

NAMING WHAT WE KNOW

Threshold Concepts of Writing Studies
CLASSROOM EDITION

Edited by

LINDA ADLER-KASSNER
ELIZABETH WARDLE

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Logan

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PREFACE

As learners (and teachers and researchers), both of us have had learning experiences that have transformed us. For Linda, one experience came in an introductory communication theory seminar, when she realized that standards of time and measurement were culture- and value-laden. Ultimately, this led to the realization that other standards—like those used to place student writers—were just as connected to culture and values . . . but sometimes not the student writer's own. For Elizabeth, one experience came when she was introduced to the idea of theory, and particularly feminist theory, in her first-year writing class, and then again in upper-level courses—theory that helped her see her own experiences and positionality in an entirely new way. Looking back on those learning experiences, we now can recognize them as encounters with “threshold concepts.”

Originally identified by researchers J. F. Meyer and Ray Land (2006), threshold concepts are ideas that learners must “see through and see with” (Kreber 2009, 11) in order to participate more fully in particular disciplines. Meyer and Land have identified characteristics that are associated with learners' encounters with threshold concepts, noting that they are:

- *Troublesome.* These concepts may be conceptually difficult and butt up against prior knowledge that is inert, contradictory, rarely used, or unchallenged. They may also ask learners to take on new identities that are uncomfortable.
- *Liminal.* Threshold concepts involve what the name implies—thresholds. But the movement toward and the (hopeful) crossing of those thresholds isn't straightforward; instead, it happens in a two-steps-forward-one-step-back kind of way as learners push against troublesome knowledge.
- *Integrative and transformative.* Once learners cross a threshold, their ability to see through and with a threshold concept leads them to recognize new patterns of meaning around that concept. The ability to see through and with that concept also transforms their understandings of phenomena, people, and/or events.

and workplace-based genres far beyond more traditionally recognized ones. Naming these as writing usefully makes visible the roles and purposes of writing (e.g., Barton and Hamilton 1998; Heath 2012).

Understanding the knowledge-making potential of writing can help people engage more purposefully with writing for varying purposes. In higher education, for example, faculty from across the curriculum now often include a wider range of writing strategies in their courses. That is, beyond teaching the more visible disciplinary conventions of writing in their fields, faculty also integrate writing assignments that highlight what is less visible but highly generative about writing in many contexts: writing's capacity for deeper understandings and new insights (see Anson 2010 for one historical account of the shift in how faculty from across campus teach writing). Beyond the classroom, people can employ exploratory, inquiry-based writing tasks like freewriting, planning, and mapping—sometimes individual and often collaborative. These strategies can help all writers increase their comprehension of subject material while also practicing with textual conventions in new genres. Through making the knowledge-making role of writing more visible, people gain experience with understanding how these sometimes-ephemeral and often-informal aspects of writing are critical to their development and growth.

1.2

WRITING ADDRESSES, INVOKES, AND/OR CREATES AUDIENCES

Andrea A. Lunsford

Writing is both relational and responsive, always in some way part of an ongoing conversation with others. This characteristic of writing is captured in what is referred to as the classic *rhetorical triangle*, which has at each of its points a key element in the creation and interpretation of meaning: writer (speaker, rhetor), audience (receiver, listener, reader), and text (message), all dynamically related in a particular context. Walter Ong (1975) referred to this history in his 1975 “The Writer’s Audience is Always a Fiction,” connecting the audience in oral performances with readers of written performances and exploring the ways in which the two differ. For Ong, the audience for a speech is immediately present, right in front of the speaker, while readers are absent, removed. Thus the need, he argues, for writers to fictionalize their audiences and, in turn, for audiences to fictionalize themselves—that is, to adopt the role set out for them by the writer.

Scholars in rhetoric and writing studies have extended this understanding of audience, explaining how writers can address audiences—that is, actual, intended readers or listeners—and invoke, or call up, imagined audiences as well. As I am writing this brief piece, for example, I am imagining or invoking an audience of students and teachers even as I am addressing the actual first readers of my writing, which in this case are the editors of this volume.

The digital age has brought with it the need for even closer consideration of audiences. We can no longer assume, for example, that the audience members for an oral presentation are actually present. And, especially in a digital age, writing cannot only address and invoke but also create audiences: as a baseball announcer in the film *Field of Dreams* (based on W. P. Kinsella’s *Shoeless Joe*) says, “If you build it, they will come.” Writers whose works have “gone viral” on the web know well what it means to create an audience that has been unintended and indeed unimagined. Perhaps even more important, the advent of digital and online literacies has blurred the boundaries between writer and audience significantly: the points of the once-stable rhetorical triangle seem to be twirling and shifting and shading into one another. When consumers of information can, quite suddenly, become producers as well, then it’s hard to tell who is the writer, who the audience. In addition, the deeply collaborative and social nature of literacy in a digital age not only calls into question earlier distinctions but allows for greater agency on the part of both writers and audiences.

Such shifting and expanding understandings of audience and of the ways writers interact with, address, invoke, become, and create audiences raise new and important questions about the ethics of various communicative acts and call for pedagogies that engage students in exploring their own roles as ethical and effective readers/audiences/writers/speakers/listeners in the twenty-first century.

1.3

WRITING EXPRESSES AND SHARES MEANING TO BE RECONSTRUCTED BY THE READER

Charles Bazerman

The concept that writing expresses and shares meaning is fundamental to participating in writing—by writing we can articulate and communicate a thought, desire, emotion, observation, directive, or state of affairs to ourselves and others through the medium of written words.

The potential of making and sharing meaning provides both the motive and guiding principle of our work in writing and helps us shape the content of our communications. Awareness of this potential starts early in emergent literacy experiences and continues throughout one's writing life but takes on different force and depth as one continues through life.

The expression of meanings in writing makes them more visible to the writer, making the writer's thoughts clearer and shareable with others, who can attempt to make sense of the words, constructing a meaning they attribute to the writer. While writers can confirm that the writing words feel consistent with their state of mind, readers can never read the writer's mind to confirm they fully share that state of mind. Readers share only the words to which each separately attributes meanings. Thus, meanings do not reside fully in the words of the text nor in the unarticulated minds but only in the dynamic relation of writer, reader, and text.

While a writer's meanings arise out of the expression of internal thought, the meanings attributed by a reader arise from the objects, experiences, and words available to that reader. For readers, the words of the text index or point to accessible ideas, thoughts, and experiences through which they can reconstruct meanings based on what they already know (see 3.3, "Writing Is Informed by Prior Experience").

Although meaning is philosophically complex, children readily grasp it in practice as they learn that they can share their experiences through writing about it. As their writing develops, they can express or articulate meanings more fully and precisely concerning a wider range of experiences, with wider audiences and with greater consequences.

The idea that writing expresses and shares meaning to be reconstructed by the reader can be troublesome because there is a tension between the expressions of meaning and the sharing of it. Often, we view our expressions as deeply personal, arising from inmost impulses. We may not be sure others will respond well to our thoughts or will evaluate us and our words favorably. Therefore, every expression shared contains risk and can evoke anxiety. Writers often hesitate to share what they have expressed and may even keep private texts they consider most meaningful. Further, writers may resist the idea that their texts convey to readers something different than what the writers intended. Feedback from readers indicating that the writer's words do not convey all the writer hoped is not always welcomed (see 4.1, "Text Is an Object Outside of One's Self that Can Be Improved and Developed"; 5.2, "Metacognition Is Not Cognition"; and 4.4, "Revision Is Central to Developing Writing").

Awareness that meaning is not transparently available in written words may have the paradoxical effect of increasing our commitment to words as we mature as users of written language. As writers we may work on the words with greater care and awareness of the needs of readers so as to share our expressions of meaning as best as we can with the limited resources of written language. As readers we may increase our attention to reconstructing writers' meanings despite the fragility of words. The vagaries of meaning also may become a resource for us as writers, whether we are poets evoking readers' projections of personal associations or lawyers creating loopholes and compromises.

1.4

WORDS GET THEIR MEANINGS FROM OTHER WORDS

Dylan B. Dryer

This threshold concept is best illustrated with an example of how a particular word is defined and understood. If asked on the spot to define the word *cup*, an English speaker might say, "Well, it's a smallish drinking vessel, something you'd use for hot drinks like coffee or tea, so probably ceramic rather than glass; usually it has a little handle so your hand doesn't too hot." This is a perfectly serviceable definition, but the way it has been phrased glosses right over this threshold concept. To say that "a cup is a small ceramic drinking vessel" cannot be literally true, after all; the object used to serve hot drinks is not called into being by this sound, nor is there any reason for the phonemes symbolized by the three characters *c*, *u* and *p* to refer to this object (or to refer to it in English, at any rate; in German that object is referred to as *die Tasse*; in Mandarin as *Cháwǎn*; and so on.) Even English speakers don't always use that sound to mean a smallish ceramic drinking vessel. In the kitchen, *cup* is probably a unit of measure; in certain sporting circles, *cup* is the diminutive for the championship trophy (e.g., the Stanley Cup). *Cup* can even mean to hold something gingerly by not closing one's fingers about it, as one would cup an eggshell.

Cup does not have an especially elaborate range of meanings (consider words like *go* or *work* or *right*), but it adequately illustrates Ferdinand de Saussure's great insight: "In language itself, there are only differences" (Saussure 1983, 118). Saussure meant that because there is no necessary connection between any sounds or clusters of symbols and their referents (otherwise different languages would not exist), the meanings of words are relational—they acquire their

writing, as it always has been, is a technology for thinking, and so it may be the case that we interiorize the technology of writing itself to shape the possibilities for meaning.

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CONCEPT 2

Writing Speaks to Situations through Recognizable Forms

2.0

WRITING SPEAKS TO SITUATIONS
THROUGH RECOGNIZABLE FORMS

Charles Bazerman

A fundamental problem in communication precedes the choosing of any words or shaping of any message: identifying the situation we are in and the nature of the communication we wish to make. Are salespeople offering us a deal and do we want to accept? Are our acquaintances amusing each other with jokes and are we amused? Are our trusted advisors asking us to reconsider our behaviors and do we resist? The situation frames our understanding of the communicative action of others and gives us the urgency and motive to respond because somehow we sense our words will satisfy our needs in the situation or otherwise make the situation better for us. In face-to-face life, this problem is solved through our recognizing the geographic locale we are in, the people we are talking to, our relationship to them, the events unfolding before us, and our impulses to do something. Through long practical experience we learn to recognize spontaneously what appears to be going on around us and how it affects us. Our impulses to act communicatively emerge as doable actions in the situation, in forms recognizable to others—we accept the offer, we laugh at the joke, we agree to change. Conscious thought is warranted only if we have reason to believe things are not as they appear to be, if confusions arise within the situation, or if we want to suppress our first impulse and pursue a less obvious strategic path—laughing to appear congenial though we find the joke offensive.

Writing, as well, addresses social situations and audiences organized in social groups and does so through recognizable forms associated with those situations and social groups. But with writing we have fewer here-and-now clues about what the situation is, who our audiences are, and how we want to respond. Written messages can circulate from one material and social situation to another, and in fact are usually intended to.

or speaking—in other words, in the communication—changes what is shared about each of them and thus what our common knowledge is. I may think if I write about a mountain that the mountain is there for all to see, so the words I use are not that important. But when I realize that all my readers are likely to know of the mountain, particularly on a sunny early spring afternoon after an overnight snow storm ending in sleet so the crust breaks through unpredictably beneath the feet, is through the words I write, I begin to take greater care in choosing my words. I want to represent facts, the world, or my imaginings as precisely and powerfully as I can. We may resist this idea because we think the world and the meaning of our ideas are more robust than the words we choose, or because grappling with words is hard and frustrating work, and we may feel that our words are always a reduction, always lose something. That is indeed so. But because words are such thin and frail communicators, writers must work hard to make them do the best they can do.

A further troublesome corollary is that what we can share with each other through writing is limited by our ability to represent the world through language and the ability of our readers to make sense of our representations in ways congruent to our intentions (see 1.2, “Writing Addresses, Invokes, and/or Creates Audiences,” and 1.3, “Writing Expresses and Shares Meanings to Be Reconstructed by the Reader”). Writers often have great ambitions about the effects and power of what they write and their ability to capture the truth of realities or conjure imagined realities, but they are constantly caught up short by what they can bring into shared reality through words. Recognizing the limitations of our representations can lead us to appropriate modesty and caution about what we and others write and about decisions and calculations made on the basis of the representations. Alfred Korzybski stated this concept vividly by noting “the map is not the territory” (Korzybski 1958, 58). Yet knowledge of this concept helps us work more effectively from our verbal maps in the way we view and contemplate the world represented.

Despite the limits of language, most of what we consider knowledge comes from the representation of the world and events in texts (see 1.1, “Writing Is a Knowledge-Making Activity”). Will Rogers famously said, “All I know is what I read in the newspapers.” The humor and humility in his statement are precisely in the recognition that most of our knowledge comes from the texts we read. If people don’t share those texts (or other texts derivative of the primary representation), they don’t share the knowledge. The recognition that different statements representing knowledge circulate in different groups does not mean all

representations are equal, but it focuses our attention on the procedures and criteria by which these representations enter a communicative network and are evaluated, held accountable, and established as credible. People may resist this recognition as it destabilizes the absoluteness of knowledge and seems to undermine certainty of truth, but recognition of this concept provides a path to a more detailed understanding of how things reach the status of truth within different communities and the criteria by which truth is held. Knowing this can help us write more carefully and effectively to represent the world, events, and ideas credibly within and across communities and to discuss the representations of others in relation to the social worlds the knowledge circulates within.

2.2

GENRES ARE ENACTED BY WRITERS AND READERS

Bill Hart-Davidson

One of the more counterintuitive ideas in writing studies has to do with the nature of a genre—not just how the term is defined but also about what genres are. Common-sense notions of *genre* hold that the term describes a form of discourse recognizable as a common set of structural or thematic qualities. People may speak about detective novels as a genre distinct from romance novels, for instance. We can also recognize nonliterary forms as genres, such as the scientific article.

In writing studies, though, the stabilization of formal elements by which we recognize genres is seen as the visible effects of human *action*, routinized to the point of habit in specific cultural conditions. The textual structures are akin to the fossil record left behind, evidence that writers have employed familiar discursive moves in accordance with reader expectations, institutional norms, market forces, and other social influences.

The idea that genres are enacted is associated most strongly, perhaps, with Carolyn Miller’s argument in a 1984 article in the *Quarterly Journal of Speech* titled “Genres as Social Action.” Miller’s (1984) argument was influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin (1986), and has been developed over the last thirty years by a number of scholars studying writing in organizational settings such as David Russell (1991), Charles Bazerman (1988), and Catherine Schryer (1993), among many others.

This view holds that genres are habitual responses to recurring socially bounded situations. Regularities of textual form most lay people experience as the structural characteristics of genres emerge from these repeated instances of action and are reinforced by institutional power

contexts, genres, tasks, and audiences as they move among workplaces and communities beyond formal schooling, and these new contexts call for new kinds of writing.

With experience, writers do discover that some writing habits developed in one context can be helpful in another. For example, habits such as writing multiple drafts or setting aside regular, frequent periods for writing in a place free of distractions often prove effective regardless of the writing task or context. Likewise, writing strategies useful in one context, such as using explicit transitional words to signal organization or using illustrations to develop an idea, will work well in many different writing contexts for many different purposes. However, these same writing habits and strategies will not work in all writing situations (see 5.3, “Habituated Practice Can Lead to Entrenchment”). There is no such thing as “writing in general”; therefore, there is no one lesson about writing that can make writing good in all contexts (see 2.0, “Writing Speaks to Situations through Recognizable Forms,” and 2.2, “Genres Are Enacted by Writers and Readers”). Writers must struggle to write in new contexts and genres, a matter of transferring what they know but also learning new things about what works in the present situation. The difficulty of drawing on prior knowledge in this way has spawned a thread of research on transfer of knowledge about writing (see Wardle 2012). The working knowledge that enables a writer to select the practices and strategies appropriate for a particular writing context and task is learned over time through experience as a writer and as a reader of writing. Therefore, a demonstration of one’s ability to write effectively in one context cannot constitute proof of one’s ability to write in other contexts.

Writers—and teachers of writing—might sometimes wish all writing abilities could be learned once and for all, just as one can learn how to spell a particular word correctly or how to punctuate a quotation correctly once and for all. However, many writing abilities, such as choosing the most appropriate and precise word, and exercising good judgment in deciding whether to quote directly or to paraphrase in any given writing situation, cannot be learned just once. This imperfectability of writing ability is even more evident when a writer must learn how to choose and use evidence to make an effective argument in an unfamiliar situation.

This threshold concept can be difficult to understand because the content of most school subjects is divided into categories and levels of difficulty and sequenced in a way that assumes students must learn the content or skills of one level or stage before moving on to the next level. Unlike these subjects, formal writing instruction is usually designed to repeat the same principles or lessons over and over as student writers encounter new situations for writing and learning.

This is an important threshold concept for educators to understand because it enables us to recognize that it is impossible to make a valid judgment of a student writer’s ability by examining a single sample of his or her writing, particularly a sample of writing that does not address a specific rhetorical situation (see 1.7, “Assessing Writing Shapes Contexts and Instruction”). For these same reasons, one cannot assume that a student who has demonstrated the ability to write a literary critical analysis of *Romeo and Juliet* as a senior in high school will also be able to write a paper outlining issues currently being discussed in response to new developments in research on childhood diabetes for a college course.

This threshold concept is helpful for all writers to understand because it will enable them to recognize that encountering difficulty in a writing situation is an indication that they are ready to learn something new about writing.

Writers never cease learning to write, never completely perfect their writing ability, as long as they encounter new or unfamiliar life experiences that require or inspire writing.

4.1

TEXT IS AN OBJECT OUTSIDE OF ONESELF THAT CAN BE IMPROVED AND DEVELOPED

Charles Bazerman and Howard Tinberg

In the course of writing, whether preliminary notes, a sketch, or a full draft, a writer inscribes signs that now exist on paper, digital display, or some other medium. While these signs may have their origin in meanings within the mind of the writer and the initial spontaneous choice of words, they now have been externalized into an independent artifact that can be examined, revised, or otherwise worked on by the writer, collaborators, or other people.

For writers, this externalization decreases the amount of material they must remember and attend to while composing (reducing cognitive load) and allows them to focus attention on limited issues. Externalization also allows writers to look at the text produced so far to see how clearly it reads, what it conveys, whether it can be improved in any way. This working on a text now external to the writer allows a more technical examination, distancing the writer from an idealized sense of meaning and what they feel internally in order to see what the words actually convey. The writer potentially can take the part of the reader. This distancing, however, is not automatic, as the writer may assume the words convey all that they

imagine. Thus, becoming aware that the text exists outside the writer's projection and must convey meaning to readers is an important threshold in developing a more professional attitude toward the act of writing and what is produced. Insofar as writers see the text as not yet fulfilling initial ambitions, they can work to improve the text to convey as much as their technical skill and craft allow.

Collaborators, team members, supervisors, editors, and others who may share the work of producing text do not share the initial writer's attachment to the anticipated meaning and have only what the inscribed words bring; they thus provide better measures of what the text actually conveys. While they may view the text with a cooler eye, noting its limitations and failures to convey, they also may lack a sense of all the text may become and of the initial author's intentions. The emerging and changing text then becomes a site of negotiated work to produce the final document.

In response to the view that writing is expressionistic—revealing primarily writers' thoughts and emotions—composition scholars have over the last several decades promoted a view of writing as socially constructed, “crowd-sourced” we'd say these days (Flower 1994; Gere 1987; LeFevre 1987; Lunsford and Ede 1990). More fundamentally, this view is an extension of George Herbert Mead's (1934) understanding that we form our sense of the self through taking the part of the other in our struggle to make ourselves understood. Such a view, while no longer positing that the author is dead, does encourage us to see the text as existing independently of the author and thus capable of being changed and perfected by the author and others.

4.2

FAILURE CAN BE AN IMPORTANT PART OF WRITING DEVELOPMENT

Collin Brooke and Allison Carr

It may seem counterintuitive to suggest that the teaching of writing should focus as much on puzzling out failure as it does on rewarding success. We often forget, however, that successful writers aren't those who are simply able to write brilliant first drafts; often, the writing we encounter has been heavily revised and edited and is sometimes the result of a great deal of failure (see 4.4, “Revision Is Central to Developing Writing,” and 4.3, “Learning to Write Effectively Requires Different Kinds of Practice, Time, and Effort”). As renowned writer

Anne Lamott observes, “Almost all good writing begins with terrible first efforts. You need to start somewhere” (Lamott 1995, 303).

As students progress throughout their educational careers and the expectations for their writing evolve from year to year and sometimes course to course, there is no way we can expect them to be able to intuit these shifting conditions. They must have the opportunity to try, to fail, and to learn from those failures as a means of intellectual growth. Edward Burger (2012), professor of mathematics and coauthor of *The 5 Elements of Effective Thinking*, explains that “in reality, every idea from every discipline is a human idea that comes from a natural, thoughtful, and (ideally) unending journey in which thinkers deeply understand the current state of knowledge, take a tiny step in a new direction, almost immediately hit a dead end, learn from that misstep, and, through iteration, inevitably move forward.”

In the writing classroom, when assessment is tied too completely to final products, students are more likely to avoid risking failure for fear of damaging their grades, and this fear works against the learning process. They focus instead on what the teacher wants and simply hope to be able to get it right on the first try. Burger (2012) advocates building “quality of failure” into his courses and reports that his students are willing to take greater risks and to examine their missteps for what they can change about them.

One of the most important things students can learn is that failure is an opportunity for growth. As sites of language development, writing classrooms, especially, should make space for quality of failure, or what Lamott describes as “shitty first drafts,” by treating failure as something all writers work through, rather than as a symptom of inadequacy or stupidity. Writers need the time and space to explore Thomas Edison's proverbial ten thousand ways that won't work in order to find the ways that do. Such practices will enable writing teachers and students to develop a healthy dialogue around the experience of failure, perhaps leading to the development of what we might call *pedagogies of failure*, or ways of teaching that seek to illuminate the myriad ways writing gets done by examining all the ways it doesn't. Embracing failure in the writing classroom in these ways makes failure speakable and doable.

Outside of the classroom, the capacity for failure (and thus success) is one of the most valuable abilities a writer can possess. The ability to write well comes neither naturally nor easily; the thinkers we praise and admire are not the lucky few born with innate talent. Rather, they are the ones who are able to make mistakes, learn from them, and keep writing until they get it right. J. K. Rowling (2008), for example, is quite

As long as teachers keep this caution about entrenchment in mind, working memory and the benefits of automaticity are set to become powerful enabling concepts for modern writing studies. All writers can increase fluency and performance through naturalizing routines; just as letter shapes recede from children's consciousness (or more specifically, the frontal lobes) and free up working memory for higher-order composing goals, so too will even the most structurally elaborate academic and workplace genres eventually become assimilated into writers' routines (see 2.1, "Writing Represents the World, Events, Ideas, and Feelings"). Teachers and supervisors alike should remember that automaticity takes time, perhaps at a temporary cost to other skill sets (see 4.2, "Failure Can Be an Important Part of Writing Development," and 4.3, "Learning to Write Effectively Requires Different Kinds of Practice, Time, and Effort") and that writers taking on a new task are attempting to forge neurological connections that literally *aren't there yet* (see James and Engelhardt 2012; Richards et al. 2011).

In sum, insights from the social turn and insights from what some are calling the *neurological turn* appear to be converging, as can be seen in this recent definition from two cognitive researchers: "The writing process is supported by a single system—the writer's internal mind-brain interacting with the external environment (including technology tools)" (Berninger and Winn 2006, 108).

5.1

WRITING IS AN EXPRESSION OF EMBODIED COGNITION

Charles Bazerman and Howard Tinberg

Writing is a full act of the mind, drawing on the full resources of our nervous system, formulating communicative impulses into thoughts and words, and transcribing through the work of the fingers. Writers at the computer or desk carry the tension of thought throughout their full posture, can grimace at the difficult contradiction, and can burst into laughter at the surprising discovery or the pleasure of an elegant phrase.

This is as true of the reasoned and evidence-grounded academic writer as of the impassioned writer of love letters. The emotional engagement of scientific writers for their subject may entail careful attention to evidence and reasoning grounded in prior work in the field and an understanding of the theory and methodological principles of the field; yet without a passion for the subject that turns a writer's full

mind and thought to the task of producing new words and ideas, little of value would get written.

If cognition assumes complex mental processes at work, then embodied cognition draws in addition upon the physical and affective aspects of the composing process. While there is still much to learn about how the brain and mind work when engaged in the complex task of writing, it was evident to theorists as early as James Moffett (1968) and Ann Berthoff (1978; 1981) that writing comes from full engagement of the entire writer, which is developed across many years of a developing self. Both drew on the work of Lev Vygotsky (1986) who, in the early years of the twentieth century, explored the role of language internalization and externalization in the social formation of mind and emotions (see Bazerman 2012). More recently, psychologists such as Ron Kellogg (2008) have documented the extensive concentration and long time it takes a writer to develop. Howard Gardner (2008) as well has called for recognition of the full, human dimension of both readers and writers in the construction of meaning. Finally, a number of teachers drawing on psychoanalytic traditions have considered how writing challenges and exposes elements of emotions and psychological structures (e.g., Alcorn 2002).

5.2

METACOGNITION IS NOT COGNITION

Howard Tinberg

"Do you know your knowledge?" asks Samuel Taylor Coleridge, trying to point out the difference between knowing what we know and knowing that we know (qtd. in Berthoff 1978, 233). The first calls upon cognition while the second requires metacognition. In other words, to think through a solution to a problem differs from an awareness of how we came to resolve that problem, or, as Kara Taczak notes in this collection, writers engage in cognition when they reflect on "what they are doing in that particular moment" but display metacognition when they consider "why they made the rhetorical choices they did" (78). For those of us who teach writing, the objective is not just to have our students produce effective writing—that is, to respond in logical and thoughtful ways to the question posed. We also want our students to demonstrate consciousness of process that will enable them to reproduce success. Metacognition is not cognition. Performance, however thoughtful, is not the same as awareness of how that performance came to be.