WRITING

A Mosaic of New Perspectives

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EDITORS

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18 The Role of Affect in Students' Writing for School

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The act of writing potentially elicits strong emotions from high school students in both their school and personal writing. In this chapter, we focus on the role of affect in students' writing in school. Although the process of writing has been studied from many different angles, the literature has all but ignored how students feel about their own writing as they are in the act of composing. Using findings from a variety of studies employing protocol analysis, that is, transcripts of real-time audio recordings of students as they compose both expository and personal writing in English class, in this chapter we report on the thoughts and feelings of high school students as they wrote for school. Our chapter is limited in that our use of case study methodology narrows our scope to the experiences of the students who have volunteered for our studies; our focus on this research follows from the fact that few, if any, other researchers have looked at real-time writing and its affective dimension.

The following quotes illustrate the range of emotions we found across our studies of student writers' real-time composing (the student's unwritten thoughts are indicated by italicized text, and the thoughts that they wrote down or read from an assignment are indicated by standard-form text):

Okay, we are going to go ahead and start this [research] paper. This is going to be one damn good paper. I am just kidding. I don't even care. That is terrible. I always care, and I don't care. Shit.

Gail (Smagorinsky, Augustine, & O'Donnell-Allen, 2007)

[Within ten years] one quarter of our country's population will be over the age of 65. Write an essay describing social, economic, and health implications of this statement. *Oh, Jeez, that is deep! That is kind of heavy on my brain! [Within ten years!]! An essay! Wait a minute, you must be joking! I ain't going to write no essay. I need something to eat.* [pause] *OK, let's get back to this stupid essay ...* Write an essay describing social, economic, and health implications of this statement. Three-fourths of the rest of us will be under 65. *I don't want to do this.* Social, economic, and health implications ... The social, economic and health implications of our, of our country's—*oh, I hate this*—social [inaudible] of the population. *And I have got to study this. It is not making any sense. I hate this. I hate this.*

Clara (Smagorinsky et al., 2007)

I actually made a girl in my creative writing class cry when she read that [poem] and you know, it felt good. It was such a neat feeling to know that something I wrote, something that I just wrote down on paper made someone cry.

Doug (Smagorinsky, 1997)

The first two quotes are from a study of students producing formal writing for a British literature and psychology class in their senior years and illustrate their struggle to become engaged with both academic content and the conventions for academic genres. The third comes from a student describing the emotional response of a reader to his creative writing. We are not claiming that academic writing necessarily produces feelings of antipathy and that personal or creative writing always brings emotive tears, although our case studies have found these outcomes more likely than their opposites. Nor are we claiming that writing has greater potential than the production of texts in

art, mathematics, science, or other disciplines in producing emotional responses in students. What we are asserting, however, is that writing often includes an emotional dimension that has not been well documented in composition studies. We next review theory and research that help to inform our understanding of the affective dimension of writing and how attending to students' emotional responses to different writing tasks can help teachers provide more satisfying writing experiences for their students. In focusing on writing, we do not exclude other parts of the school curriculum for having emotional components for students; rather, we simply view writing as one area in which the role of emotional response has been underestimated and under-researched.

Writing researchers have mapped considerable terrain over the last 40 or so years. Their concerns have included which teaching methods are most effective (Hillocks, 1986), the competing political and pragmatic interests of students and faculty (Durst, 1999), the types of writing that students do in school (Applebee, 1981), the differential thinking that students engage in during writing tasks of different lengths and complexities (Newell, 1984), young people's online literacy lives and their construction of identity (Black, 2008; Black & Steinkuehler, 2009), the racial divide between many teachers and students in relation to students' writing (Kirkland, 2004, 2006), contrasts between urban students' in-school and out-of-school writing (Schultz, 2002), the writing experiences of GLBTQ youth in community settings (Blackburn, 2003), gender differences in college students' writing (Rubin & Greene, 1992), social class issues in students' acclimation to college writing expectations (Ashley, 2001), and many other topics (see, e.g., the contributors to Bazerman, 2007; MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2008; Smagorinsky, 2006).

With writing amenable to seemingly countless perspectives, it is somewhat surprising that the role of affect in writing has received relatively little attention. Brand (1987, 1989) raised the issue among writing researchers and pedagogues two decades ago, yet few followed up on her brief initiative. Since then the role of affect in writing has mainly been an interest of psychologists more than writing researchers, with such studies conducted as investigations of writing as a therapeutic and cathartic process (Pennebaker, 1997), as a potential benefit for mental and physical health (Lepore & Smyth, 2002), as a vehicle for improving working memory capacity (Klein & Boals, 2001), and other similar topics. Often using experimental designs, these investigations have been conducted on the role of writing in addressing what the researchers characterize as maladaptions and disorders in people's mental makeup and how writing might play a role in normalizing them. Writing has been characterized as a vehicle for "healing" (e.g., Anderson & MacCurdy, 2000; Singer & Singer, 2007); Ira Progoff's commercially successful workshops on the use of journals have been promoted as means for helping patients cope with illness, rehabilitating prison inmates, improving job training success, and developing the ministry (see, e.g., Progoff, 1980).

If writing researchers accept the premise that people's emotional response to their work affects how they go about it, then the field would benefit from greater attention to the role of emotion in writing. We next outline some considerations that could inform such a perspective, then review possible lines of inquiry that could be part of a research effort designed to reveal how affective experiences during composing contribute to writers' production of texts and the social action manifested through their writing.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Merriam-Webster's *11th Collegiate Dictionary and Thesaurus* (2003), affect refers to "the conscious subjective aspect of an emotion considered apart from bodily changes." This definition positions affect as a discrete experience, unrelated to the body it inhabits and world to which it responds. If one rejects the Cartesian bifurcation of mind and body, as those working from a cultural-historical perspective do (see, e.g., Cole, 1996), then this definition is problematic. Rather, one's emotions are related through tool-mediated action to both one's body (e.g., sentiments producing tears) and the setting of experience (e.g., being in a setting in which crying is or is not appropriate, such as viewing a poignant movie in a theater versus watching the same movie in a film class

where it will be dissected). This more distributed and integrated conception of affect or emotion is assumed in the following review, which takes as axiomatic that emotion is not a strictly personal or individual phenomenon but works in relation to the settings of activity and in conjunction with the body's functions. From this perspective it makes sense to begin with a broad consideration of setting and then work toward how individuals construct and act within the environments that provide the problems, routines, goals, expectations, social practices, and other cultural mediators that channel their performance.

EMOTION AND COGNITION IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Roth (2007) argues that psychological research typically marginalizes or omits attention to emotion when considering cognition. He references Vygotsky's (1986) observation that the separation of intellect and affect "is a major weakness of traditional psychology, since it makes the thought process appear as an autonomous flow of 'thoughts thinking themselves,' segregated from the fullness of life, from the personal needs and interests, the inclinations and impulses, of the thinker" (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 10; cited in Roth, 2007, p. 40). Vygotsky (1972) was interested in emotions from his earliest efforts to outline a comprehensive psychology (Yaroshevsky, 1989). Yet Roth finds that for the most part, people taking up Vygotsky's work have often treated thinking as *cold cognition* (a term that Roth credits to Wyatt et al., 1993); that is, thinking detached from any dialectic relation with emotion.

Late in his brief career, Vygotsky (1994) adapted the Russian term *perezhivanie* (*pâr*-uh-jhi-*von*-yuh) to account for the central role of affect in framing and interpreting human experience (Connery, 2007; Gonzalez-Rey, 2002; Jaques, Bocca, & Vicari, 2003; Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002; Robbins, 2004). He described it as follows:

> The emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] arising from any situation or from any aspect of [a child's] environment, determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on the child. Therefore, it is not any of the factors themselves (if taken without the reference of the child) which determines how they will influence the future course of his development, but the same factors refracted through the prism of the child's emotional experience. (p. 339)

A key implication of this notion is that people frame and interpret their experiences through both emotional and cognitive means working in tandem, which in turn are interdependent with the activity setting of new experiences. This meta-experience, that is, the experience of one's experiences, provides the means through which people render their socially and culturally situated activity into meaningful texts of events, not as individuals surrounded and affected by context but as people acting in conjunction with context through their employment of mediational tools. While some argue that the notion of *perezhivanie* refers primarily to the ways in which people process trauma—a notion that seems to correspond to the ways in which most who link writing to emotion are concerned with its healing potential—we see the term as appropriate for the ways in which people construct positive experiences of their experiences. (For additional perspectives on the role of emotion in human development, see Dalgleish & Powers, 1999; Diamond, 1998; Fuster, 2001; Lee, 2008; Nadel, Lane, & Ahern, 2000; Ortony, 1979; Quartz & Sejnowski, 2002.)

Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007; cf. Gray, Braver, & Raichle, 2002) argue that what appears to be strictly rational cognition—the *cold cognition* dismissed by Roth (2007)—is guided by "hidden emotional processes" (p. 5) that may play a dynamic role in the ways in which people learn. What guides this process is what they call an *emotional rudder*, which helps people "to manipulate situations and to mark those situations as positive or negative from an affective point of view" (p. 6). "[E]motional strategies" (p. 7) thus regulate the dispositions that people bring to tasks and experiences, not just those that involve trauma but those that could be framed in positive and proactive ways. Emotional strategies help to frame an affective approach to learning that suggests that tasks are manageable and learners themselves are capable. They thus serve as mediational tools through

which experience is interpreted and applied to new problems in ways that make success appear plausible and manageable. Immordino-Yang and Damasio argue that rational thought and logical reasoning "cannot be recruited appropriately and usefully in the real world without emotion. Emotions help to direct our reasoning into the sector of knowledge that is relevant to the current situation or problem" (pp. 7–8). Their assertions presume that one's mental makeup allows for a rudder to be available and to steer one in a positive direction; the literature on non-normative mental conditions such as mood disorders and Asperger's syndrome indicate that neuroatypicality can compromise people's ability to navigate their worlds in positive and proactive ways (see, e.g., Cook, 2004).

Immordino-Yang and Damasio (2007) term this interrelation between cognition and emotion *emotional thought.* And so, barring a neuroatypical makeup or traumatizing set of experiences that might interfere with normative processes, one's emotional rudder helps to provide the feeling of confidence that enables people to use knowledge appropriately, and the successful application of appropriate knowledge in turn contributes to the development of emotional thought and the feelings of competence that it engenders. Success thus begets success, producing a sense of efficacy in carrying out tasks. One's construction of experience thus produces frameworks for interpreting new experiences. Emotions, rather than being strictly spontaneous, may be managed strategically to interpret experiences in ways that dispose a learner to view a new situation as replete with potential for success, and thus to help bring about that success. A learner, then, is potentially less at the mercy of an environment and more able to manage how events are interpreted, if not entirely controlled, in that setting.

EMOTION AND EDUCATION

In prior work (Smagorinsky & O'Donnell-Allen, 1998, 2000) we have argued that students' engagement with any particular school class and its activities cannot be disconnected from their broader and more extended affective experiences with school. Rather, learners' relationships with texts and schoolwork must be viewed in terms of the vast web of experiences over time, both in and out of school, that they bring to particular classroom episodes and the feelings of affiliation with school that follow from these experiences. DeStigter (1998, 1999) has found that highly relevant individual classes can help motivate students whose disaffection with school is otherwise pervasive. We agree with his conclusion, yet argue that the degree to which students have developed a deeply rooted sense of connection with the institution of school itself will often set the stage for how they engage with any individual class or specific activity within a class.

One point to consider is Goodlad's (1984) observation that the overall sense of affect in schools is "flat" (p. 108). Within classrooms, neither students nor teachers are particularly enthusiastic or hostile; rather, the formal academic experience excites few emotions of any kind. It is a routine existence for many who inhabit it, one that stirs only the rare passion. While there are surely many exceptions to this general rule—the contributors to Freedman and colleagues (1999), for instance, describe their efforts to prod students to talk about relationships complicated by issues of race, with occasionally volatile results—the academic part of school for the most part is described as a place lacking in adventure or engagement with complex and controversial issues (Yero, 2002). On the whole, teachers do the bulk of the talking while students sit and are expected to listen, even if far too often they don't (Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1984; Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993).

A sense of connection with the school's purpose can help students relate to its mission and go along with its expectations and rewards, even when the work itself does not meet their personal needs (Eckert, 1989). Feeling connected with the school institution can thus help students to find purpose with its procedures, goals, social practices, and other dimensions of affiliation. Yet students cannot simply become a part of an institution solely because they wish to be. Luke (1996) argues that the extent to which school enables feelings of status, power, and access to social, educational, and cultural goods depends upon a range of sociological and cultural factors. Drawing on Bourdieu (1991), he argues that those who are on the margins of a social group—in the case of school, those

whose values determine the trajectory and accompanying social practices that constitute a successful person in that setting—may have a difficult time transforming academic knowledge into value, capital, and power. Communities of practice, including schools, may serve exclusive groups of people in ways that are discriminatory to outsiders and create barriers to access within the community's value and reward system. As a consequence, outsiders might have a difficult time being accepted by an established community of practice, not because of insufficient knowledge but because they are fundamentally devalued by the groups who control access to goods. Even emotional strategies, then, cannot necessarily overcome aspects of a setting that mitigate against feelings of success; knowledge only yields authority when enabled by a mutual feeling of inclusion.

The work of Eckert (1989) is instructive in this regard. She contrasted the feelings of affiliation between "jocks," those who are active within the school community and benefit from its rewards, and "burnouts," those students, largely from blue-collar backgrounds, who feel that the school community is someone else's realm and who therefore reject its role in their development toward a successful adulthood. Burnouts believe that school relies on a juvenile system of punishments and rewards and see little connection between their own lives and destinations and those assumed by the school community. They are more oriented toward the adult world of work, where they are valued in terms of their job performance and not on abstract assessments of knowledge.

Students from this background, finds Eckert (1989), feel disaffiliated from the institution of school itself, reducing the likelihood that they will engage with the academic curriculum in any particular class. Further, to link Luke's (1996) perspective to Eckert's, even when they do strive for the desired academic knowledge offered through the curriculum, they may be socially denied by those for whom the middle class is a protected class. In either case—whether they reject school values outright or whether they adopt them and are socially discouraged from attempting them—school can provide an emotional disjuncture for whole groups of people. When marginalized groups are identified and aligned by race, social class, and gender (e.g., when girls are discouraged from studying science, or when students of color are advised not to take advanced classes, or when students are tracked according to the neighborhoods in which they live), these effects are especially pernicious.

These feelings of exclusion can affect even those working-class students who ultimately attend college. Ashley (2001) found that the working-class college students she studied regarded their employment of academic discourse norms to be a "game" in which they would "trick" (p. 501) their instructors into believing that they were members of the scholarly community. This double-voicedness, that is, their ability to speak in a voice far different from their own vernacular language in order to "pass" as a member of the academic world, resulted in a loss of a sense of self in their academic work and strong feeling of "*self*-removal" from their academic writing (p. 510; emphasis in original). Ashley's focal students took a certain form of agency that led them to view their writing as a kind of parody. Their affective orientation to their education, then, provided them with a pragmatic determination—a type of emotional strategy—that enabled them to complete college work through resistant disingenuousness designed to make them appear to be members of the club, even while they experienced feelings of alienation from university values and practices. Immordino-Yang and Damasio's (2007) conception of emotion and cognition, then, can work to provide learners with a sort of subversive power in addition to the kind of broader metacognitive social empowerment that we see in their outline.

Affect and Composition

In response to the pioneering protocol analyses of writers conducted by Flower and Hayes (e.g., 1980) and others, Brand (1987) argued that think-aloud methodologies overlook the role of affect in writing processes. Smagorinsky (1994) responded that such a limitation is not a systemic problem with protocol analysis; rather, protocol studies of the 1970s and 1980s were concerned with cognition without its social and emotional underpinnings and so did not code for affect or for the

ways in which thinking is socially situated. As in the fields of psychology critiqued by Roth (2007), however, composition researchers have for the most part not viewed the issue of emotion as critical.

Brand's critique of the cognitive orientation of writing research included attention to the limited ways in which emotion was addressed on those rare occasions when it served as a research focus. Brand and Powell (1986) note that

> When emotion is studied, it is studied as disruptive of the process: writer's block (Rose, 1984), writing apprehension and its academic correlates (Daly & Miller, 1975), writing anxiety (Bloom, 1980; Holladay, 1981), writing apprehension and personality correlates (Daly & Wilson, 1983), reducing writing apprehension (Fox, 1980; Powers, Cook, & Meyer, 1979; Smith, 1984), and measuring writing apprehension with a scale (Daly & Miller, 1975).

To fill this gap in the research, one in which emotion is rarely studied in conjunction with writing and then only as an impediment, Brand developed the Brand Emotions Scale for Writers (BESW), a 20-item scale designed to measure the emotions of writers immediately before writing, immediately after writing, and during the process (see Powell & Brand, 1987). This subjective measurement was then subjected to statistical tests to determine emotional engagement with the task of writing. Brand herself appears to have been the primary user of this instrument; and after she produced a flurry of publications on the topic in the late 1980s, both her own scholarship and the issue of affect and writing receded from the field's attention. Subsequently, only Piazza and Siebert (2008) have developed survey instruments to measure affective responses to writing, again however limited to self-reports rather than nuanced data.

Our own work has included a line of inquiry in which students' emotions have played a role in their composition of both verbal and nonverbal texts (O'Donnell-Allen & Smagorinsky, 1999; Smagorinsky, 1997, 2001; Smagorinsky, Augustine, & O'Donnell-Allen, 2007; Smagorinsky, Cameron, & O'Donnell-Allen, 2007; Smagorinsky, Cook, & Reed, 2005; Smagorinsky & Coppock, 1994, 1995a, 1995b; Smagorinsky et al., 2010; Smagorinsky & O'Donnell-Allen, 1998a,b, 2000; Smagorinsky, Pettis, & Reed, 2004; Smagorinsky, Zoss, & Reed, 2006; Zoss, Smagorinsky, & O'Donnell-Allen, 2007). These studies have employed concurrent protocol analysis, retrospective protocol analysis, and stimulated recall to capture the composing processes of writers and producers of other sorts of texts (e.g., drawings, dramatic enactments, and choreography). As our use of these methods has evolved from its early orientation to cognition (see Smagorinsky, 1991), our attention has increasingly turned from efforts to capture thinking processes apart from affect to a focus on viewing cognition as it relates to both emotional involvement and identity formation.

As noted, those exploring the relation between writing and emotion have typically viewed emotion in terms of writing pathologies. Writers are apprehensive or anxious about writing, so solutions to liberate writers from their fears are sought; or writing is viewed as a vehicle for healing emotional trauma. The studies in our line of inquiry find that writing dispositions and behaviors may also arise from more positive emotional states. The next sections detail findings from studies conducted in this line of inquiry. We should emphasize that we are reporting on findings from a small set of case studies that may or may not represent the experiences of students broadly speaking. Yet we do believe that the cases that follow do suggest possible areas of inquiry that may benefit the larger project of understanding writing in all its cognitive, emotional, social, and cultural complexity.

RESEARCHING AFFECT AND SCHOOL WRITING

BROAD DISPOSITIONS TOWARD SCHOOL

Some composition researchers have found that a writer's confidence in her ability to govern and succeed with requirements for writing is highly predictive of writing success among college students (Hilgers, Hussey, & Stitt-Bergh, 1999; Sommers & Saltz, 2004; Yancey, 2008). This finding is consistent with Immordino-Yang and Damasio's (2007) views on an emotional rudder and emotional

strategies and with Eckert's (1989) account of feelings of affiliation and disaffiliation among "jocks" and "burnouts" in their dispositions toward school, along with our own work (Smagorinsky & O'Donnell-Allen, 1998b, 2000) in looking at reading transactions as a function of not just the relation between readers and texts but of the cultural-historical setting in which reading takes place, including readers' prior experiences with school.

We will illustrate the role of a deeply-rooted sense of efficacy with schoolwork through an illustration from a study of one writer (Smagorinsky & Daigle, 2008a,b; Smagorinsky et al., 2010). The student, coauthor Susan Bynum, in spite of being a high-achieving student, struggled to follow the archaic vocabulary, serpentine syntax, arcane references, poly-entendres, and complex plot structure of *Much Ado about Nothing* and in turn write a cogent essay analyzing the play. The task, modeled by her teacher after college essay exams, cued Susan to write about the play in the New Critical fashion, that is, a close reading of the text as a discrete creation that merits careful scrutiny on its own terms, the concomitant exclusion of the reader's response or other factors outside the text, and an interpretation guided by knowledge of technical aspects of form. Given the difficulty of Shakespearean language, plot structures, and other challenges, in conjunction with the teacher's placement of the interpretive onus almost exclusively on the students, it is not surprising that even a high-achieving student such as Susan struggled to compose her essay.

Even with the difficulties that Susan experienced while writing this essay, she persevered. We view her positive affect as a student as playing a central role in her ability to proceed with her writing, even when she did not have a good understanding of the material. In the think-aloud that she provided as she wrote the essay, she exhibited what we termed a sense of efficacy toward the task. We applied efficacy codes when we inferred that Susan exhibited confidence in her ability to complete the assignment, even when she experienced stress about the writing. Given our knowledge of Susan's background based on interviews and her participation in the research over the course of the school year, we understood that this confidence followed from her prior successful experiences as a writer of school essays—her meta-experiences as a student with a storehouse of positive emotional experiences in school.

The following excerpt illustrates how her sense of efficacy enabled her to persevere with a task that she acknowledged was beyond her. (In the illustrations from protocol analyses that follow, the student's unwritten thoughts are indicated by italicized text, and the thoughts that she wrote down are indicated by standard-form text.)

Back to where I was. The reason why the song—the reason why the—captures spirit of play is because the song itself is irony and it symbolizes the relationship between Bennie and Beet [Benedick and Beatrice]. *So—I guess that might be a good starting point. A good, you know, kick in the mud starting point, get down and dirty, got my big toes in the water, okay, and I keep going back, discuss how the song captures the spirit of the entire play. I don't care how it captures it, I know it, it is in my head, I don't want to write it down but I am going to because it is a big assignment.* Beginning of the play—*I am always drawing blanks, okay. I have a good. See I never do stuff like this. I don't ever like—I mean, I write like this but it has so much more pressure talking because like I am driving myself insane, like I should be in some—I don't know, it is driving me crazy. Okay. Start out by saying,* the song—*but then it says captures. It is kind of like, who cares, who cares—I will change it later. Oops—*song, *which would be in front of—*the song captures the spirit—*okay, how about this.* William Shakespeare uses the song in *Much Ado about Nothing* to symbolize the irony in the play—*no,* of the characters in the play and the play itself. *Now mind you, this is a rough draft and I am perfectly happy to go back and rewrite stuff. There is no skin off my back whatever.* William Shakespeare uses the song in *Much Ado about Nothing*—*wait*—uses the song in *Much Ado about Nothing* to symbolize the irony of the characters in the play and the play itself. *But maybe I should—I don't know because I kind of want to use Beatrice and Benedick—okay, can do that later, alright. Right.* Symbolizes—*working off my other sheet of papers [from class]*—is the reason why the song captures the spirit of the play. *What?* The reason why the song captures the spirit of the play is because the song itself is irony and symbolizes the relationship between Benedick and Beatrice. *How about I put* the song like the play is irony and also—*oh. I don't like to*—furthermore [inaudible]—song like the play is irony, *and I will use* also symbolizes the relationship between Benedick and Beatrice. *That works wonders right there.*

In this segment Susan indicated her sense of efficacy in a number of ways. Her recognition that she had found a "good starting point" with her "big toes in the water" of her composition indicates her genre knowledge regarding the role of a thesis statement in generating the remainder of an essay and her process knowledge, in this case, orienting herself to the task, appearing mentally to project a completed essay whose details she could develop as she wrote.

She then expressed difficulty in articulating her ideas but, we infer, drew on her experiences as a successful student to forge ahead "because it is a big assignment" that she needed to complete, and so employed what we coded as a *block solution*, something she did when stumped so as not to lose her momentum and train of thought in producing the essay. She soon employed another *block solution*, this time her employment of a *placeholder*, when she did not care for her phrasing yet said, "who cares, who cares—I will change it later." She continued to use a placeholder in noting that she was producing a rough draft and could "go back and rewrite stuff," a possibility that led her to view future revisions as manageable and "no skin off my back." She continued to defer decisions by means of placeholders, noting that she could "do that later" rather than getting bogged down in wordsmithing. Ultimately, she indicated her sense of efficacy with the *positive evaluation* that her phrasing had "work[ed] wonders right there."

The block solutions that we identified in our coding were also coded as *problem-solving deferrals*. Susan knew that she could delay making certain decisions and come back to them later, thus allowing her to continue with her writing in order to generate a draft to which she could return at a later time. She often used such strategies, saying on several occasions that although the text was awkward in its current phrasing, "That will get prettier later." Susan's sense of efficacy as a writer of school essays thus enabled her to proceed with her thinking even when that thinking did not produce prose that she found immediately acceptable.

AFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO DIFFERENT WRITING TASKS

If all students had Susan's sense of affiliation with school and efficacy as a writer, teaching writing would be fairly easy. Many students, however, find school to be not merely dreary—something that a "jock" can endure because the social benefits are so great—but downright hostile and outside the range of what they see as their life trajectories. We next focus on Clara (a pseudonym), a student whose experiences we report in Smagorinsky, Augustine, and O'Donnell-Allen (2007). At the time of the research, Clara was in the midst of a very difficult time in her life (the confidentiality of which we protect in our public revelations about her case). School was on the periphery of her interests, and she often took on schoolwork as a chore to be completed rather than the sort of growth-oriented experience that many believe it can be (see Dixon, 1975).

In the study that Clara participated in, we focused on students' experiences with academic, personal, and hybrid writing. As revealed in the quote that helps to open this chapter, Clara detested taking on the academic voice required by formal school writing, interspersing her efforts to generate text during her think-alouds with "I hate this." She said during an interview that formal writing "was harder. You had to do it that certain way." And for the most part, academic writing was what her teachers required.

Clara's psychology class proved especially vexing for her. She was required, for instance, to write synopses of films the class had watched, one of which produced the excerpt in which she "hated" the effort to express herself in appropriate academic language. The following excerpt illustrates the ways in which she had difficulty translating her notes to an appropriate formal academic voice:

> *I am at home and I am doing my Psychology homework right now. We watched a movie today about aging. And I took notes on it, and now I have to take the notes and put it into a summary. And I hate this, I really hate this. It is hard ... Why is aging for some people different than for others? Let's see, write that down. Who cares? ... I don't want to do this ... I don't want to do it. I don't want to do it. Okay, synopsis. Let's start by, I don't want to do this. I don't know how to get this little information into*

a long, page thing. A Rouge Test[1] on children. *Where is it, say, I don't know, let's just write,* maturation of the brain, from maturation of the brain is accompanied by the emergence of cognitive confidences. *What does this mean though?* The brain maturing is also accompanied by the emergence of cognitive confidences. *Cognitive confidences, what does that mean? Let's see, a look of boredom, she is going to kill me for this. I am not going to get a grade, and if I don't get a grade, she is like, "Oh, but what is wrong? We must talk about it." The problem with psychology teachers is they want to analyze everything. They just can't accept it.* A look of boredom can mean that they have already done it or have already experienced it. Children who have a fixation on sounds and faces just after birth. *I wish I could remember more about this movie. Let's say* the Rouge Test, *and I guess I am done with that.*

Clara found the formal tone of her sources to be "boring," leading her to "hate" and not care about either the writing or the content that the writing was designed to help her learn. In our coding of the protocols, we identified such instances as *antipathy toward writing* and *anxiety/stress.*

Clara also provided a concurrent protocol while working on a research paper on the artist Joseph Albers. As she did with her psychology synopses, she strained to work fluently within the authoritative discourse of her sources and the expectations for her own writing. While reviewing her notes early in the protocol, she said that Albers

became one of the most influential propagators—he became one of the most influential propagators of Bauhaus ideas. He became influential of ideas or about art of design. (Sighs) *This is boring … His* exploitation of the fact that grammatically approximate colors could produce the illusion of third color also making a precursor of the off artists. Art visual perception—*I think I'll skip that. I'll go to Albers's recollection of [inaudible] to speak and interaction with colors rather than to use the [inaudible].* There is usually in his painting a sense of—*come on, speak in English, please. Let's put this in English.*

Clara appeared disaffected with the academic writing expected of her. It is possible that she found the topics tedious. We would argue as well that the protocols suggest that the language she was expected to produce—the sort of formal speech that she complained about in her comments— served to distance her from the information in ways that made learning a chore for her.

A shift in the sort of voice required by writing assignments, however, appeared to allow Clara a different sort of experience with writing. Her British literature teacher assigned a research report that the students were told to present as a letter to a classmate, written at some point in the future. This shift in genre and audience encouraged students to share their research in familiar, conversational language. Clara did not produce a concurrent protocol while working on her research project but did include the final draft of the paper in her portfolio. Her writing suggests a degree of enthusiasm and vividness in her final product decidedly absent from her academic writing. Following is the beginning of the letter that Clara wrote to a classmate:

Dear Gail,

Hi! How are you? It has been so long since we've written or talked. I'm doing great! I guess you have already received the invitation to the reunion. Doesn't it sound wonderful? I can't believe it! I've already started packing. Who do you think the donor [for the class reunion] is? My guess would be Anthony. You remember when he used to rap in class all the time? I bet he's made millions in the music business. Don't you think? Who else could it be?

After high school, when I moved to Colorado, I spent a lot of time at my husband Craig's ranch. I developed a liking for horses and for a while that's all I wanted to do with my spare time. I decided when we moved to New Mexico, that we would have our own ranch. So with my husband's inheritance, we bought a ranch, some horses and equipment. I ride all the time. It is a new hobby for me. Sometimes I get too busy to ride and take care of the horses like I should. Every four to six weeks, they have to change their horseshoes. Every eight to ten weeks, they have to be treated for worms. There are so many routine chores involved in caring for these animals. The horses are my second family. We own Highland Horses. They are large and come from the Highlands of Scotland. They are great family horses. I can't wait to teach my son Taylor how to ride.

The *Queen Elizabeth II* sounds incredible! A luxury passenger liner, how fabulous! It was first launched in September of 1967. It was made to carry 2,025 passengers. Can you imagine all those people on a single ship? The ship is 963 feet long. Its top speed is 32.46 miles per hour. This ship has 13 decks. I bet there is something different to do on each one of them. It contains the largest room afloat, the Double Room. It has swimming pools, a workout room and a large sun deck. I can't wait to get my tan. Oh! And the shopping. There is an actual mall on the ship. Can you believe it?!

I can't wait to get to New York City. I have been there before, but there were so many sights I didn't get to see. The United Nations Building was one of the things I missed. I have heard it was very interesting. It overlooks the East River. I especially want to go to a Broadway play. I have heard they are the best. There is a boat tour during the day. It's the Circle Line Boats in Manhattan. SHOPPING! They have so many different stores. The subways will be very interesting. It is kind of like stepping into the twilight zone. Where are you staying while you are there? Craig and I are staying at the Par Fifty One. It has Italian marble baths, a health club and a limo service. Imagine this, there is a phone in the bathroom. Isn't that wild? We are going to a fabulous restaurant, called the Box Three. It has a French-English menu. They have a wine cellar. They are well known for their lobster. It is my favorite. The restaurant is rated four-star!

I have been wanting to go to Hawaii forever. It sounds like such a beautiful place. The volcanoes will be amazing. I can't wait to see the craters of Diamond Head and Punchbowl. I am really anxious to see the beaches. Especially Waikiki Beach, it is lined with hotels and condos—over a hundred of them. It is quite a tourist attraction with over five million tourists visiting annually. What a popular place and we will be able to say we've been there. Have you heard about the mansion there? It is called the Washington Palace. It was built in 1846. If I'm not mistaken, I think it is the residence of Hawaii's governor. Not only is there a mansion, but there is an actual palace. It is the only royal palace in the United States. It is called Iolani Palace. I am sure Craig can't wait to see the Aloha Stadium where the football Pro Bowl game is held each January. A great part of our history is there at Pearl Harbor. I hear it is quite enormous. I guess we will see soon enough.

Clara's letter included a lot of information about shopping, luxurious accommodations, and other things she found interesting about her research topic. We also see the projection of a social future in her report, one in which she is happily married, is provided an inheritance, and has access to luxury and leisure. Each aspect of this future also includes relevant details, down to the phone in her hotel bathroom.

What stands out—something that we attribute to the assignment and the shift in readership—is the positive affect through which she related her letter. Her voice was accessible and conversational; it avoided the stilted and technical language of the synopses we found in her concurrent protocols. In the absence of protocol data for the research report, we infer that the fluency of her writing suggests that she found this writing to be a more affectively rewarding experience than reports produced in a formal voice. We should note that we base this interpretation on the information available to us about Clara; we were not provided the specifics of the difficult time in her life that she was experiencing or how it affected her engagement with these school assignments. We also had no case file to determine if she was experiencing a mood disorder or other mental health condition that might have contributed to her emotional state during the study. What we did infer, however, was that her engagement in formal and informal writing genres produced very different emotional responses during data collection that we have attributed to the affordances of the genres available for her to produce her ideas in.

DISCUSSION

We hope that in this chapter we have stimulated some interest in the role of affect in students' writing for school. We end by discussing a conundrum that we see in what the limited body of research suggests thus far. Genre studies (e.g., Swales, 1990) point to the ways in which discourse communities have specialized social languages (Wertsch, 1991) that people must learn in order to work effectively within them. Academic writing is one such social language, practiced in schools and in

the scholarly world more broadly speaking—with, of course, idiodiscourses developed within each subfield of academia and professional communities (see, e.g., Stratman, 1990, for an analysis of the discourse of legal writing). One simply cannot enter such fields without agreeing to learn the codes and conventions that govern communication within them.

Many (e.g., Atwell, 1987) have argued that personal writing should comprise students' composing in school because of the authenticity of expression it allows students. These authorities argue that rather than getting bogged down in learning rules, students should proceed unfettered by attention to formal conventions. They should develop their own voices, rather than adopting the voices affected by others. And the experiences of Clara indeed support the idea that students enjoy writing more when they are not compelled to ask their sources to "speak in English" and wonder why they must attempt to imitate the syntax, vocabulary, and other dimensions of texts they can barely understand and appear to see little reason to emulate, other than to satisfy a teacher's expectations. Smith and Wilhelm (2002), in studying boys' engagement with reading, argue that teachers ought to pay greater attention to students' immediate experiences with learning, rather than teaching toward some distant benefit down life's rocky road (cf. Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). If such qualities demand attention, how then do secondary school teachers simultaneously prepare students for the more rigid demands that await them, and are expected of them, if and when they reach college (Bartholomae, 1985) or the workplace and its unique ways with words (Dias & Paré, 2000)?

A conundrum by definition has no easy answer, and we are not prepared to offer one here. Rather, our goal is to urge writing researchers to attend to issues of affect in relation to the institution of school, the discursive demands of particular disciplines, the phrasings available through different sorts of tasks, and the interpersonal relationships with teachers and others who make up a student's writing community. With a greater empirical database from which to make inferences, writing teachers, researchers, and theorists may have a better understanding of the role of affect in student writing and how to make ends meet, or at least get close enough for a dialogue, with respect to the dilemma of how to encourage students to value and enjoy writing while simultaneously helping them learn that their attention to conventions often determines how seriously they will be taken within the discourse communities available for them to enter.

NOTE

1. In a typical Rouge Test experiment, researchers asked a group of mothers and their babies, aged 9 to 24 months, to play in front of a mirror. First, the researchers observed how each baby acted in front of a mirror. Next, each mother pretended to wipe dirt off her baby's face, but was actually putting a small spot of rouge on the tip of the baby's nose. The babies were then placed in front of the mirror again to see if they would notice the red spot on their noses, recognize that something was different about their faces and try to wipe the red spot off, or have some other reaction (Lewis & Brooks-Gunn, 1979).

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