of information and cold hard facts. (Alison PJ4)

## *Step 2: Describing Future/Broad Goals*

- For draft two I will have to find additional sources to include in my paper. (Francis PJ3)
- One thing that I am going to have to do is really reevaluate and become familiar with my sources. I will probably have to go to the library and find different source that fit more with what I want to talk about. (Tamara PJ3)
- I want to have a final paper like the one that was shown to us in class. I want to have a good enough amount of synthesis but also explanation for my audience. By the end of the project I hope to have a well developed paper full of valuable information. (Alison PJ3)

## Martin and Rose's Periodicity and FYC Process Journals

Martin and Rose draw on Pike's metaphor of the wave to visualize and explain the way that discourse flows so that it can be understood (188). They explain: "discourse creates expectations by flagging forward and consolidates them by summarizing back" (ibid 189). This kind of linguistic analysis of discourse relies on the concept of Theme, or the "peak prominence at the beginning of the clause" (ibid 190). There is a higher level of Theme called the hyperTheme, functioning similarly to a topic sentence. Here "theme gives us an orientation to what is to come: our frame of reference as it were. Beyond this, the hyperTheme is predictive, it establishes expectations about how the text will unfold"(ibid 191). We can see this same relationship between the theme and hyperTheme very clearly in the process journals, showing a student's inherent awareness of the need to provide a clear flow of information, or periodicity, for the disconnected reader.

For this part of the analysis, I have chosen examples from the second research group process journal data set. This will not only give the reader a broader view of the data under analysis, but will also help to topically separate the Swales Move/Step analysis from the focus of the Martin and Rose framework. The hyperTheme will be presented in bold, with the Theme blocked in regular lettering below it (as is the standard set by Martin and Rose 194).

Amy, PJ2

I am still confused on how I'm going to **make my paper flow with all of my sources.**

I still need two sources from the library and I plan on going tomorrow to find them. Also I'm not positive that I will use the sources that I picked out to write my annotated bibliography

For my main topic, I am **heading towards the health aspect.**

I want to talk about how addictive junk food is and how it is causing obesity, diabetes, and the benefits of becoming a vegetarian. Friday I found a book in the library called, "Always the Fat Kid." It discusses the effects of junk food on children, particularly childhood obesity. When I brought it back to my dorm, my roommates were laughing at the title. The truth is that being the fat kid should not be a laughing matter. This is one of the reasons I decided to research food because it can be beneficial and harmful. In fact, I think more people should research food.

Josh, PJ4

This week I have been mainly focusing on **finding more information for my research paper...**

such as more information on certain diets that I can use to help people. I have currently found one new diet that I can use for my paper and that would be the vegetarian diet which will explain the effects of being on that diet instead of the western diet. For the final part of the paper I will probably find one more diet that I can use for the paper, so that I can have three good diets that people would be able to use and then one diet that is not good that people will know that they would want to stay away from that diet.

Mary PJ2

This week I am working on **figuring out my book source.**

So far I have two picked out from the library the first is *Food Law for Public Law*, and the second is *Food consumers, and the Food Industry*, both are good books and on the topics I want to incorporate into my paper I just cant decide which one is better or if I should just include them both.

The part of the paper that I'm am **finding hardest to work on is the sources...**

not finding them but reading and summarizing them for the annotated bib, and having those assignments due is good for me because it makes me work on the paper understand it more and know exactly what all I want to include from the articles, books, and the *They Say I Say* Article's into my paper instead of at the last minute looking for sources quickly reading them though and randomly pulling things from them to sort of put a paper together.

Martin PJ 4

For A2D2 I am going to look for **another main topic** and get the **word count up.**

I don't have an idea at the top of my head but I am going to re-read through my sources to see if I can find another one. Currently my main topics are fast food companies hold the blame for obesity, no self-control is the cause of obesity, and snacking is the cause of obesity. Maybe a main topic could be another thing I find the sources have in common for what causes obesity? Maybe like accessibility

and affordability of fast food? But that is kind of along the lines of it being fast food company's faults.

Throughout journal samples in both research groups, the students showed an innate use of the hyperTheme/Theme as a way to guide a reader through their experience from the week before. As anecdotal evidence, since the Phase 1 data set is not formally used in this final analysis, it seems as if students writing from their own set of purposes and ideas have a stronger command of periodicity in presenting their experience. More than a few of my peer researchers explained that the student's writing in the journals from Phase One, where they were provided guiding questions, made it difficult to understand what actually happened during the week under reflection because they jumped from guided question to guided question without a larger consideration of the journal as a whole, implied connections between the questions, or the contextual needs of a disconnected reader. While this was the case for an analyst looking at the data outside of the classroom context, communicating to this audience is not the rhetorical purpose of the process journals. As long as the learners and instructor in the class can draw meaning from the embedded context of the classroom and assignment, and as long as the writer is able to better connect with their process, then the journals are achieving—pedagogically—what they set out to do.

## Results

This analysis provided useful information on two fronts: pedagogical and generic. From a pedagogical point of view, it must be considered how the results from the Move/Step analysis match with the definitions of reflections from Dewey and Yancey. As was introduced in Chapter 2, Dewey defines reflection as (1) a meaning making process (2) a rigorous way of thinking (3) an act occurring within community and (4) a set of implicit or explicit attitudes (Rodgers 845).

Yancey defines it within the specific context of writing as (1) projection: “goal setting, revisiting, and refining” (2) retrospection: “the articulation of what learning has taken place, as embodied in various texts as well as processes used by the writer” and (3) revision: “text revising in light of retrospection” (Yancey 6-7).

Within Dewey’s definition, the move-step analysis shows that students meet many of these goals in their writing, even without direct instruction, intervention, or training from the instructor. Students make meaning of their experience of writing the research paper throughout the five steps. They show rigorous thinking when identifying a challenge (Move 4, Step 1) and posing a possible solution (Move 4, Step 2). They also show rigorous, even metacognitive, thinking in Move 3, which they interrogate their own writing processes. The process journals occur within a community, and the initial data of this project proposes that this community, in fact, impacts the form of the journals over time as students learn from each other and adopt moves. Finally, the process journals reveal clear attitudes about the writer’s themselves, their attitudes toward the assignment, and their attitude toward writing in general. In this sense, even without detailed guidelines or scaffolding, the journals meet the basis of what Dewey had in mind for reflective practice.

Yancey’s definition includes projection, retrospection, and revision. We can see these three moves modeled throughout the process journal samples. In Move 5, Steps 1 and 2, students project their immediate and future goals for the project. In Moves 1, 3, and 4 students look back on what they have accomplished and reframe or redesign plans for future approaches (Move 5) based on what went well and what didn’t. Revision, however, is a bit less clear. Move 4, Step 2 seems to be the closest in terms of Yancey’s conceptualization of revision, as students identify a problem and then describe an enacted solution or plan a future one.

A second major question the introduction posed, the one related to the generic qualifications of the process journal, was if viewing the FYC classroom as a discourse community unto itself helps to reveal a more nuanced view of the communication among writers in that space. The Swales analysis of the process journals suggests that, yes, there is distinct benefit to viewing a composition classroom as its own discourse community. As the process journals show, there is generic similarity even in the absence of strict guidelines or genre formats (Swales 26). In fact, the generic similarity appears to increase as students communicate together in research groups. The goals of the group are clear, if basic: to make it through FYC and build skills for higher-level academic writing (ibid 24). Iterations of these goals can be seen throughout the common moves of the process journal. Next, mechanisms for communication, with the aid of technology, can merge spatiotemporal locations, connecting students in and outside of the classroom (ibid 25).

The research groups, the process journals, and the related in-class discussion time provide additional mechanisms for information and feedback between members of the community (Swales 25). While the genres for this discourse community are determined in varying degree of specificity by national organizations, institutional curricular language, and the instructor's syllabus, the meta-discourse about writing, genre, and rhetoric throughout the course is a unique conversation that takes places in these spaces alone, binding distant and diverse groups of learners into one coherent discourse community. Connected to this is the unique lexis, which is both broad and specific, from considering threshold concepts of the established field (see Adler-Kassner and Wardle 2016) to coded shorthand for assignments and drafts, as can be seen throughout the process journals (ibid 26). Finally, students' abilities and openness in

investigating their own writing processes in Step 3 is evidence engagement in this larger discourse and shared goal of FYC (ibid 26).

The final point of contention might be that of expertise. While Swales calls for members who poses expertise within the discourse community, Etienne Wenger, the key scholar for the related concept of “communities of practice,” assumes that there are both experts and novices, and the experts help to train novices in the practices of the community. Based on the aggregate results of this entire project, I argue that the reality of “expertise” within FYC spaces is much more complex than either of these conceptualizations allow. An FYC instructor practicing with the most current research in the field would be wary of presenting themselves “expert” of writing or of the writing process. Certainly, if they are researching and practicing members of the field, with years of experience in the classroom and publications in the field’s journals, there is expertise to be had in terms of knowing what the field knows and building on that knowledge. But, increasingly, as we see in WAW for example, writing studies highlights the complexity and individuality of an individual’s writing practice. While the instructor may know that within the field they have achieved some level of expertise, they’ll recognize as well the limits of that expertise in a room full of writers’ with different processes, approaches, and practices. The scholar-practitioner, then, becomes expert in the ability to support diverse writers’ in shared space, rather than expert at defining what writing is or how it is done. This connects back to the discussion of the process/post-process movements and the foundations of WAW: if the writing process is paralogic, so too is the process to teach writing.

In this way, the more we come to understand about writing, the more we see that writing is about exploration and experimentation; a hierarchical divide between instructor and learner does not help either to fully embody this approach to the writing process. In this sense, both

instructor and learner in FYC spaces are equal parts expert and novice. The question of discursal expertise within the FYC discourse community does not pertain to its perfection but rather its development. Process journals as a genre show the slow, slogging progression toward a new understanding of what writing is, what is required of the writer, and how this might be transferred to new tasks and contexts. However, the value of this endeavor does not require justification by a space awaiting them outside the course; it is found in the very relations formed among writers finding new voice.

This research suggests that we should not only view individual FYC classrooms as discourse communities, but that these discrete spaces also tap into a larger discourse community—namely, FYC as a writing studies space. As writing studies continues to grow it demands, as we can see in the aims and objectives of WAW, that FYC more directly reflect the epistemology, discourse, and practice being defined by research in writing studies. Writing studies, traditionally housed within the larger department of English, is beginning, in some institutions, to migrate to its own department or college. This shift is slowly changing what writing studies programs and FYC courses look like, and is unifying the discourse between lower-level required writing courses (like FYC) and the higher-level courses of undergraduate and graduate programs in writing studies. This shift also allows for new research into programmatic and classroom practices that more holistically represent the emerging aims of writing studies; this research has the potential to change instructional and classroom practices in departments where this shift from English has not been made. As such, seeing FYC as a discourse community unto itself that is directly connected to this disciplinary discourse of writing studies helps to shape what can be asked and said of FYC spaces both individually and

across campuses, in addition to better defining its relationship(s) to the shifting and developing disciplinary discourse of writing studies more broadly.

## Discussion

### *Limitations and Future Research: Scope and Specificity*

The scope of the current project is easily highlighted as its major limitation. While the limited results of this study show the potential benefits of merging qualitative pedagogical and linguistic genre research, this research would have been greatly improved with a larger sample set from a more diverse group of writers. This is particularly important for supporting the argument being made about classifying FYC spaces as a discourse community. Reflective writing samples from FYC students across the country could help to build credence to this notion. Samples of different kinds of FYC writing, too, would help to build this larger concept.

A more specific set of research questions would also yield a broader understanding of students' uses of the reflective writing space. For example, omitted from this study due to time and resource constraint was Martin and Rose's analytic lens of appraisal. Understanding emotional expression as it connects to reflective writing could potentially encourage or dissuade its use in future practice. Students include emotion in journals because of generic familiarity; yet emotion may be a way for students to hide from the hard work of engaged reflection. On the other hand, the use of emotion may help students to overcome the barriers (such as anxiety, dialect variation, family educational history, etc.) that cause them to feel unwelcome or out of place in the FYC discourse community. Significantly more research is needed to fully understand the impact reflective practice can have on students' acclimation to and development in the FYC discourse community.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION – RECLAIMING THE ICEBERG

Over the past two years, my students and I have taken many trips beneath the surface of our writing processes. My students have realized new and important things about what it means to “be a writer,” namely that so much more happens in the process than what the reader finally experiences. And, of course, that every step of the processes is crucial to the shaping of a final product; without the mass of ice beneath the surface, there’d be nothing to push the tip above.

As a scholar, I have come to realize that the portion of the iceberg beneath the surface is where most scholarly conversations within writing studies are taking place. We’ve taken up permanent residence underwater, coming up only to check on iceberg tips so that we might make even better sense of the processes that unfold beneath. Writing About Writing (WAW) and multimodal approaches to writing studies live and breathe beneath the surface, growing ever closer to understanding what it means to write—what happens to our thoughts as they turn into words that turn in to meaning for others.

When I first started on this project, I imagined it fulfilling a seminar requirement of an article-length original research project and that was about it. As is evidenced in the preceding chapters, it grew and expanded in unexpected ways as I found that answers led to more questions, which ultimately reframed my original understandings of the practice before me. As a nascent scholar in writing studies, this project has taught me more than anything the expanse of questions that can be asked within the field, and the painstaking difficulty of finding cohesion and patterns among such diversity and celebrated difference in my classroom. I’ve fully grasped that teaching writing, and the writing process, will never look the same in each class, or for students individually. Scholarship in writing studies allows us to describe and predict some

patterns in composition spaces, as this project has aimed to do, but in doing so always points back to the wide variety of approaches, experiences, and processes.

As a young scholar and writer, the project has also shaped my own understandings of the writing process. Like some of my students, I too turned in papers with fingers crossed, totally unknowing if what I had written was “good” or not. Luckily (I considered it luck each time) I rarely received a grade lower than an “A” on a piece of writing throughout secondary school. While teachers and classmates gave me the label of a “good writer,” internally I felt like a fraud. I was product-focused and grade-dependent, two conditions that do not allow for meaningful connection with the writing process. Because of this, even though I was deemed a “good writer,” my writing world was much like what I described in the introduction, full of anxiety, doubt, and self-loathing. In coming to the field of writing studies, I started to re-frame my relationship with writing in ways that allowed me to think bigger, take more risks, and be okay with failure. Writing is scary when viewed as a single attempt to “do it right,” but it loses its teeth when the spaces we write in allow for experimentation, confusion, frustration, and grit.

As I hope this project shows, I aim to create that space for the writers in my classroom so that they might be able to leave behind fear, perfectionism, and imposter syndromes for a more authentic connection with their thoughts, their readers, and their unique abilities to communicate. The process journals were one, tiny, way for me to begin to craft that space. As I continue through my career as a writing studies scholar and practitioner I will seek out and study these spaces beneath the surface—for my students, for myself, for my field.

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### PROCESS JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

A process journal charts the process/progress of any research or writing project and helps to overcome obstacles along the way. The purpose of a process journal is to think more intentionally about the methods you use in the process of researching and writing. There are lots of ways to go about the research and writing process, and no one way is the right way. There is only the *right for you* way. However, figuring out what is right for you can take some time.

At this stage in your academic career, you probably do things a particular way because you were told in high school to do them that way or because you've found something that works well enough and have stuck with it. *Now it is time to consider what works and why, what doesn't and how you can change it.* This, ultimately, is the purpose of a process journal.

#### **The Journal**

It's up to you in terms of what you want your process journal to be. The following are my three recommendations:

- An informal written (typed) journal between 300 and 500 words that is a mix of prose and bullet-point writing
- An informal video between 3 and 5 minutes long
- An informal voice recording between 3 and 5 minutes long

If you have another idea for how to approach the process journal, please discuss your plan with me and we'll see if it works.

#### **Due Dates**

Here are due dates for process journals:

*(due to Process Journal Group file exchange on Bb)*

- Sunday Oct 11 by 11:59pm
- Sunday Oct 18 by 11:59pm
- Sunday Oct 25 by 11:59pm
- Sunday Nov 1 by 11:59pm
- Sunday Nov 8 by 11:59pm
- Sunday Nov 15 by 11:59pm

#### **Peer Support**

Here are the peer conference days for process journal sharing and review:

*(we will spend approx. 25 minutes of class in process journal support groups)*

- Wednesday Oct 14
- Wednesday Oct 21
- Wednesday Oct 28
- Wednesday Nov 4
- Wednesday Nov 11
- Wednesday Nov 18

### **Weekly Guidelines**

Every Friday before journals are due, I will provide some guiding questions you may want to consider, based on what we've covered in class and the progress you should have made on your research/writing for this assignment. You can use these questions to shape your journal, or ignore them completely. Like everything else for this assignment, it's up to you.

### **Grading**

Although this is an open assignment in terms of what the product looks like, since it is a *process* journal the process is not an option. Process journals and support group session will be worth 10 points (each) of your class-points score.

## APPENDIX B

### PROCESS JOURNAL GUIDING QUESTIONS

#### **Process Journal 1**

What will be your first steps in the research process?

How can you apply what you learned from the research librarian today? What questions do you still have?

What 4+ articles will you focus on in the *TSIS* chapter you've chosen? How/why did you pick those four (or more) articles?

What concerns, nervousness, or anxiety do you have this week about your research? Have you encountered any significant obstacles and, if so, what are they? How can your peers help?

#### **Process Journal 2**

What was your experience looking for sources through the library website? What strategies worked for you and what do you think you can improve for your next research paper?

We have ten days before draft 1 is due. Make a plan, but make it backwards! Start from Monday evening, and think of everything you have to have done by the 11:59pm submission deadline. Then, think of where you are now and how much work you have to get done in the next ten days. Working backward from Monday 10/26 today, make daily goals of things that have to be done. Break up your work into ten parts, and map out a plan! Come back to that plan over the next week to see if you are on track (or slipping behind).

Talk a bit about how you go from reading resources to writing a paper. Do you use research notes? Outlines? Note cards? What process helps you to organize your ideas and synthesize your sources even before you 'put the first word on the page' (as the saying goes)?

#### **Process Journal 3**

How has this research process been similar or different than research you've done in the past? What is something you've done this time that has been more effective and you hope to continue doing in the future, for other classes?

What is more stressful for you, research or writing? Why? Consider some ways you might reduce that stress.

What are you most proud of so far in your draft 1? Or, what is something that has come out of the research/writing process that you couldn't have expected from the beginning? (like something you learned, a conclusion you reached, etc)

#### **Process Journal 4**

What, if any, additional research have you had to do this week to continue working on your draft? How did you determine what additional information/sources you needed?

What is something you learned from reviewing other students' draft 1? How can you apply that to your draft 2?

Overall, what has been the most challenging part of completing this assignment so far? Why is it challenging for you and what have you done to address the challenge?

#### **Process Journal 5**

This process journal could focus on what you need to do to get from draft 2 to draft 3, or what you learned from the comments I made on draft 2 in terms of things you are stilling working on in your writing, or it could consider anything else that is on your mind about this assignment as a whole or the research/writing process as a whole.

#### **Process Journal 6**

For this process journal please reflect on your experience of doing the process journal and how it helped (or didn't!) your research and writing. Discuss the things you liked and the things you didn't, and please be honest (but maybe not rude) about it. I am developing this as a practice I'd like to use again next semester, so the more honest you are in your feedback the better the assignment will be for students in semesters to come.

## APPENDIX C

### WEDNESDAY IN-CLASS GUIDING QUESTIONS

#### Week 1

1. What are some goals you have for the library on Friday?
2. What are goals you intend to accomplish before the next process journal?
3. What is a strategy one of your group members uses that you think is particularly effective?

#### Week 2

1. What are your day-by-day goals from now until Monday 10/26?
2. What have you added or changed in your research and writing strategies since last week? Why?

#### Week 3

1. Be honest, when did you *actually* start writing (in the sense of putting somewhat organized prose on a page, not research or planning writing)?
2. What do you hope to work on for draft 2? What things do you know you want to expand on or improve, and what are the steps you think you'll need to take to get there?
3. On a scale of 1-10 (1 being worse than any other paper ever and 10 being better than any other paper ever), what was your experience of researching and writing this assignment for the first draft?

#### Week 4

1. After turning in draft 2, what do you feel most confident about?
2. For draft 3, what is something you intend to continue working on? What do you need to accomplish that?
3. Name one way in which your process journal group has helped you during this assignment.

#### Week 5

1. In a short paragraph, explain what you've learned about your own research and writing process throughout the research paper assignment. How will you apply this to future classes and assignments?

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