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Scholarly Art: The Writing Experiences of Student Affairs Professionals

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SCHOLARLY ART: THE WRITING EXPERIENCES OF
STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS

by

Wanda L.E. Viento

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
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Dr. Donna M. Talbot, Advisor

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Special issues of the major student affairs journals recently have reflected on the scholarship of the profession (Blimling, 2001; Roper, 2002). The focus of these recent reflections, as well as prior publications on student affairs scholarship (e.g., Davis & Liddell, 1997; Engstrom, 1999; Hunter, 1986; Hunter & Kuh, 1987), largely has been on mentoring research, describing scholarship trends, critiquing existing patterns, and/or envisioning the shape of future scholarship. While the profession of student affairs acknowledges the critical need to promote scholarship and the dissemination of information, little has actually been done to help people get there. Only a few articles have focused on the training of scholars in student affairs and even less on training in a crucial aspect of scholarship—writing for publication.

As I examined literature relevant to learning to write for publication, there was a key distinction in the ideas about writing that were discussed: a technical or content-focused aspect and a social-psychological or process-focused aspect. The technical aspects are easier to identify, as these are the concrete steps taught in most college writing courses. The social-psychological aspects of writing include the less tangible components focused on the process of thinking and creating, on
the more personal and passionate aspects of scholarly writing. This includes how the professional identifies as a writer, what motivates her or him to write, and how one feels about one’s writing and the process of writing.

To better understand the how of teaching writing to doctoral students, this study explored how student affairs professionals who publish in the field describe their development as writers, their scholarly writing process, and whether/how their identity affects their scholarly art. Sixteen well-published student affairs professionals were interviewed about their writing development and process.

The resulting transcripts were analyzed using a phenomenological procedure to describe the lived experience. Seven essential themes were identified in this study: Knowing One’s Process, Persisting, Situating the Self with Feedback, Purposeful Voice, Voicing Purpose, Preparing the Future, and In Being with Others. Implications are explored for the student affairs profession in regard to teaching and future research.
DEDICATION

Friendship

By Dinah Maria Mulock Craik
(1826 - 1887)

Oh the comfort—the inexpressible comfort of feeling safe with a person
Having neither to weigh thoughts,
Nor measure words—but pouring them
All right out—just as they are—
Chaff and grain together—
Certain that a faithful hand will
Take and sift them—
Keep what is worth keeping—
And with the breath of kindness
Blow the rest away

To Beverly Nell Tabor (1945-1996)
El viento bajo de mis alas

I knew in the space and the process of her dying that I was receiving a gift—
not one that she or I would have chosen, but there nonetheless. We bonded over sharing
unmeasured words, so I dedicate these words to her.
She always made the journey more fun.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have come to believe that while writing may sometimes feel solitary in its process, it is truly a community activity, as one of the participants in this study asserted. My community reaches back to my earliest educators who helped shaped my love of learning. Mrs. Grace Himbaugh, Mr. Keith Ross, and Miss Eleanor Baum were all public school teachers who constructed the right mix of challenge and support to a young girl so eager to learn and gave me something so special there are no words to do it justice. Stumbling into college as a first generation student, Ms. Emily Jean McFadden taught me to think and sense in a world of academia completely foreign to my family upbringing. Along those same lines, I also owe a debt to the intellectual “parents” of my committee members, to the intellectual parents of their intellectual parents, to all the scholars I have read in the greater discourse of my new profession. It is a debt owed to the greatness of educators, that intellectual lineage from which I now come, and a debt that I can only pay forward.

One of the most valuable components of my doctoral program was my cohort, specifically Jin Abe and Andy Howe. The long and non-linear discussions, the brain teasing, the generation of ideas, and the shared drinks at O’Duffy’s all engaged us in the best of scholarly discourse as we found our way into the language of our profession. We practiced the thinking and the rethinking without awareness. They were a gift and they helped me feel like a scholar. Domo arigato gozaimashita.
Acknowledgements—Continued

Serendipity has played a role in this doctoral program as well, providing me with a full circle, a coming home on several layers. I returned to Kalamazoo, the place of my birth and upbringing, to pursue my Ph.D. It is there I finished an advanced degree of education, having come from a family of few high school graduates. And during this program, my committee chair graciously gave birth to twins, a process started when I entered my program. Watching Victoria and Andrejs Talbot Minka develop provided fascinating fodder for my own development. It is apropos to thank them for letting me revisit my kindergarten lessons, the eternal foundations of language and letters and learning, while in my terminal degree program. There is nothing like a rousing game of "Duck, Duck, Goose" or repetitions of the "A, B, C" song to put the world back into perspective.

My community also included several people who helped transcribe, read, and review the words contained herein, providing me with honest and caring feedback from a variety of perspectives, all of which I value. Linda Giefer and Joyce North generously donated their typing skills in helping me transcribe the rich words of my participants. Sandy Friedly lent her incredible editing skills, saving me from the brink of boredom with myself. Jenna Clark, a student who is a strong writer in her own sense, provided me with her understanding of what I was trying to construct. Blaine Eckles, a colleague on a similar doctoral journey, provided me with his understanding from a student affairs perspective.
Acknowledgements—Continued

Two professors at Western Michigan University who were not on my committee provided me with their time and wise advice on qualitative research. Dr. Karen Blaisyure and Dr. Mark Orbe are credits to the profession of education, truly demonstrating the values of teaching through their assistance. I am blessed to have had their guidance.

And of course, I am grateful for my committee. In the course of my research, I had read and heard many nightmarish stories of committees from hell. Good fortune was with me as I selected a committee of the highest caliber. I came to appreciate their developmental approach with me, the challenge and support they consciously provided, the freedom they encouraged in my critical thinking, and the criticism from which I could learn. I am dumbstruck as I contemplate how I got so lucky. Dr. Shen’s gentleness and insight into qualitative studies always helped me to feel grounded, even though he always seemed to be the busiest man on campus. Dr. Croteau has been an invaluable mentor from my first student development class with him. He went the extra mile in walking me through a process that fascinated me. His feedback and encouragement have improved my writing and enhanced my student affairs values.

Then there is Dr. Talbot. She guided me through my entire doctoral program, advised me on classes, prepared me for exams, coordinated my internships (magically finding a way to get me one in New Zealand), and steered me through this dissertation. She has always insisted that I own it, even in those frustrating moments when I just wanted to be told what to do. Beyond that, she has mentored me into the profession of student affairs, kept me informed of publication opportunities, and encouraged my involvement in professional organizations. The best part has been the numerous
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conversations about professional practice we have had over these years. I have been
blessed with the best mentoring I could have ever imagined.

And finally, the participants in my study were the incredible leaders in my
profession. It is with deep gratitude that I recognize their amazing contribution to our
profession and to my learning process.

To all of these people: Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

Wanda L.E. Viento
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Special issues of the major student affairs journals recently have reflected on the scholarship of the profession (Blimling, 2001; Roper, 2002). Moreover, the College Student Educators International (ACPA) has instituted a program track for senior and emerging scholars at their national conventions. The focus of these recent reflections, as well as prior publications on student affairs scholarship (e.g., Davis & Liddell, 1997; Engstrom, 1999; Hunter, 1986; Hunter & Kuh, 1987), has largely been on mentoring research, describing scholarship patterns and trends, critiquing existing patterns, and/or envisioning the shape of future scholarship. While the profession of student affairs has been acknowledging the critical need to promote scholarship and the continued dissemination of information, little has actually been done to help people get there. Only a few research articles have focused on the training of scholars in student affairs and even less on training in a crucial aspect of scholarship—writing for publication.

Writing is a cornerstone to good communication and scholarship. However, the tasks of teaching doctoral students in student affairs to write and helping them to identify as writers are often overlooked. As the importance of writing increases with higher levels of education (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Diekelmann & Ironside, 1998), it is necessary for doctoral programs to become adept at a pedagogy for the art as well as the science of writing. There is a tremendous amount of information written on writing from a spectrum of professions and applied to different circumstances and fields. Most often, the
technicalities and the structure of writing are addressed (Diekelmann & Ironside, 1998; Flint, Manas, & Serra, 2001; Miller, 2001; Thompson, 1995). However, there is also an art to writing (Bradbury, 1990; Goldberg, 1986; Huff, 1999; King, 2000). The art is an "almost" mysterious process of sitting with our ideas and transposing them into written form, the emotional relationship we have with our ideas as we create, how we say what we say, and the routines we construct as we become more prolific. These less tangible qualities of writing, such as voice and process, are difficult to teach yet vital to the development of a writer. In scholarly writing, such processes are even more elusive.

Because student affairs is a profession that grounds itself in the developmental processes of students, we also should be developmentally oriented for our own future colleagues. We can and should apply these concepts in our student affairs and higher education doctoral programs and then continue the dialogue in our professional literature. We are not simply teaching students, we are developing future colleagues.

As I examined student affairs and non-student affairs literature relevant to learning to write for publication, I identified a key distinction in the ideas about writing that were discussed: a technical or content-focused aspect and a social-psychological or process-focused aspect. The technical aspects are easier to identify, as these are the concrete steps taught in most college writing courses. Outlining, the formation of thesis statements, the construction of sentences and paragraphs, supporting one's ideas, editing, and rewriting are all steps to the development of a written work. These are the foundational aspects of writing; they are the essential skills for communicating clearly and concisely. Classic books such as Strunk and White's (2000) nearly mandatory Elements of Style and Zinsser's (2001) frequently cited On Writing Well provide an
excellent foundation for the technical aspects of writing. Even guidebooks such as the American Psychological Association’s *Publication Manual* (2001) include basic writing advice. Because these technical skills are easier to identify and explain, I believe they are often the focus of teaching or learning to write for publication in student affairs.

Juxtaposed to these technicalities, the social-psychological aspects of writing include the less tangible components focused on the process of thinking and creating, on the more personal and passionate aspects of scholarly writing. This includes how the professional identifies as a writer, what motivates her or him to write, and how one feels about one’s writing and the process of writing.

The social-psychological and the technical aspects of writing, however, are not mutually exclusive. Alter and Adkins (2001) argue that “creativity and self-expression” are not “stifled” by doing the technical aspects of writing well (p. 497). Both aspects need to be taught and developed in potential student affairs scholars. As there is no shortage of information about teaching the technical aspects, I seek to focus this study on the less tangible social-psychological components situated more in process than in content.

To better understand the *how* of teaching writing to doctoral students, I seek to explore how student affairs professionals who publish in the field describe their development as writers, their process in writing for scholarship, and whether/how their identity affects their scholarly art. To that end, this study is designed to explore those questions.

**Background of Study**

My interest in this topic originated from a desire to learn more about writing for publication. As a doctoral student, I had portions of my coursework focused on the tasks
of writing—the ‘how-tos.’ These were not unfamiliar tasks, as they concentrated on organization and output. It was helpful to heed advice to become disciplined, to write everyday, to outline and organize thoughts, to edit and rewrite and edit some more. However, something was missing for me. How exactly was I supposed to turn ideas into something that I could contribute to the professional literature, to the discourse of my scholarly community?

I came to realize that the role models I had were varied. I had had 13 years of public schooling, and another six years of college, all focused on academic writing as the regurgitation of other people’s ideas. In college, I had heard some professors complain continuously about the process of writing and publishing; it was a chore to be mastered, a dreaded necessity, something that blocked them from other, more pleasurable, activities. All of this consciously and unconsciously affected my own relationship to writing.

Prior to my doctoral program, I had spent many years of my life keeping a personal journal. Writing had become a source of reflection and process for me. It was not a daily diary, actually far from it. Journaling was therapeutic, healing, fun, a gift and practice I shared with best friends or therapists. I participated in creative writing classes, took workshops in poetry writing, attended journal writing seminars—all for my own enjoyment. Much of that instruction was focused on the process that one experiences while transposing thought into written form and the personal benefit that the self receives in doing so. The self was not separated from the writing. In fact, it was the writing. Back in college after that, I was having a hard time translating what I knew about writing into formal scholarly work. What was the process? Was not there more to it than outlining and editing? What were all those emotions that were popping up for me?
I needed more, so I decided to ask a professor to guide me on a course of independent study that would focus on writing for publication. Dr. Croteau agreed, with some bargaining, to take on the project. The project took many turns and extended itself two years beyond the original one semester independent study. As I began to research the teaching of writing to doctoral students in student affairs in higher education, I was startled to find very little written about the subject of writing. Scholarship was addressed in the student affairs professional journals, but writing per se was seldom mentioned. I found instances of student affairs professionals calling themselves scholars, but nowhere did I find practitioners referring to themselves as ‘writers.’ Why not?

As Dr. Croteau and I started writing our project, the personal process of writing in collaboration was something we discussed in our sessions. It became clear that there are easily taught “linear” steps in writing—outline, write, edit, rewrite. However, the personal or emotional process is not linear, not easily taught, and probably very individualized. If rewriting was actually rethinking, how does one teach students how to think?

I found the process of meeting Dr. Croteau at the local coffee shop with our two laptops to write together transformative. Here was a professor walking me through, step-by-step, the “how-to” of this process, while at the same time we were operating as observers of ourselves. It was encouraging and inspiring to have Dr. Croteau open himself to talking about his own development as a writer and his own view of how he teaches his students to write as professionals. In the course of researching writing, I often found reference made to the importance of mentorship and role modeling with students and subsequently found this to be true to my own learning process.
For me, I believe that our identity is linked to what we write. This may be influenced by my gender and/or my training, but it may also be influenced by my preferred method of research, which is qualitative. Personal and private lives are not so distinct, and the call for awareness of one’s epistemological and theoretical focus requires a greater connection to one’s understanding of the self as a researcher. The generally held belief that subjectivity is inherent in our research allows us the freedom to be more connected to and engaged with our scholarship. Therefore, how we write up our scholarship will essentially reflect this more engaged nature. In a book on writing the qualitative dissertation (Meloy, 2002), one doctoral student wrote about the differences between her quantitatively focused cohort and her qualitatively focused self when it comes to writing:

She [a friend] and I …have decided that a qualitative researcher must be a writer. She doesn’t feel that writing is as important in quantitative studies… A well-written statistical paper is a gift and great, but the use or abuse of the statistical data is what matters. (p. 123)

Furthermore, this subjective nature acknowledged in qualitative research can and often does influence a scholar’s identity. The above author continues,

One of the ‘feelings’ about what it means to do qualitative research appears to be a strong, definite sense of direct, personal connection with the processes and production, in large part, I think, because of the connection of thinking and writing. (Meloy, 2002, p. 99)

She contended that the personal and private aspects of our lives are not distinct, but occupied simultaneously. “Who I am as a private individual does not simply influence
who I am as a researcher, we are one and the same.... Personal and professional lives intersect in meaningful ways” (p. 106). This intersection is nowhere more visible than when it comes to the development of our scholarly writing.

In another book on qualitative research, Laurel Richardson (1994) also challenged the traditional view of writing. She presented the purpose of writing up qualitative research as a part of a process of learning and thinking and claimed it is a very different process from the writing done for quantitative research.

I was taught, however, as perhaps you were, too, not to write until I knew what I wanted to say, until my points were organized and outlined. No surprise, this static writing model coheres with mechanistic scientism and quantitative research...The model has serious problems: It ignores the role of writing as a dynamic, creative process; it undermines the confidence of beginning qualitative researchers because their experience of research is inconsistent with the writing model; and it contributes to the flotilla of qualitative writing that is simply not interesting to read because adherence to the model requires writers to silence their own voices and to view themselves as contaminants.

(Richardson, 1994, p. 517)

The nature of qualitative research requires scholars to be more engaged in the writing of their research as the analysis of qualitative material requires more engagement. This is more than reporting statistical facts that we take for granted as being “truth” with a capital “T.” In qualitative research, there are many truths. There is no pre-identified hypothesis that is to be proven. Instead, qualitative research provides a snapshot of different lives, which can be interpreted from many different perspectives, hence, many
different truths. As Richardson alluded, the writing is a creative process, one in which we find our voices. Where do our voices come from though? A start is to understand our epistemologies and theoretical perspectives.

**Epistemology**

An epistemology is the way one views the nature of knowledge and how one makes sense of the world—how one knows what one knows (Crotty, 1998). A researcher’s understanding of her epistemological approach is critical to the theoretical perspectives that influence her and her choices for methodology and methods. I am influenced mostly by my U.S. culture; my identity in dominant groups (power and privilege), socially and personally defined; and my identity in targeted or oppressed groups (marginalization and voice), socially and personally defined.

I identify my epistemological belief as situated between constructivism and constructionism. Constructivism proposes that meaning is constructed from the unique activity of the individual while constructionism views meaning as socially constructed and transmitted to us through our culture with meaning preconstructed by our culture (Crotty, 1998). My personal belief is somewhere between this dichotomous paradigm, integrating aspects of these two approaches to knowledge and meaning. I believe that humans are social beings, born into a community where we learn about the world through those around us. Nevertheless, I also believe that as we grow and develop, we have the opportunities and capacities to make our own meanings through conscious awareness of culture and self or to reframe our meanings based on our own experiences.
Theoretical Perspective

Theoretical perspectives are influenced by the epistemology of the researcher (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002; Crotty, 1998; Jones, 2002). We carry assumptions to our research tasks and our philosophical stance influences the methodological choices we make (Crotty, 1998). My theoretical perspective is largely influenced by feminist theory and critical theory. Feminist theory maintains that the world is constructed patriarchally and the culture we inherit is masculine-based. Critical theory explicates that culture is not separate from the transactions of daily life, but mirrors its contradictions and oppressions.

My Approach

My epistemology and theoretical perspectives then influence my approach to research and naturally my approach to writing. I hold a high value for the process and outcome of research. Because research is vital to practice in my profession, I believe research should inform practice and practice should generate and inspire research. The voices of those underrepresented and underserved in higher education can inform and strengthen us as individuals and collectively as institutions. While my epistemology and theoretical perspectives guide me, traditional scholarly pursuits have stressed an "objective," distanced view of research and education. Ruth Behar (1994) expressed this sentiment eloquently when she wrote:

What is drawing me and, I believe, other scholars to write personally is a desire to abandon the alienation "metalanguage" that closes, rather than opens, the doors of academe to all those who wish to enter. Personal writing represents a sustained effort to democratize the academy. Indeed, it emerges from the struggles of those traditionally excluded from the academy, such as women and members of
minority groups, to find a voice that acknowledges both their sense of difference and their belated arrival on the scholarly scene. "Yes, we are here," so many of the new personal texts seem to assert, "but we’re not who you think we are!" (p. B2)

For me, qualitative research seems a natural extension of my work. After 20 years of counseling individuals, couples, families, and groups, gathering information about people’s lives is almost second nature—their values, their experiences, their epiphanies, their traumas, and how they make sense of all of that. Cole and Knowles (2001) refer to this as a participant-observer role. Qualitative research is also a vehicle through which traditionally marginalized persons in higher education can have a voice. As a woman, as a first-generation college student, having a voice has been crucial in my education. Therefore, understanding the process of how student affairs professionals use their voice in scholarship is a perfect fit for my dissertation.

Overview of Study

The focus of this study is on the non-technical process of writing in student affairs scholarship. Sixteen well-published student affairs professionals were interviewed about their writing development and publication experiences. The resulting transcripts were analyzed using a phenomenological procedure.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to illuminate the process of scholarly writing and whether/how that process influences the identity of student affairs professionals.
Research Questions

What are the emotional and psychological processes (non-technical aspects) that student affairs scholars go through as they write for publication? How did they develop that writing process over time? Has that writing process influenced their identity and if so, how?

Significance of Study

Although much of our education in the field of student affairs involves attending conferences and reading professional literature, almost no research has been conducted on the process and identity of student affairs scholars and writing. This study seeks to open exploration into how student affairs professionals write and whether this influences their professional identity. By doing so, I hope to provide some further areas for research and exploration and to provide guidance for the teaching of writing to student affairs students.

Limitations of Study

As with most qualitative inquiries, this study incorporates a small, select sample size. Its smallness provides for great depth and richness of material, thereby not making it a limitation but an asset.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter I will provide the background and overview for this study and define some selected terminology. Chapter II will review relevant literature. Chapter III will explicate the theoretical perspectives and the phenomenological methodology while also delineating the epoche. The research findings will be detailed in Chapter IV and Chapter V will discuss the conclusions and recommendations drawn from this research, and
Chapter VI will be a reflection on my journey living and experiencing the lived experience about which I am writing.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Introduction

I have structured this chapter into four sections. The first presents the little information about scholarship, writing, and professional identity that I have culled from the student affairs literature. The second section provides relevant information collected from an assortment of other professions as it relates specifically to writing process, scholarly writing, and the instruction of writing. Salient illustrations from literature on various aspects of writing per se are included in the third section and the fourth section illuminates noteworthy information supporting my ideas of the non-technical aspects in the instruction of writing with graduate students.

Student Affairs

There is relatively little in the student affairs literature concerning the training of graduate students in professional writing. Most literature related to professional writing is about publication patterns and trends concerning such issues as collaboration vs. single authorship (Saunders, Register, Cooper, Bates, & Daddona, 2000), content areas covered in articles (Davis & Liddell, 1997), prolific scholarly activity (Hunter, 1986; Hunter & Kuh, 1987), or general scholarship (Blimling, 2001; Roper, 2002). Two journal articles do specifically address writing for publication in student affairs, but the focus was on the more technical aspects (Engstrom, 1999; Hunter, 1986).
One particular student affairs article (Onwuegbuzie, 1998) reported on a study about the writing anxiety of graduate students. The researcher surveyed and administered writing apprehension tests to 89 graduate students in social and behavioral science disciplines. He reported that students with higher anxiety about writing tend to write poorer quality papers and proposals and have learning styles that are more authority-oriented. Anxiety is certainly a component of many doctoral students' process. However, Onwuegbuzie did not explore the effect that the anxiety may have had on the students' perceptions of self as scholars.

In another student affairs article, Davis and Liddell (1997) reviewed publication trends in the *Journal of College Student Development* spanning nine years, focusing on distribution of male and female authors, single versus collaborative authorships, funding, methodologies, and subject trends. They reported on the frequencies of subject areas, types of funding for research, and types of articles and research methodologies. Saunders, Register, Cooper, Bates, and Daddona (2000) conducted a similar study of authorship patterns in the *Journal of College Student Development* and the *NASPA Journal*. After examining over 30 years of articles, the authors discovered a significant increase in the number of collaboratively written articles, an increase in the number of women authors and women as first authors, and an increase in the number of articles published by graduate students. With the trend in collaboration, I think identity will emerge as a more salient issue for professionals. Collaboration opportunities often cause us to see how we are similar to and different from our colleagues, requiring more exploration and explication of our own process.
Back in 1986, Hunter conducted a survey of well-published higher education/student affairs administration female scholars. She reported that they identified professional affiliations and collegial relationships as encouraging to their writing. This supports my supposition that the non-technical aspects of scholarly writing (like mentoring and support) are of significance.

Following up in 1999, Engstrom conducted a qualitative study on how tenured women faculty in higher education and student affairs with strong publication records perceived the role of their doctoral programs in promoting scholarly writing. Most participants acknowledged that the socialization of women to the academy differs significantly from that of men. Three areas were of consequence: structured opportunities for skill development in research, writing, and publishing; the role of mentors; and the role of peers. I had a very emotional response to reading this article as I saw Engstrom’s assertions reflected in my own doctoral life. Being the only women in my cohort, I witnessed amazing gender differences in regard to opportunities in the department, with preferencing going toward men. I personally longed for more connected and collaborative experiences than my peers and did not feel fulfilled by competitive approaches.

Additionally, two special issues of the major student affairs journals focused on scholarship within the profession (Blimling, 2001; Roper, 2002). The Winter 2002 special issue of the NASPA Journal, entitled “The Scholarship of Student Affairs” (Roper, 2002) has many articles calling for the redefinition and exploration of scholarship in student affairs and, more specifically, how it should affect the “direction” of the journal. However, in the content of the individual articles, there was no a focus on the actual writing process for professionals and students or the training of such. The other
special issue was the July/August issue of volume 42 in the *Journal of College Student Development*, entitled "Scholarship in Student Affairs Revisited" (Blimling, 2001). Similar to the special issue of the *NASPA Journal*, the focus was on general scholarship. There were numerous calls for scholarship to be rigorous and the teaching of student affairs to return to a "scholarly" base, for professionals to conduct and report research, and for our journals to remain scholarly and professional. But how are we to do this if the very vehicle by which we transport our knowledge (our publications) is not adequately taught to new professionals? My concern is that my profession is calling for increased scholarship but not paying enough attention to how we get there. As a doctoral student in student affairs, the absence of addressing the "hows" means that I am expected to learn either by osmosis or should have been born just knowing how. As a student, this is frustrating. We can and should teach the process that is involved, and much of that instruction will be grounded in personal awareness.

One last source from a recently published book on qualitative research in higher education (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006) addressed the importance of writing specific to qualitative research. They asserted that, "It is in and through the writing process that meaning takes shape and insights are sharpened....What becomes known about your research comes through what is written, and therefore, the writing process carries with it a great responsibility" (p. 171).

**Information From Other Relevant Professions**

While scholarly writing is endemic across a variety of professions, one of the challenges to this project is that so little has been written in any field about this process.
Culling through the literature of various professions, I have been able to collect the few that have been published related to this topic that could be applied to student affairs.

_Counseling Psychology Training_

Relevant to professional writing, there is an emerging body of literature focused on research training, particularly in counseling psychology. The focus is often on providing training environments that foster research activity among doctoral students (e.g., Bowman, 1997; Brown, Lent, Ryan, & McPartland, 1996; Gelso, 1993; Gelso & Lent, 2000). Although the research training literature is not focused on professional writing per se, there is material relevant to professional writing.

One training director (Bowman, 1997) wrote about her personal observations of the academic training of counseling psychologists. Her research indicated very few counseling psychologists publish post doctorate and she speculated that the fear of publishing is a significant factor. More specifically, she claimed that academicians’ attitudes toward students do not seem to encourage students to learn to write and publish. Bowman categorized faculty-student interactions as being separated to the point that students are often viewed as “unpaid peons to do our bidding” (p. 84). She suggested that research and writing should be taught the same way counseling skills are taught, that is, through practicum experience—what I would label as process. She also asserted that even though the field of counseling psychology is “feminized,” women are not supported or socialized in a way that encourages their development and “voice” because those who are training women are still primarily White men.
Additionally, there is some literature focused on training for professional writing in social work that is germane here. Alter and Adkins (2001) reviewed a program implemented at the University of Denver for improving the writing of graduate social work students. They reported a steady decline in the writing skills of U.S. students and reviewed the history of schools' and colleges' attempts to correct the decline. The social work graduate faculty developed a dual component program that required incoming students to have their writing skills assessed, and then offered writing assistance throughout the year in a writing lab specific to their program. While this article was focused primarily on the technicalities of writing, of particular interest was the history of the instruction of writing which they reported. Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) programs became popular in the 1970s along with college Learning Centers modeled on an innovative program at Yale University. High school graduation skill tests began to be implemented at many schools in the 1980s while colleges began to shift their focus to teaching students critical thinking skills, hoping to improve writing skills through thinking skills. In the 1990s, structured writing labs became popular in campus resource centers; however most schools found the demand for their services from students and instructors far exceeded their resources. The implication here is that the demand for writing instruction is high and growing.

Also in the field of social work, Page-Adams, Cheng, Gogineni, and Shen (1995) presented their approach to encouraging doctoral students to write for publication. They reviewed the process of a doctoral support group that formed at Washington University. Eight students met regularly to review each other's articles for publication, give feedback
and editorial advice, discuss theoretical approaches, and support one another. The eight students all believed their writing had improved and that they had increased their publication productivity by the end of the year in the group. This group process reflects the numerous references in the student affairs literature about the collaborative approach to writing and demonstrates the social-psychological nature of the writing process.

Another article (Dolejs & Grant, 2000) in social work presented teaching suggestions for improving graduate students’ writing. Of interest was the social-psychological uses of writing as tasks, primarily using writing as a way to learn, as process, and as a social act. They also suggested that professors require multiple drafts of papers to be turned in as a way to reinforce for students that writing is a process.

In one last article in social work, family therapists Piercy, Sprenkle, and McDaniel (1996) detailed how they teach professional writing in workshops and through their own publications. They stressed the importance of support and the need for budding writers to write with a voice that is congruent with their own, steering away from professional jargon. One goal in their workshop is for participants to learn to have an excitement for professional writing. These ideas are all focused on the social-psychological processes in developing voice, providing modeling and support, and mentoring new scholars.

**Nursing**

In one research project from the nursing profession, nursing instructors were given valuable information from Eyres, Hatch, and Turner’s (2001) survey of doctoral students’ responses to their professors’ writing critique. They interviewed 15 doctoral students about their reactions to professors’ feedback on their writing. Several significant
responses clearly linked learning to write to their identity. “I came here to build on who I already was...” (p. 150); “It is extremely important to us to be seen for our individuality” (p. 152); and “When you respond to our papers, do it in a way that helps us find our voices” (p. 152) are all prime examples of their writing being linked to identity. The students in this study also addressed the weight of support and encouragement. One student specifically identified how helpful it was for her to have a professor view writing as a process, “The most helpful writing experience has been with the instructor who made it very clear that she considered writing a process, and she would view multiple drafts” (p. 150). Significant to me was another student’s comment, “…if I were to have made all the changes suggested by the comments, I would have felt like I was writing her [the professor’s] paper” (p. 150). Editorial feedback was not always appropriate or constructive, but encouragement and support for thinking and ideas were. Their final recommendations included: provide opportunities to engage in the writing process through multiple drafts; give specific, constructive feedback that acknowledges individuality; encourage students to grow; help them think like the professional community, not just like students; help them join in the professional conversations; and interact with students to engage them in thinking, do not just challenge them to think.

These survey responses are highly applicable to teaching doctoral student affairs students the social-psychological aspects of writing as well.

*English as a Second Language*

In the literature from *English as a Second Language*, Casanave and Hubbard (1992) reviewed faculty perceptions and pedagogical beliefs about teaching writing to first-year doctoral students. They surveyed 85 graduate faculty members across 28
departments about their writing requirements, evaluation criteria, and the perceived writing problems of non-native English speaking students. Social-psychological issues were not addressed here, but Casanave and Hubbard raised serious pedagogical considerations about the teaching of writing to doctoral students within disciplines that is relevant to this study. Specifically, doctoral students need to learn writing within their own discipline and that as students progress in their program, emphasis should be on helping students become more self-sufficient in preparing final work products long before they reach the dissertation stage.

Education

From remedial and special education, information about the how of writing for publication was also available. Fuchs and Fuchs (1993) provide detailed guidelines to potential authors on the process of getting published. While these guidelines are standard technical fare, they do address some of the emotional components of the process, such as perseverance and a willingness to learn in the many steps toward getting an article published. Spooner and Heller's (1993) article on writing for publication in special education made the point that professional writing need not be dry. They stressed the need to make writing have interest and value for the readers of journals, which comes by way of the interest writers have in their topic and process. They also addressed the need for mentoring new professionals into writing.

Additionally, from an educational leadership perspective, Rippenberger (1998) gave specific advice to graduate faculty about the “art” of writing for publication. While most of her advice is actually technical “how-tos,” she did refer to the encouragement of students to enjoy writing and the process of getting work ready for publication. She
detailed how she walks students through the many drafts and rewrites of a piece in preparing for publication. However, process is more than multiple edits.

In the field of computers and education, Maddux (1995, 1996a, 1996b) wrote a three-part article on scholarly publishing, presenting very common-sense types of suggestions along with a genuine love of the process of scholarship. Some of the suggestions were process-oriented while others were technique-oriented. Overall, he stressed collaboration with colleagues and students. What was noteworthy in his suggestions was the focus on a writer’s attitude about writing. He drew conclusions about the role of professors’ attitudes about writing and publishing to the development of positive or negative attitudes in graduate students. He made a strong case for role modeling and mentoring for students. Most amazing for me in this article is Maddux’s own voice shining through. I could feel how much he cared about what he was writing.

A more recent book addressed academic writing in education and the importance of linking the personal to the professional work (Richards & Miller, 2005). The authors explored the relevant debates in teacher education about the instruction of writing and the traditional expectations for academic writing that good writing is only “objective,” meaning, the personal is not evident. The authors advocated for active teaching to students and the use of the personal in academic writing, specifically, in developing voice. In the introduction to this book, Don Murray, a well-known scholar on writing instruction in education, delineated the traditional academic voice from the passionate voice. He situated these as being grounded in “male” and “female” approaches and stated that it is:
more than a matter of sexism. All of us, male and female, recognized that our profession spoke in two voices. One was the academic voice in which we spoke to the ‘choir,’ and the other was the personal voice in which we spoke to other audiences. (pp. xvii-xviii)

He went on to add that he found “a great irony in the fact that our profession, through many of its scholarly journals of writing, encourages a professional discourse that communicates to fewer and fewer” (p. xviii). Clearly, he saw the importance of protecting a profession and keeping it going.

Additionally in this book, the authors made a significant point about traditional practices. In developing voice in academic writing, they stressed that the membership of the academic community is changing rapidly, and therefore it is only natural that our language changes as well.

Although it did not come about easily, there are now in academe more people of color, more women, more scholars from diverse cultures, and more students for whom English is not their first language. These scholars bring with them their own particular discourse and have a need and a right to blend what might have been previously described as nonacademic discourse with traditional academic discourse. (p. 55)

Information From Literature on Writing

While different disciplines have contributed information relevant to this study, there is crucial information from the literature on writing per se that can be applied here as well.
From his perspective as a Writing Program administrator, Miller (2001) discussed his personal perspective on graduate preparation and the instruction of writing. He alleged that the instruction of writing is viewed as transparent and unproblematic, and that historically the teaching of basic writing skills has been considered an “unprofessional concern.” Most professors made assumptions that those basic skills are not their responsibility to cover and focused more on the content of their course than on the development of the student writer. However, Miller maintained that the only way students can learn to write in a discipline is to work with the experts in that discipline, quite in line with the recommendations from Casanave and Hubbard (1992). Miller further stressed collaborative learning as a way to accomplish this intra-discipline instruction. In sum, I think Miller is seeking to find ways to teach the process, but I do not think he labeled it as such.

Another author (Tee, 1999) reviewed his own progress in writing and publishing after attending a workshop on the technicalities of writing. The suggestions he offered are typical, standard fare for advice to aspiring writers for professional publications: identify your specific field and scope of study; identify the authoritative body that best represents the profession; identity flagship journals; identify similar publications; and identify specialist in the field to engage in discussion about your ideas and results. Furthermore, he listed specific personal attributes as contributing to publication success: perseverance, proofreading skills, clarity, and willingness to consider modifications or to extend your research. However, the areas that are not addressed are the emotional venues in the process of writing.
Dissertation Process Writing

The literature that describes more of the social-psychological pieces in the writing process comes from literature specific to writing dissertations. I found this fact particularly inspiring, as I think the dissertation process clearly stretches most people on an emotional level as they go through the process. Smith, Brownell, Simpson, and Deshler (1993) wrote an article from the point of view of two dissertation students and two dissertation advisors about the process of dissertation work. While most of the article was not focused on the process of professional writing, it did address some of the social-psychological aspects that I believe is left out of other professional literature. In particular, one dissertation student, Brownell, touched on the non-linear nature of the process of writing: “Intellectual and emotional breakthroughs and setbacks became a familiar experience, and surviving them required the maximum endurance that I could muster” (p. 56). She continued to describe the emotional roller coaster with:

My exhilaration gave way to feelings of inadequacy over my lack of experience and knowledge regarding the questions I wanted to answer… For me, surviving the emotional warp and woof of the dissertation process required tenacity, support of my adviser, personal and collegial support, and previous experience conducting applied research. (pp. 56-57)

Brownell acknowledged the emotional aspect of scholarship and the writing process that is often ignored or under-understood in the profession of student affairs.

In a book specific to the process of writing a qualitative dissertation, Meloy (2002) addressed the “emotional journey” of writing and its relationship to voice. She advocated using a journal while writing to reflect on the process one is going through and
identifying the emotional aspects of one's writing. By using excerpts from many interviews with doctoral students' about their process, Meloy dramatically illustrated that there is an emotional side to the process of writing. One prominent point the students in the book returned to time and again was about voice and ownership of one's writing. As I read this material, their comments resonated deeply within me as I was also in the process of being a doctoral student struggling in the dissertation writing process. How do I describe it? How do I claim it? This book was helpful in taking some of the isolation out of the process for me, while at the same time illuminating how the process involves isolation.

Another major point highlighted in the Meloy (2002) book was about the emotional journey and the struggles with self-confidence and success. As an adult returning to school after 20 years as a professional, my competence and self-confidence was challenged. Early in my doctoral program in my college student development class, I learned how to think of this as part of a developmental process. The connection for me was that as we learn to write for publication, many competent professionals are entering an area where their inexperience challenges their self-confidence and competence, thereby affecting their established identity. Students, as practitioners, might feel very competent, but as budding writers, they may experience a sense of dissonance in the process, one that does not feel too comfortable or provide immediate (enough) rewards. This aspect of competence must be considered as we design programs to teach writing.

In addition, Veroff (2001) wrote a chapter specifically about writing in a book on the surviving the dissertation process. A beginning exercise that she recommended for doctoral students is to start with reviewing their writing history. She proposed that
illuminating one’s identity as a writer starts with reviewing what has been learned about writing, how one has been rewarded or punished, and what one’s current feelings and attitudes are about writing. Three detrimental messages in prior schooling seemed to be most prevalent among doctoral students: they learned to distance themselves from their writing, learned to think of writing as a boring activity, and learned to feel inadequate as a writer. This is a start in acknowledging the incredible emotional process that writing involves and its connection to scholarly identity.

Scholarly Writing

There have been many books written on advising budding writers in the arena of scholarly publication. Huff (1999) and Rankin (2001) each authored a book in which they addressed the technical aspects as well as process. Huff likened scholarship to an ongoing conversation in writing. She conceptualized scholarship as a “lively exchange of ideas—conversation at its best” (p. 3). Rankin addressed more elusive elements of writing, declaring that “the relationship between thought and language is extremely complex” and “our speaking and writing are forms of thinking—processes of discovery in themselves” (p. 12).

Similarly, Diekelmann and Ironside (1998) described scholarship as a dialogue carried out through the literature. When one voice has a conversation with other voices, then we have created scholarship. This community then is vital to providing critique and feedback that enhances reflexive thinking and continually shapes scholarship and writing. Thus, student affairs journals and books are one of the mediums by which professionals connect, communicate, and continue the profession.
Building on that idea, Allen (2002) claimed that the purpose of scholarship is to provide leadership. Since leadership takes the form here of writing and publishing, how are we managing to teach our graduate students to write, to shape their identities as writers? Is writing not more than just a mere reporting of research conducted?

This scholarly conversation is enriched through the evolving contributions of newcomers to the student affairs profession. In order for newcomers to express their voices, they must have confidence to enter that conversation. This, of course, is linked to the development of their voice through connection to their writing. The interrelated, overlapping nature of these three aspects of voice development (voice, self-efficacy, and connectedness) are continually evolving and shaping each of the other aspects.

Supporting that interrelated process, Dolejs and Grant (2000) affirmed that “no good writing is conceived whole in the writer’s head and transferred onto paper” (p. 23). A process starts from an idea in the writer’s head and is shaped and molded into a thought transferred to the page or computer screen. There is a chaos to this process, one in which the swirl of ideas, thoughts, reactions, and responses to the ongoing professional discourse find their way through the brain and into the writer’s fingertips. I use chaos here not as a term to denote a negative state, but instead as a term to describe the internal effort to create and express.

Continuing to build on these ideas, there is one book that specifically addressed academic writing and identity (Ivanič, 1998). Ivanič worked with “mature” (returning) adult college students in England. She proposed that writing is about the representation of the self (how we see ourselves and how others see us through our writing) and not just about the content. She summarized her book as focusing on “the capacity of the written
language to construct the identity of the writer” (p. 345). For many students in higher education, academic writing is difficult, as the “voice” that is situated in such writing does not feel comfortable or real to the writer. This dissonance is then the cause of the poor attention placed on writing by students as a whole, and, as Ivanič asserted, their avoidance of writing. Ivanič (1998) believed that writing is:

not a ‘neutral’ skill, but a socio-political act of identification in which people are constructed by the discoursal resources on which they are drawing, construct their own ‘discoursal identity’ in relation to their immediate social contest, and contribute to constructing a new configuration of discoursal resources for the future. While language can, to some extent, be donned and discarded like a set of clothing, it also has deeply personal consequences, going right to the heart of our being, defining our social selves. For these reasons, I suggest that issues of identity are not an ‘optional extra’ for literacy theorists, but are central to the social view of writing. (p. 345)

In the context of her book, Ivanič (1998) suggested that we can gain control over our writing when we recognize what and how we write is in fact communicating a significant impression of who we are. The influence of this piece of literature was outstanding for me. From a pedagogical perspective then, when we seek to teach and mentor doctoral students and new professionals into writing for the student affairs profession, we must address the personal aspect of identity. Who are they? How do they perceive themselves and how do they wish others to perceive them? By acknowledging the deeply personal nature of writing, we can help new writers then gain mastery over their expectations.
**Creative Writing**

Finally, there is a tremendous amount of literature written on writing not specific to scholarship in any particular profession. This literature comes from a myriad of angles and perspectives, and I have selected several sources that seem most applicable to scholarly writing in student affairs. In writing about writing itself, there are valuable lessons about the “art” of writing. Natalie Goldberg (1986), in her classic *Writing Down the Bones*, went deep into the process of writing. She provided a fun and energizing process in her approach to teaching writing, emphasizing such things as listening well, reading voraciously, sifting through personal experiences, and self-reflection as vital to the process of writing. Instead of distancing from our writing, she advocated that we engage with it. This would be helpful to inspiring the passion that Veroff (2001) recommended and the enjoyment that Maddux (1995) advocated.

In another unique source about the process of writing, Killien and Bender (1992) published the letters they wrote to each other as they prepared to teach a class together on writing. Additionally, there are volumes of advice on writing from prolific writers such as Ray Bradbury (1990) and Stephen King (2000). Although not specific to student affairs, these resources can help students develop their identity as writers.

**Non-Technical Components**

**Support and Mentorship**

There is also a body of literature that addressed supporting and mentoring students into the scholarly conversation as a vital step to their continued investment in writing and publishing (Engstrom, 1999; Flint, Manas, & Serra, 2001; Herrington, 1997; Hunter, 1986; Maddux, 1996b; Piercy, Sprenkle, & McDaniel, 1996; Rippenberger,
1998; Spooner & Heller, 1993). Encouragement from faculty members and advisors was frequently cited as necessary to the process of developing scholarly interest and voice (Bowman, 1997; Engstrom, 1999; Eyres, Hatch, & Turner, 2001), and even more so for students of color and women (Bowman, 1997; Engstrom, 1999; Flint, Manas, & Serra, 2001). In one study (Eyres, Hatch, & Turner, 2001), doctoral students specifically requested that faculty help them join the professional conversation, indicating that students do not feel a part of the community of scholars. Support and encouragement will help tentative newcomers try out their voices.

Support takes many forms, from casual comments to concentrated interest. "Mattering," a state of feeling that one’s existence is important to her or his environment, is important for developing a commitment to one’s profession. Brown, Lent, Ryan, and McPartland (1996) found that among counseling psychology doctoral students, women’s perceptions of the research training environment were more strongly related to self-efficacy beliefs than men’s, yet men’s self-efficacy beliefs were more strongly related to their research productivity than women’s. Kathryn Lenz (1997), writing about nontraditional-aged women in the dissertation process, reported that women’s relationships with their advisors were central to either helping or hindering their completion of the dissertation. One way or another, students are affected by the amount of support they receive in their training programs. Programs and professors that treat doctoral students as "unpaid peons to do (their) bidding" (Bowman, 1997, p. 84) deplete that personal sense of mattering. This is significant to the continued development of one’s professional identity.
Support also comes in the form of talking. The elusive writing process involves thinking, passing around ideas, brainstorming, and collaborating. Professors who take the time to sit and talk to students—about their own and their students’ ideas and writing—help to model the process and develop the enthusiasm that sparks creativity. This type of mentoring, the exchanging of ideas, plays a significant role in developing student scholarship and writing (Bowman, 1997; Engstrom, 1999; Maddux, 1996b) and subsequently in the continuation of the profession. Margaret Reif (1992) described this as “talking into writing” in her article on improving instruction in writing for nontraditional graduate students.

From a more personal perspective, Flint, Manas, and Serra (2001) wrote an article about their experiences as faculty women of color in a supportive writing group to promote their self-confidence and skills at writing and publishing. They addressed their struggles and successes in overcoming their fear and vulnerability around writing, stressing collaboration and encouragement as central to their success in a primarily White male environment. An interesting assertion they made is that almost everyone educated in the U.S. educational system has a fear of writing. Most writing is taught with an emphasis on structure rather than process. I think this has far-reaching implications especially for women and people of color. This was another emotional article for me as I realized that I have years of negative messages to overcome with writing. Most of my writing experience through journaling has been a vulnerable, usually private process. This article was another example of the very emotional process that evolves while writing.
Modeling

One other aspect to address is that of modeling. As it can be helpful for students to watch and observe their professors, it can also be unhelpful. Sharon Bowman (1997), a former counseling psychology training director, posited that professors’ attitudes will be communicated to their students. Charles Gelso (1993), in his writing about scientist-practitioner training in counseling psychology, identified faculty modeling as the most fundamentally important factor in research training. In a series of articles about publishing in scholarly journals, Cleborne Maddux (1995, 1996a, 1996b) asserted that professors’ complaints about writing and publication reinforce the fears students may bring to their doctoral program and their avoidance of writing. The absence of writing classes in our doctoral programs also sends a message to students. Writing is either “not important” or is something we should just know how to do. This is reinforced further with the scarcity of institutions that do not provide student affairs administrators time in their schedules for writing. We must ask ourselves this: What are we communicating?

Relationship to Writing

One of my main thoughts about writing, that the process of writing is significantly affected by personal attitudes about writing and scholarship, is addressed in numerous ways in assorted pieces of literature. Veroff (2001) stressed a need for writers to have passion; McGowan (1997) and Veroff both suggested that a writer must have a true interest in the topic; and Hunter (1986) and Maddux (1995) both advocated that a writer must have an enjoyment of research and writing. I think all these aspects make up elements of the creative style in the process of writing. What is one’s relationship to the writing? In one handbook on writing (Karls & Szymanski, 1990), the authors stated
"whatever kind of writing you do—practical, creative, or some of both...." (p. 4), which seems to imply that creative writing is not practical and that practical writing is not creative. I do not agree with this, as I believe there is a creative process to scholarship but it has not been named yet.

Summary

While there are thousands of sources available about writing per se, there is less available about the process of scholarly writing. Most of the material on scholarly writing focuses on the “how-tos” of writing from a technical or structural standpoint. The emotional components and the non-linear process of writing is less often addressed, and when it is, it is not very clearly defined or thoroughly discussed. Some of the themes that came up in the literature started to touch on these social-psychological issues, such as support, encouragement, mentoring, role modeling, attitudes, and self-efficacy. Taking all these things into consideration, they also influence one’s perceptions of one’s self as a writer—hence, identity. It is these areas specifically I wish to delve into in this study.
CHAPTER III

METHOD

“One of the most important features of talking is the opportunity it offers us to explore the nature of describing being here for one another.” (Curry, 1973)

This chapter presents the research design that is the structure for the process of this phenomenological inquiry. First, I will summarize the key assumptions of the phenomenology research approach and discuss its fit with this topic; then I will delineate the participant co-researcher characteristics and sampling strategies. Next, I will provide an overview of the research procedure, specifically describing the epoche, phenomenological description, phenomenological reduction, and phenomenological interpretation or synthesis. Lastly, I will address issues of trustworthiness and goodness of fit.

Phenomenological Inquiry

The focus of phenomenological inquiry is on the conscious, lived experience of a person (Orbe, 1998). It is discovery-oriented (Giorgi, 1994), requiring entering the field of perception of the participants: how do they live, experience, and make meaning from the phenomenon under investigation (Creswell, 1998). Phenomenology seeks to explicate the essence, the common or universal aspects, of several individuals’ experience with the same phenomenon (Creswell, 1998; Moustakas, 1994). By laying aside, as best we can, our understandings of a phenomenon, we can then revisit the immediate experience and allow new meanings to emerge (Crotty, 1998).
This process involves researcher preparation on a self-reflective level in order to identify her presuppositions, biases, and preconceived ideas (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002). The researcher is considered the instrument, and the interview is the process by which data are typically collected. Analysis involves reflection and techniques of intuition, imaginative variation, phenomenology reduction, and identification of universal structures or essences (Moustakas, 1994).

The general procedure of phenomenological inquiry involves several steps: the epoche, phenomenological description, phenomenological reduction, and phenomenological interpretation or synthesis. Each of these steps will be described in detail in the procedure section.

**Key Assumptions**

Phenomenological inquiry as a human science research method is based on several essential assumptions highlighted by Orbe (1998). First, phenomenology rejects the notion of the objective researcher that dominates quantitative research. Instead, the researcher's subjective experiences lend vital data to the study undertaken. A second assumption is that phenomenology seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning and nature of common everyday experiences. Third, whereas quantitative investigation seeks to prove or disprove stated hypotheses, qualitative inquiry and phenomenology is discovery-oriented. A fourth assumption is that phenomenological investigation proceeds in an open, unconstrictive way with the researcher and participants as “partners in the generation of knowledge” (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002, p. 449). The research question is broad, allowing for all possible situations and meaning constructions on the part of participants. Interviewing questions are open-ended in order to promote inductive
exploration of participants’ experiences (Orbe, 2000). Fifth, phenomenology studies the lived experiences of persons as opposed to individuals. In quantitative sciences, the “individual” can refer to people, animals, or things that are being studied. In phenomenology, it is only about the person.

The sixth assumption is that phenomenology seeks to describe and report the conscious experience, known as capta, rather than hypothetical situations. In doing so, the researcher is actively a medium for the voices of her participants. There is no manipulation of the reported information, nor is there an attempt to alter, reshape, or explain the causal factors of their lived experiences.

Rationale/Fit of Phenomenological Inquiry

As there is little research or even discussion of student affairs professionals’ experiences as writers and their process of developing their writing skills, the exploratory nature of this study is a good fit for a phenomenological analysis. It is also a suitable match for how I situate myself in the epistemology and theoretical perspectives, which I have presented in Chapter I.

Participant Selection

Participants were chosen by their fit with the criterion of this study. Thirty participants sent invitations by email to participate in this study. Eighteen responded asking for the packets of information. Sixteen student affairs professionals returned the consent forms and participated in telephone interviews about their own process in writing for scholarly publication. The study included seasoned and mid-level professionals who have been well-published in student affairs books and journals. All of the participants were selected for their ability and willingness to reflect on their process and experiences,
and their ability to provide rich information in great depth. Therefore, a small sample as
typical in a qualitative study is not a limitation but an asset.

Sampling

Qualitative research uses several different types of purposeful sampling as opposed to random sampling. In the context of this study, participants were selected because they facilitate the particular inquiry (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998) about the identified phenomenon. For this study, I used two sampling strategies: criterion and snowball. Criterion sampling establishes certain qualities, experiences, or characteristics that must be held by an individual in order to be a participant (Creswell, 1998). Snowball sampling is a process of identifying cases from “people who know people who know that cases are information-rich” (Creswell, 1998, p. 119).

Criterion

For this study, there are two criterions that participants needed to meet to be invited to participate. First, participants must identify as student affairs professionals. This was either as a practitioner in the field or a professor of student affairs/higher education, or as both. Second, the participant had to have a record of scholarly publications in student affairs journals, monographs, and/or books.

Snowball

Since the population for this study is specific, the participants were selected through a process of examining the contributing authors to professional journals and standard student affairs texts. Then, through discussion with my dissertation chair and a committee member, other names of potential participants were identified. We added or deleted names in an attempt to balance for years of experience, personal identities (e.g.,
race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.). We settled on an original list of 30 to invite to participate. I had also planned to solicit recommendations from participants about other potential participants, but this was not necessary due to the overwhelming first response I received.

Participant Description

I have chosen an aggregate description of the participants simply to keep identities confidential, recognizing that a traditional description of each individual in this study would make it easy to identify persons as they are all known well within professional circles. Additionally, as I use the words of different participants, I provide only the salient aspects of a person’s identity to the quote or theme being referenced. In some way, this sacrifices continuity throughout the reporting of the data, but identifying one person by age, years in practice, gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation could easily be recognized. And in some places where an individual identity isn’t relevant to the theme exploration, there may be no identification. The other consideration I adhered to in selecting material to illustrate these experiences was to remain conscious about how easily recognized people might be in their comments and philosophy. I have eliminated references to others, unless it is a reference to a theory widely used in the profession. While some participants talked about personal identities and life circumstances that have affected their development, to identify specifics could be too revealing. Hence, I have remained vague and broad in some areas I might have otherwise delved into with another sample of less public people. In leaving out some specific cultural and salient identities, I fear I may unintentionally invalidate or disrespect a person’s experience and the value of difference. Some of these decisions were agonizing, as I want to pay due respect to those
differences but I would fail to protect anonymity if I did so. To my co-researchers, I humbly apologize for any offense.

In total, 16 people participated in this project with me. Nine were female and seven were male. Three identified as people of color and 13 identified as White or Caucasian. Four identified during the interviews as lesbian or gay while others either did not identify their sexual orientation or identified themselves as heterosexual. This personal identification occurred mostly in reflecting on how personal identity intertwined with their writing.

Thirteen participants also identified as full-time faculty members and three as practitioners or consultants, and all but one faculty member had significant experience as a practitioner before teaching (6 to 30 years). The ages ranged from 42 to 60, with six between 42 and 47, five between 50 and 54, and five were 59 and 60. All participants were within middle age range of Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development model (Erikson, 1959/1980, 1982) which will be explored later in Chapter IV. Fifteen participants had Ph.D.s in student affairs, higher education, education administration, or college student personnel, and one person had completed some Ph.D. work at the time of the interview. They completed graduated their graduate training in student affairs at the master’s and doctoral from 1970 through 1999, representing training programs over a span of at least 30 years. All participants had practiced and written up qualitative research while only a few had grounded themselves more in quantitative research and writing.

Additionally, all participants had co-authored publications as well as had some professional editorial experience with books, journals, or newsletters. Among these participants, they individually had a range of professional experience (either as a faculty
member and/or practitioner) between 18 and 42 years. Their publications ranged individually from the newest writer with nine publications to the most experienced writer with 226 publications. Combined, the 16 participants represent 749 professional publications, including journal articles, monographs, books, and chapters in books. In addition, they have numerous experiences on editorial and media boards and in editing books, journals, monographs, and newsletters for publication.

Procedure

Data Gathering

After receiving HSIRB approval for this study (Appendix A), a list of 30 potential participants were identified and each was contacted by email (Appendix B). They were given general information about the study, invited to participate, and told they would receive an information packet if they were interested. Eighteen people responded to the email asking for more information. Each of those respondents was then sent by postal mail an information packet including a letter detailing more background information and the purpose of the study (Appendix C), a list of potential questions for the interview (Appendix D), a demographic sheet to complete (Appendix E), and an informed consent form (Appendix F) to sign if they chose to participate. Sixteen respondents returned the consent form, at which time we then scheduled appointments by email for phone interviews.

The interviews were conducted by telephone since the participants were spread out across the United States and lasted between 45 and 90 minutes each. After giving the participants an opportunity to ask any clarifying questions first, we then started the interview with the list of questions I had supplied to them ahead of time (Appendix D).
Most participants commented on the information I had sent about my project (Appendix C) and indicated their interest to participate had been piqued by that. All participants had reviewed the questions at some point prior to my calling, and some had written themselves notes that they used during the interview process. I was impressed by the amount of preparation and the intentionality in their responses. Their level of preparation was evident as many times I did not need to ask the specific questions on the list as they had addressed them in the course of their discussion with me.

It was interesting to me that three of the participants had talked to one another about my research project. They had compared their answers to some of my questions and engaged in deeper conversations with one another about their writing and identity. I maintained confidentiality by not acknowledging that I had spoken with the other participants but simply allowed the conversation to continue.

All 16 interviews were tape recorded and then later transcribed. Participants were sent their individual transcripts with a short note (Appendix G) and asked to check it for clarity of the ideas they were trying to express. Several participants emailed back with minor changes to their transcripts, either clarifying a statement or correcting a typographical error.

**Data Analysis**

The collected interviews were analyzed using a phenomenological approach. Each individual interview was analyzed by itself in its entirety and then analyzed with the other interviews as a group looking for the universal themes of the experience. The following sections detail specifically the structural procedure that was used.
Phenomenological Description

After the preparation of the researcher through the epoche, detailed in Chapter I, the process of phenomenological description involved the data collection and presentation. The purpose of phenomenology is to describe the experience precisely as presented instead of manipulating data to explain it (Creswell, 1998; Giorgi, 1994; Moustakas, 1994). The interviews were guided by several simple questions, open-ended in order to elicit the participants' perceived meanings and descriptions of their experience.

Phenomenological Reduction

The next step in the procedure was phenomenological reduction, the ultimate goal of which was to determine what parts of the description are essential to this experience (Orbe, 1998). Each story was thoroughly reviewed before moving on to the next. This process is called horizontalization. It was necessary to bracket the paradigmatic (initial) thematizations I had discovered in each story before I started to immerse in the next one (Orbe, 1998).

I started the horizontalization process while conducting each interview. During the interview, I took notes about my own reactions and ideas that were being generated from listening to that individual. Immediately after each interview, I spent time reflecting on it. After all the interviews were completed, I returned to the tapes to transcribe them or read them along with the transcripts. (Half of the interviews were transcribed by an assistant and half were transcribed by me.) Again, immersed in each story, I made notes to myself as I reflected again upon the person's experiences. After completing all the transcriptions, I printed out each one to read on a hard copy. I returned to each story individually, going
over it several times, highlighting sections, writing notes in the margins, and writing notes on a separate pad of paper.

After revisiting each transcript, I wrote a summary of the individual, seeking to capture the essence of her or his particular experience after having been immersed in that individual story. This is. Textural descriptions, what was experienced in the phenomenon, and structural descriptions, how it was experienced, were described in my summaries (Creswell, 1998), which is called thematization in phenomenology. I have not included those summaries in this document only to protect the identities of the participants, who are easily recognized.

Essential aspects of the phenomenon then were starting to emerge. With imaginative free variation, I then compared and contrasted the patterns I saw emerging with other experiences. Moustakas (1994) described this process as seeking every possible meaning through divergent perspectives and various frames of reference, requiring numerous reviews of the story. “I look and describe; look again and describe; look again and describe…” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). The researcher is not just an observing, recording machine, but one who engages fully in this process. Her insights, impressions, intuition, and ideas actually become part of the data and help to inform and enrich the collection and analysis (Whitt, 1991). For me, I saw different aspects of previously known theories emerging, tried fitting the descriptions within other frameworks, altered titles to see what would happen, and other variations on this “mix and match” theme.
Phenomenological Interpretation or Synthesis

The final phenomenological procedure is interpreting (Moustakas, 1994), or synthesizing (Orbe, 1998), the fundamental textural and structural descriptions. In this step, I sought to uncover the interrelatedness among the themes and individual descriptions. Once again, I spent hours in hyper-reflection on the words and experiences of the participants to reveal meanings not readily apparent in earlier stages (Orbe, 1998). The process involved an intuitive integration (Moustakas, 1994) as fundamental textural and structural descriptions from the individual stories were unified into a composite description of the essence of the phenomenon. Reviewing these themes and formulating how these themes relate to one another is called syntagmatic thematization (Bauer & Orbe, 2001; Orbe, 1998), which is the larger, broader perspective of the experience.

I created tables of themes, then returned to each theme to deepen my interpretation of it. These initial themes were sent to the participants (Appendix H & Appendix I), and they were asked to provide feedback regarding how the themes fit their experience. I also used an internal auditor, my dissertation chair, to test the goodness of fit. She had read the transcripts and was able to speak to how well the essences that I was describing fit from her perspective of reading as an outsider. I used two other peer reviewers, one from student affairs and one from outside of student affairs. Their feedback on how much this made sense to them was also incorporated into the synthesis. I settled on seven essential commonalities that will be described in detail in Chapter IV.
Trustworthiness

"Still, mistakes can, in their own way, be as revealing as epiphanies, and even a wrong impression may say as much...as a right one." (Iyer, 1988, p. 28)

One of the major problems with qualitative methods is that many researchers mistakenly try to analyze it with quantitative paradigms (Giorgi, 1994). This interparadigmatic criticism (M. P. Orbe, personal communication, May 16, 2002) or mixed discourse (Giorgi, 1994) only constrains the possibilities of phenomenological inquiry. Quantitatively defined concepts such as “reliability” and “validity” do not fit the paradigm and so qualitative research has its own standards of trustworthiness or “goodness” (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002; Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006), which is grounded in establishing a confidence in the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Goodness in phenomenology is evidenced by the “lived quality of the language and the deeper meaning brought forward by the researcher in conversation with the text” (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002, p. 453). Good qualitative research does not present the researcher as an expert of other people’s experiences, but instead provides illumination and understanding about those experiences under study (Arminio & Hultgren, 2002).

Being careful to consider what is specific to phenomenology, the following strategies were used to establish confidence in the findings of this research.

- **Participant checking**—Each participant was sent her or his transcript and asked to review it for clarity of what they were meaning. Anything they wanted to change was incorporated into the analyzed transcripts.

- **Participant confirmability**—Each participant was asked if the researcher’s interpretations were recognizable. Did they ring true to them? Was it “on the nose”? 

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- **Peer debriefing**—A colleague was asked to review the findings and to comment on the clarity of the interpretation and whether it increased his understanding of the phenomenon.

- **Internal auditor**—My dissertation chair read the 16 transcripts and provided feedback to the clarity and recognition of the interpretation.

- **Reader confirmability**—An individual who was not familiar with the phenomenon was asked to read the description and to comment on her understanding of an experience about which she had only read.

- **Spontaneous recognition**—Each reader was asked if the patterns fit together logically and whether the same elements could be arranged to explain a different pattern.

Even with all that said, each qualitative study is grounded in the researcher, her epistemology, standpoint, and theoretical orientation. Each study is a snapshot of the time and place in which it was done. I could do this same study at any other time with the same participants, and yet it would be an entirely different event and result. Keeping that snapshot in mind, I need to acknowledge several conflicts or ethical concerns that arose in my process and are grounded in my "positionality." Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2006) defined positionality as "the relationship between the researcher and his or her participants and the researcher and his or her topic" (p. 31). As I proceeded through my analysis, a couple of issues came to consciousness for me that are intrinsically then part of the research.

From a feminist theory perspective, I need to acknowledge that aspects of power and privilege emerged for me in the data collection and analysis process. Jones, Torres,
and Arminio (2006) addressed the issues of insider-outsider positioning and the placement of the researcher as part of or separate from the group that is being studied. Typically, a researcher has an implied power and authority within a research project, but that has not been my overt experience on this project. I was conscious of being in awe of most of the participants with whom I spoke. My role as a student clearly was defined more noticeably when talking with the leaders and faculty of my profession than it has been when I have participated in research with people outside of the profession or on other topics. I did not have the perspective of authority. Sometimes that was self-induced, as in awe of people whose work I have admired from afar for a period of time, or other-induced as particular participants chose to criticize my research in the process of the interview or remind me of my role as a “student.” What was critical for me during this recognition was the consciousness I carry about working within an institution (higher education) that is firmly grounded in sexism and the norming of practices and traditions around male-focused comfort. It was essential that I acknowledge that to myself as I returned to the transcripted interviews during the analysis stage.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

"We pass the word around; we ponder how the case is put by different people; we read the poetry; we meditate over the literature; we play the music; we change our minds; we reach an understanding." (Thomas, 1979)

Situating the Findings

Having a large sample for a qualitative study, especially one grounded in phenomenology, posed some challenges. At the same time, a larger sample enhanced the essence of what did emerge as the essential parts of the experiences narrowed down. While the themes I describe here were experienced by these participants, there were some noticeable differences how they experienced them. Typically, the same one or two participants were the “outliers.” From my standpoint as a conscious feminist (the most salient part of my identity at this time in my life), acknowledging the difference in those voices for me was grounded in my understanding and experience of power and privilege. It was impossible for me not to hear the traditional ways in which society ascribes or imposes privilege on members of particular groups in the words that were glaringly different from other participants.

I pondered, nay, ruminated on these outliers continually. Eliminating participants seemed unethical, but how do I tell the other stories as well? What essence would be lost? Forward, backward, sidewise I stepped, trying to find the dance that felt right in this place and in this time. While I was listening to those voices with similarities, various ideas began to emerge from different theories I had been exposed to in my training programs. I returned to the demographic information I had and found familiar experiences grouped
easily along divisions by age and subsequently the timeline of training programs. I began to reflect on how individual identities grow and develop over time, as does an entire group's identity. The profession of student affairs has done the same. It has developed over time, accommodated changes in thinking and in people, and has been enriched by the contributions of many. Each intellectual generation is trained similarly, then integrates the changes of its time, and passes it on to the next intellectual generation.

Student affairs is actually a rather young profession and is not the same as it was 40 years ago, nor will 40 years on look like today. But it is all connected, intertwined in its lineage, and that is what I found as I listened. The earliest voices here reflect a place in time, laid the foundational support for a profession through traditional research paradigms, and subsequent voices reflect that time while also reflecting its own and now have the environment to build on that foundation with deepening explorations.

As this study is exploratory and hopefully informs further exploration by others or myself in the profession, it provides suggestions for other areas of research. Are the differences in experience guided by gender? Are they guided by generation? Are they guided by training program and cultural time of that training program from which an author graduated? These may be more quantitative questions being generated, but certainly worthwhile considerations for future research.

In the evaluation of these documents, completed in the manner I presented in Chapter III, my engagement with the words of my participants was a non-linear, cycling process of immersion. Repeatedly I returned to the emerging themes and ideas and asked myself how did I see what I was seeing. I looked at what they all described, and recognizing the similarities in their stories, dug deeper into those themes, hoping to find a
way to illuminate that part of the process along with the whole, the “whats” and the
“hows.”

Some of these emerging themes are new to the writings on writing while others
seem overly logical. It is important to illuminate those “of course” aspects here in order
to provide the broader overview of how the pieces connect. A significant part of this
illumination is to ensure that those who are just beginning a journey have as much clarity
about the components engaged in by those more experienced. Like riding a bicycle, the
nuances we take for granted might be missed as we try to explain it. Part of this research
is situated in my current life status, and what might seem matter-of-fact to those who are
experienced, through my eyes as a curious graduate student, can be enlightening and
amazing, much like explaining balance to a new bike-rider. These simplicities at my level
were full of “Aha” moments.

With that said, I arrive back at a basic concept I presented in Chapter I where I
identified a distinction in my ideas about writing: a technical or content-focused aspect
and a social-psychological or process-focused aspect. I described the technical aspects as
the concrete steps to good writing that are easier to list, to teach, and to demonstrate.
Those have to do with such things as style rules, grammar, outlining, editing, and thesis
statements. It also includes common advice like, “Write 15 minutes everyday,” or “Find
the time of day that works for you.” The social-psychological aspects of writing
encompass those less tangible components focused on the process of thinking and
creating, on the more personal and passionate aspects of scholarly writing. This includes
how the professional thinks about her or his scholarship, what motivates one to write, and
how one feels about the process of writing.
Seven Essential Themes

In my journey with this study, I arrived at seven essential commonalities: Knowing One’s Process, Persisting, Situating the Self with Feedback, Purposeful Voice, Voicing Purpose, Preparing the Future, and In Being with Others. These seven themes were experienced by all 16 participants, but often in a range of different styles or means. An example of range is provided in Appendix J. The first theme is definitely a foundational description of the technical aspects of these participants’ process. The remaining six are grounded in those more nebulous social-psychological aspects. As I stated in Chapter I, the social-psychological and the technical aspects of writing are not mutually exclusive and should not be interpreted as one being of more value than the other, but that both are necessary for success at writing. “Creativity and self-expression” are not “stifled” by doing the technical aspects of writing well (Alter & Adkins, 2001, p. 497), but they can be stifled at doing the technical aspects of writing poorly. Both aspects need to be taught and developed in potential student affairs scholars.

Knowing One’s Process

I start with the foundational piece that emerged from the participants and was situated in the more technical aspects, or the “hows” of writing. Yet even in describing this, participants were layering in social-psychological aspects. Knowing One’s Process was an essential component for all involved, and yet in describing it, it seemed as perfunctory as describing riding a bicycle. Participants were able to describe what they do and how they do it, while also delineating the exceptions to their process. Each individual process was unique, some highly structured on one end of the spectrum to others who were highly intuitive. Some authors wrote from outlines, some authors never used
outlines, and some used what they called frameworks. Some authors kept stacks of notes while others wrote straight out of their heads. They were clear about what worked for them and what did not. This process was learned over time and with lots of practice, and while some aspects of the process changed due to changes in our world (e.g., as with improved technologies, with more collaboratively written pieces, or with the aging process), the process remained essentially the same for most of them.

However, what is significant about knowing one’s process? The consciousness around one’s process allows for more opportunities to construct successes. Self-efficacy in all realms of identity allows individuals to proceed with motivation and a sense of security that they will be successful. These authors came to know how the process works for them, developed over time through experiencing and re-experiencing. They built upon their successes and the process became predictable for them.

All participants talked about having developed good writing skills, described often as clarity in communication. This foundational piece leads into all the other technical skills. One participant told her story of learning as an undergraduate from a professor the importance of clarity in thinking and in writing. The professor returned a paper to her with the following comment: “Either you have a very clear idea which you have expressed in a fuzzy manner, or a fuzzy idea which you have expressed quite clearly. I’m not sure which.” She has continued to use this maxim in her own writing and in her teaching, continually asking herself if it fuzzy thinking or fuzzy writing.

Another foundational part of the writing process all participants talked about is what I have labeled “prethinking.” Thinking, reading, and talking were continually cycling through people’s process. Thinking about the project, the research, and the format
of the written work consumed a great deal of time, sometimes for months, prior to actually writing. Participants related that their ideas come from doing conference presentations on their research and listening to reactions from attendees, from reading current professional journals, and from talking with colleagues. Truly, the idea of engaging in an ongoing conversation within the professional literature is represented in this process. Reading was referenced often as a concurrent passion along with writing, and this was beyond the normal expectation to keep up with current professional literature. Many of the participants stressed the importance of reading, as a part of their development, from a variety of perspectives: good fiction authors who construct language that moves them; authors in the profession whose ideas inspire them; and recommendations from other authors.

Another element in the process that emerged was the sense of writing to one’s strengths, particularly as it manifested in collaboration with others in research and writing projects. Writers were conscious about their own process, they knew what worked, what they were good at, and what they struggled with or got stuck on; they knew what worked. Understanding one’s strengths and weaknesses in writing facilitated persisting, the experience of success at writing, and effective or satisfying collaboration with others. These strengths and weakness ranged from conceptualization to technical tasks. Some examples of this spectrum of awareness from the participants include:

Conceptual thinking doesn’t come easily to me. (female)

I like the conceptualizing. I like the being creative...I like to communicate. (male)
I am the utility in-fielder who has squeezed as much learning from each process in order to continue. (male)

I look at what’s being said, how it’s being said, so I tend to be the wordsmith. (male)

So I end up writing in a way that is very compatible with who I am and what I believe, so it works very well in that process. (male)

I write fairly direct and concise...that’s sort of my strength, is concise writing.... I don’t like the editing process. It’s very time consuming and tedious. (female)

More specifically, participants had definite practices around what worked best for them. While most participants did not identify any “rituals” in their process, these preferences actually became habitual, bordering on being ritual. Time of day, amount of time, and a space for writing were frequently acknowledged as aspects they constructed. All participants had some kind of preference, whether at home or office, with computer or paper and pen, or a preferred time of day. Several participants discussed the need to have a full day stretched in front of them to be able to write, as sort of “psychological space” they needed to construct for readiness to write. Whether they used the whole day or not was inconsequential as they just “felt” that they needed that stretched out before them. A common shared frustration was the lack of time available for writing. The intrusion of other duties and responsibilities often would limit or interrupt them. Writing
in spurts was a necessary skill learned to accommodate all those other demands of their career and still persist in writing.

Another common description in knowing one’s process revolved around the personal gains received from writing, outside of the instrumental gains associated with job requirements. The most cited gain was the pleasure of the writing process. One may not like some or many of the specific tasks, but there was an overall enjoyment of writing expressed by the participants, frequently referenced as “a joy” or “a love.” Doing something one enjoyed was certainly recognized as a personal gain. One participant saw more benefit from being connected to her writing rather than distanced from it, “I certainly have felt more gratification from pieces that I was more passionate about.” There was also a personal gain associated with writing as a way to understand one’s own experience of something, writing as a healing practice, or writing to satisfy a curiosity. Certainly, these descriptions are not the traditional language heard from scholars, but clearly a motivator for many. This is how the non-technical aspects of writing are essential to understanding the whole process and the influence of the technical aspects as not truly separate from the social-psychological. Knowing One’s Process provides a level of inspiration and motivation for scholars, which will be addressed more specifically in the Voicing Purpose section.

Persisting

In order to publish written work, one must finish the project. While persistence may seem to be a fairly simple concept at first glance, it actually appears to be grounded in several layers of understanding. Participants explicated ideas of persistence associated with the learning process, with the construction of ideas for projects, with the actual
writing and rewriting and editing of their work, with the submission process, with revising and resubmission. According to their descriptions, there are far more opportunities for persistence than there are for “successes” in publishing written work. Yet without persistence, there would not be successes.

In one way or another, all participants acknowledged that writing is a time-intensive part of their work. As discussed in Knowing One’s Process, time or the availability of time was linked in many ways to a psychological readiness to write. Other participants detailed learning to write in “spurts” or “hunks” out of necessity rather than preference, persisting in finding a compromise that works for them. This necessary persistence starts with the seed of an idea, staying through the prethinking process, the writing process, and the submission process. While it often may be suggested to students or new professionals to “keep at it,” a truer understanding of what that entails can be explored and taught. There needs to be more than a statement; there needs to be a demonstration.

One participant, in coming to understand his own strengths and weaknesses, used his self-knowledge and persistence to become published and to keep on publishing. He persisted in learning and he persisted in the continuation of the process.

I think that I have got average skills, but what has allowed me to publish is paying attention to feedback, getting feedback, continuing to be open to learning about the writing process and the academic writing process, and developing the sense of confidence that I have had success before, I have made a contribution, therefore I believe that I can continue to do that.
Another participant persisted in building on what he had learned in graduate school as he worked in the field as a practitioner.

...then I just continued when I graduated to write small little articles for the newsletter or something until I got to the point that I did the book.

Many others talked about their writing actually coming from the rewriting stages. Editing, rewriting, and rethinking were words used to explain the continually revising nature of working on a project. "I'm one of these people who edits and edits and edits...[it's] likely to go through six or seven, maybe more, edits." And another described it this way, "It's best when it's writing and rewriting and writing and rewriting and at some point, you know is it ever really done?" Persisting with a project through its re-editing and re-writing and re-submitting are constant expectations for participants.

Learning to manage one's reactions to and incorporate feedback from others was central to this theme of persisting as well. Finding a successful way of situating oneself with the feedback seemed central to success. Additionally, the ability to handle feedback intertwined with self-efficacy as well. Negative or unhelpful feedback, difficulty getting a piece accepted for publication, or lack of interest in your ideas could impact one's sense of competency and one's motivation to persist. One participant described it this way:

I was working really hard and kind of doing my part, and I had a real hard time getting some things published.... It didn't happen that often, just often enough that it was discouraging....So I started to lose confidence, and thought 'Maybe I'm not as good. Maybe this isn't as good or I'm not as good as I thought,'...and really internalizing that a little too much. (female)
She persisted through this dry spell by sending her manuscripts to friends and colleagues, and searching out more critical feedback from people she trusted.

Another participant addressed the frame of mind that helped him to persist. Finding a way to keep his self-confidence intact was necessary to push through on his project.

The mindset, that sort of ‘confidence in the face of despair,’ because I know in each project that I have ever written on…there often comes points where I think either I don’t have anything to say or what I have to say won’t make a difference, somebody has already said it…those kind of things and having sort of the confidence that that is a phase and that eventually I will work through that…

(male)

It was also clear that the submission process required the same need for persistence. It could be a grueling process with several resubmissions and critical feedback. One participant shared, “I’ve learned that succeeding about writing is about as much about persistence as it is about having good ideas…I just decided to say, ‘I’m going to get this thing published.’” Some had to keep at it to find a publisher that a certain piece of scholarship could fit. Others talked about submissions choices designed to accommodate rejections. “Everything that I have submitted for publication has been rejected at least once.” And still some others noted the constant revisions and resubmissions that took place. “That [particular piece] from the day it was conceived until the time it was published probably took 8 to 10 years.” This commitment to persisting was described by one woman as loyalty. “I can probably get this done and get
it out of there. Even if it takes a decade to do it. [laughs] And that, my friend, is loyalty! It’s loyalty to an idea which...I believe is important.”

Given the need for long-term commitment to a project, that kind of “loyalty to an idea,” the role of passion for one’s scholarship was a repeated theme. As one participant stated, “If you don’t love the topic, you’ll never finish.” Most participants had found a research agenda that fulfilled that passion, something to which they felt personally committed. Many talked about the consciousness with which they chose a research agenda, asserting they wanted their work to reflect who they were. That connectedness though flies against the traditional paradigm of remaining distant from one’s own research. How they seemed to resolve this conflict is discussed more in Voicing Purpose.

All of these constructs around persistent also layer into the mentoring/modeling aspect of education. What do we tell students and new writers about persistence? How do we demonstrate persisting toward the goal? One faculty member acknowledged the need to communicate this very thing by advising, “Make that investment; see it through; don’t throw in the towel part way...If you hang in there with it, I think it makes a difference.” (female) I posit that that takes place less with the words and more with the modeling, which I will return to in Chapter V.

Situating the Self With Feedback

As previously explored, a writer’s sense of self-efficacy is important to one’s persistence and subsequent successes, which in turn enhance self-efficacy. Another theme critical to developing that self-efficacy and persistence was learning to handle feedback on one’s writing and its effect on one’s sense of self-efficacy. Feedback takes many forms from having colleagues review work before submitting it, to editors and reviewers...
critiquing it, to responses from readers and students once it is published. What a scholar did with this feedback related to the ability to develop self-efficacy around writing. Success helped to build self-efficacy and provided motivation to persist in writing and publishing.

Student affairs professionals are becoming more intentional in their scholarship, as evidenced in the connectedness to their topics. As persistence is necessary to get through the time-consuming tasks of writing, rewriting, editing, submitting, revising, and resubmitting, a strong commitment to the topic is nearly mandatory. Consequently, focusing scholarship around things participants feel passionate about also promotes a different value attached to their work, different from the “objective” stance encouraged in the traditional paradigm. One participant summed it up this way:

I feel kind of fragile in my writing, so getting feedback is sometimes difficult for me….I think that clearly says, in terms of feedback, that it’s not a critique of my work, it’s a critique of me….Many of the things that I have written on [have been] about something that I cared deeply about. So yeah, I think those things are an extension of myself. I think for people who are doing scholarly writing that is on the edges or on the fringes or it’s pioneering, it’s particularly important to be able to trust yourself about what you think is important to do. (female)

Traditionally, this has been perceived as being constructed along gender lines—women supposedly having more of their identity attached to their work. As student affairs professionals engage in more qualitative or longitudinal scholarship, more of the self is reflected in that work. Additionally, many participants talked about how they perceived all writing and research to be autobiographical to some extent. Being encouraged to find
passion in one’s research holds other meanings for “putting it out there” and getting critique back, for both women and men. One participant summed it up this way.

…the feedback that you get can sometimes be very harsh….Things have gotten a little bit easier for me, but the first couple of times I put my work out there and got feedback, I mean, it was like a dagger in my heart. (female)

How feedback is received, interpreted, and integrated becomes more essential to persisting. On one end of the continuum, some participants handled feedback simply by “ignoring” it or attributing stupidity to the person providing the critique. “Well, they just don’t know what they were doing….You can’t sit around and mope about that….so I tend to dismiss the source.” (male) “I don’t take myself too seriously, so when people don’t like my work, I’m never too surprised.” (male) This is one way to handle feedback.

On the other end of the continuum, feedback has the potential to crush or damage one’s ability to move forward. Obviously, this sample of participants would not fall into this category. One participant who had learned to conceptualize his writing separate from his identity reflected on others who could not.

I had been rejected again and I was experiencing it as a personal rejection….I think it’s what keeps people from sharing their writing, from getting it critiqued by other people. I think it is why some people who win dissertation of the year awards aren’t successful as faculty because they can’t release their writing to other people for review, comments, critique, and possible rejection…. What we write is not who we are. (male)

And then many participants fell in the middle of the continuum, searching for ways to write from their passion while learning to think critically about feedback,
balancing when to incorporate it and when to challenge it. One participant described how she learned to balance her investment in her work with the feedback. A professor guided and encouraged her in the "how to's": to think critically about the feedback, to integrate what worked, and to defend her position on what she chose not to integrate.

This ability to think critically about the feedback, keeping it balanced with one’s emotions and intellect, and learning to integrate appropriately was a key for many of the participants. Other participants reflected on that very attitude:

I believe that this [particular project] is something that should be out there and if others don’t think it’s important, well that’s too bad, but I just keep throwing it out there and I’ll keep making changes that I can live with and I won’t change anything that I can’t live with. (female)

And another participant described her development this way:
When I started writing for publication, I think I was much more emotionally attached. But, that’s not to say I don’t have emotional attachments now....[Now I say] what am I willing to do and what am I not willing to do and to justify that to the editor. (female)

Both of these women were able to assess, accept, and reject as necessary. It kept their commitment to their projects intact and allowed them to persist.

Some participants made reference to the conflicting feedback received from editors and reviewers. Again, the strategy was to critically assess and move from there.

A lot of times, you’ll get competing responses from editors....I’m a believer that you’re going to get some whacky stuff from people and you’re going to get some positive stuff. I just try to balance it. (male)
For some participants, assessing feedback about the personal side of their work was grounded in an internalized sense of commitment or trust of oneself.

I think for people who are doing scholarly writing that is on the edges or on the fringes or it's pioneering, it's particularly important to be able to trust yourself about what you think is important to do. (female)

And from a perspective of writing, what is the cost associated with having your authentic voice show up? The fear of having voice get rejected is dwarfed by the fear of never putting my voice out there. It's a social responsibility thing. I think as my professional confidence grows, and has grown, my comfort with writing and my comfort with recommending things that are more 'out there' has also increased. I feel like I'm more willing to take risks with what I'll write and with what I'll say. (male)

In addition, there are numerous rounds of feedback that one must learn to manage. Most participants used outside readers before submitting their work: students, colleagues, friends, and family would provide one layer of feedback. This usually was a “safer” round of reviewers. The next would come from journal, newsletter, or book reviewers and editors, sometimes a more harsh round of comments. A mindset that looked to feedback as a way to improve one’s writing and ideas seemed necessary to persisting through these levels. Many participants talked about how they used information to improve themselves and their writing.

I learned very early on the power of critical feedback... I would say that probably the people who have been most influential [in my writing development] have been
anonymous reviewers... I now really see it as... the more critical the feedback, the more information to help me write a stronger piece and the more potential I might learn something else about the writing process. (male)

I think my writing is much better because of the feedback that I’ve gotten from others. I think as painful as getting reviews back on your work is to me, I also have learned a lot and I’m sure my writing is stronger from feedback that I’ve gotten. (female)

My motto is I write to be edited because I think that the editorial process makes my writing better.... Peer review happens at every level of the writing and don’t be scared of that. When someone critiques your writing, they’re doing you a favor. (female)

This mindset seemed to be a learned process through repeated experience. Instead of crumbling into one’s disappointments, creating a context to manage that feedback and turn it into a positive force shifts the thinking paradigm.

I think the first couple of times you receive feedback... from editors who are very prominent in the profession... I mean, the amount of red ink is at first very startling! But then once you realize that that is often the case and you know it’s not unusual for even very talented writers to receive that much feedback, I think you become more used to it.... I don’t become as defensive or as hurt by the amount of feedback as I used to. (female)
In conveying that kind of judgment and perspective, and very much separating out that this isn’t about you, this isn’t about us as people, this is about our abilities or our successes at being clear. But it also depends on what a reviewer or what an editor is interested in hearing or what they think is a match or what they think is important. And that was just a really helpful perspective to hear. (female)

From one end of the continuum to the other, finding successful ways to manage one’s self-confidence in the midst of critical feedback seemed critical to persisting. This indirectly affects one’s sense of success and contribution to the profession.

*Purposeful Voice*

The next two themes, Purposeful Voice and Voicing Purpose, are intricately intertwined and mutually influencing, which is why I have chosen to label them this way. In my process of trying to capture and understand what ‘voice’ is, translating it from creative writing venues, I actually have come to recognize it in scholarly work as Purposeful Voice. It is much more than just how a writer comes across to readers or how well readers think they can know a writer, but is actually a voice grounded in one’s sense of purpose, often referred to by participants as making a contribution. This may be very specific to scholarly writing and especially to scholarly writing grounded in qualitative explorations.

This purpose in writing and scholarship affects what is researched, what is written, how it is written, and how much one writes. The self cannot help but showing up in scholarship when it comes from one’s passions. Luce-Kapler (2004) claimed that researchers are “a part of rather than apart from the world they research” (p. 64). It is a
challenge to the traditional paradigm of publishing to be published, which shows up in one’s voice anyway. One participant put it this way:

… for many, many years that’s sort of been the notion of what good writing is [not having one’s self show]. You know, very objective and… a kind of distance between the writer and what’s written and you would not interject your own voice into writing. But I don’t know, I think there is a voice even in that approach.

Maybe the difference between your inside voice and your outside voice. (female)

This “inside voice” and “outside voice” correspond to our positionality in research—the insider/outsider positions that scholars have within any research project. As the profession becomes more engaged in understanding the importance of situating ourselves in the research (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006), that voice will become more discernable in research and writing. Some participants addressed their perceptions of their voice:

I was concerned that my paper would be looked upon as too simple, because it was very simple language. I wasn’t citing these theorists. It was really about an experience I had. So I think it is from my voice….I tend to use very simple language and I think the topic gets deep, but I try to use simple language. And I think part of that is my working class background where people who used really big words were deemed faked and inauthentic and who are they just trying to impress. (female)

Voice also get connected to authenticity, a sense of being true to who you are. With the number of comments made by participants about feeling as if they were “impostors,” this sense of authenticity was important to communicate in one’s work—
letting one’s work reflect who the self is. For me, what seemed absent in these experiences were writers who were trying to mimic others.

I try to write in a way that allows the authentic me to surface....For me, it was just important that there not be a disconnect between how I work and how I live and how I write. That I didn’t want to have to get in touch with a different self [chuckles] in order to write. I wanted the same me to show up in all forms of all the work that I do. (male)

I think that voice comes from who we are, our past experiences, our cultures, that voice of representation of all it is that we bring to the writing process. (female)

It does feel like I am doing some things that are sort of reflective of who I am... my identity I think does influence my writing. (male)

Nowhere does this voice become more critical than when we acknowledge the marginalized voices in higher education. Voices are shaded by race, gender, sexual orientation, age, theoretical perspectives, values, education, experiences, etc. Participants’ identities were much more influential on the writing than the writing was on their identities.

I would be remise if I said that my sexual orientation did not influence my writing at all, because it does....The reality is that when you’re talking about social justice issues you gotta bring yourself in. I don’t believe you can write...about social justice issues and NOT bring yourself in. No way can I leave my gender outside the door. It’s gonna show up. Now I can minimize the bias that could be
there or acknowledge it and say from upfront ‘Here is a bias’ or ‘Here is a potential researcher bias.’ (male who identified as gay)

I really feel like a responsibility to get this information out....I started doing this research because I didn’t see my own story in the literature.... If you’re gonna do research on your own group, you’ve got to be pretty comfortable in your skin within that group (female of color)

Erasing these aspects and denying the influence of identity create a monotone and dullness in individual voices and in the scholarly literature. I posit that when “we” show up in our writing, we are then writing well. Identity also shapes the vision of scholars, the lenses through which they see the world. Therefore, the gaps that are observed in the scholarly literature and practice will look different depending on one’s standpoint.

Research agendas are grounded in what individuals see as missing from our discourse. Part of the mission of student affairs has been to create space for those voices to be heard and validated. Certainly, the scholarship in the profession has been instrumental in changing practice and changing culture within our institutions. When researchers choose to focus their scholarship on their own marginalized identities, then aspects of those voices shine through in that research. This is one way that voice gets grounded in one’s purpose.

*Voicing Purpose*

“You have to have the inspiration along with the skills to be able to do it,” said one female participant. This became evident when participants revealed why they do what they do. Sometimes that was connected to one’s role (i.e., faculty member), but
more often it was connected to one’s identity and the purpose for writing situated one’s relationship to that work. Although most participants acknowledged that an “instrumental” answer to the why was that research, writing, and publishing was a job requirement as a faculty member, only two participants saw it primarily as their “job” and did it because it was a good fit for them. While there is a strong pressure in academia for faculty to “publish or perish,” much is now being written to challenge and revise the adage. “Publish and Flourish” (Gray, 2005) and “Publish and Prosper” (Byron & Broback, 2006) are two examples of the shift in ideology. As the profession is moving toward publishing and research that has a greater purpose for the profession, the researcher’s engagement with her or his work is bound to be more complex and more significant on the personal level.

Participants who were faculty members were also conscious of the impact of the profession and their institutions on their writing choices. Rules ranked what kinds of publications, quantities, and authorships were more valuable than others. The impact of APA style on what they want to write, expectations of journal editors or reviewers, traditional paradigms for research, and required formats for journals or books were all mentioned as outside factors affecting one’s writing. The challenge in all that was to retain one’s own voice and purpose within such constraints. Many authors talked about their work in a way as to understand the rebounding effect on the profession—one where the traditional paradigm had begun to shift as new voices emerged in our professional literature.

Other participants spoke to purpose in their scholarship being aligned more with their identity than their role, placing importance on authenticity and integrity, which
would also be reflected in voice or Purposeful Voice. Therefore, one’s purpose in writing was reflected in their voice. The voices of those who identified their expectations for writing as “cranking it out” sound quite different from the voices of those who identify their purpose as contributing to the profession or having something worthwhile to say. However, many participants addressed a hopeful shift into finding a balance, in doing what is expected, but doing it with purpose. Some of the words used by the participants were truly awe-inspiring on this. I must confess I felt a sense of pride in my profession as I listened. One faculty participant shared these words about speaking to her classes about the accessibility of scholars in our profession to newcomers (so necessary to mentoring and modeling), “It’s really nice to have that kind of integrity in the field.”

The purpose of writing, or why one chooses to write or continue writing, was the most enlightening part of this project for me. Voice and standpoint also were reflected in participant researchers identifying purpose. All participants with some form of marginalized identity or strong dominant group allies acknowledged that their writing had a sense of purpose connected to informing others and informing the profession outside of it being a job requirement. The personal commitment, or the connectedness, to their research undeniably provided inspiration and motivation for their work.

Furthermore, there was a beauty in how participants expressed the purpose behind their work, often cited as springing from a desire to make a true contribution. It developed out of an awareness of something “missing” in practice, in literature, or in the research of the profession. It shaped early career directions and choices. It also was influenced by personal identities and not just their roles. Writing was a process by which they were able to enact their purposes, a vehicle to achieve a goal on a greater level, and
that purpose showed up in their body of scholarship and voice. The perfect words come from the participants themselves:

I started doing this research because I didn’t see my own story in the literature... I became a faculty member to do this research out of a passion for recognizing that my voice is not in the literature... If you’re gonna do research on your own group, you’ve got to be pretty comfortable in your skin within that group... I really feel a responsibility to get this information out... I think my research attempts to talk to practice... I think if it’s not worth reading than I’m not writing it. I think writing for the sake of writing is useless... I really try not to write stuff that doesn’t really, truly make a difference. (female of color)

I started to encounter ideas that I wanted to challenge or that I wanted to enrich, and so really started with a belief that I’ve got a perspective that I would like to have influence this conversation, or enter this discussion on this important issue.... You have ideas or you have beliefs or you have commitments that you might have lost track of and when you write about it, it gives you a chance to get back in touch with those things that are... important parts of who you are as a person or as a professional.... I try to write in a way that... allows it to be an expression of who I am or who I aspire to be and my hopes for the world. Or my hopes for our work, or my hopes for higher education or student affairs, but it’s somewhere embedded in there. I try to embed my hope.... I try to write in a way that allows the authentic me to surface.... I just feel a responsibility to share with people, ‘Here’s another way of being.’ We’ve got a responsibility to liberate the
human spirit, ...to affirm and support the identities of members of our community, that we have a shared responsibility to improve the condition of the space that we share. (male of color)

I feel a fairly strong duty to the community of scholars, which includes students, of course....Duty isn't a word that flies really well in higher education.... [I have] this oh-my-gosh incredibly cool job where they pay me to do this stuff...I'm so aware that that is not the world that hardly anybody else gets to live in....You get entrusted with this and, darn it, you owe something back. [She cites a quote from the Bible to illustrate: 'Of those to whom much is given, much is expected.'] And you don’t just owe back doing good scholarship, but you owe back creating a space for other people...You pay it forward. It’s the duty. (White female who identified as lesbian)

I don’t believe that my writing, nor do I want my writing, to be perceived as inaccessible esoteric work that only a few people are going to read, understand, and be able to apply to their practice. I believe that writing ought to inform and transform. (White female identified as lesbian)

I just want to get stuff out there and influence practice....It’s very clear to me that if something’s not in writing somewhere in our field, most people can’t benefit from it.... I think it’s a moral obligation [to advance knowledge in the profession]. (White female)
For some, part of this purpose of making a contribution centered around ideas of generativity. In Erik Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial Development, *Stage Seven* is middle adulthood (40-65 years old) and involves a task of generativity vs. stagnation (Erikson, 1959/1980, 1982) Each adult must find some way to satisfy and support the next generation, and most relevant to this study, in the sense of working productively and creatively. Strength comes through care of others and production of something that contributes to the betterment of society. As every participant in this study was between 42 and 60 years of age, it is not surprising that these ideas showed up in their words.

I have always been a generative person....It’s why I have liked being in student affairs work—to give to others, to bring along others, to empower others....And so writing down ideas and writing down things that could help other people, things that someone might find useful or doing research that really matter, it is very motivating....(60-year-old female)

It’s the more generative policy impact stuff....to have a broader impact. (42-year-old female)

I guess one of my underlying or fundamental beliefs about scholarly writing is that it ought to serve a greater good. (51-year-old female)

It’s feeling a little less ego driven than it did for a little while there. I think it’s a generativity notion in there... (45-year-old male)
If I’ve caused anybody to think a little bit, or if I’ve helped someone with practice, or how people think about college students, then that’s been successful for me. (59-year-old male)

I know that it will be a contribution and I think that is an important part of what drives me in doing this stuff...I’m not a fan of just publishing something to publish it...I say, ‘Do I think this is going to make a difference? Is it really going to make a contribution?’ (59-year-old female)

I felt pleasure in supporting [newer professional]...there was a lot of intrinsic rewards from it. (60-year-old female)

Also, Erikson (1980, 1982) related generativity to its opposite, the fear of meaninglessness. One participant, who currently described his writing voice and purpose as in a significant transition for himself, described it this way:

I sometimes have the sense that you’re nobody, at least within the faculty rings of student affairs, unless you’re published and your name is out there a lot. And I kind of got caught up in that ego trip a little bit...I’ve thought hard about this. What am I aspiring to be? Am I doing it for my ego or am I doing that because I really think I’ve found something?

This reflects the transitioning of the profession of student affairs as well.

One other related intrinsic reward or benefit was that scholarship provided an avenue for making meaning out of one’s own experiences. A parallel notion exists in

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researching what one is curious about, one’s passions and experiences, and while explicating others’ meaning of life experiences, our own become clearer to us as well.

At the heart of everything, I have a better sense of who I am and what I believe.... Writing helps me understand what I think. I become much, much more precise in what I’m thinking, I have a much clearer sense of what is going on and so that writing process I think pushes that even further to help me understand who I am and sort of what I believe and how those beliefs sort of shape the ways in which I interact with people. (White male)

I write because I can make sense of who I am and the world. ...Writing is very central to who I am and has been for a long time...Writing is an avenue for expression and meaning making. (White female)

I tend to write about things that I experience rather than things that are theoretical. I think I start off with theory, but it gets to trying to make meaning of my experience. (White female)

In talking about purpose in writing, a metalanguage of creation or art began to creep into many of the participants’ descriptions as they discussed the purpose behind their writing. “Create” as a word was used repeatedly to describe creating scholarship, writing, space, encouragement, support, ideas, flow, change, opportunities, images, and pictures. This metalanguage often was used to describe or explain what is less tangible in the experience of writing.
I guess if I were to say that there is an art to writing, that it would be right from the heart. (female)

I was going to say write from your heart, but I probably say connect with it because I think scholarly writing probably has to be about more than just what’s in our hearts. But to connect with that and to build on that. Um, I’d…well, I think, um, I mean…I’m censoring myself in a sense which probably isn’t what you want me to do…(female)

It’s more about serendipity maybe… Part of it is a gut sense…if it’s a gut sense that there needs to be something more…It’s kind of like a journey. (female)

I see writing as a creative process…the writer as an artist and the writing as an artistic rendering of an area of inquiry or an area of interest to the writer. (female)

I love words. Every word I think conveys meaning and poignancy. (female)

My writing process is a fairly private thing for me….I want to create by myself. (female)

I think that voice in writing is the artist painting a picture or telling a story. (female)
I feel like I'm just repeating the word 'creating' or using a different word, but it feels like—how am I going to kind of construct something? How am I going to help both myself, because it's a learning process for me as I write? Particularly I think again about [a particular piece of scholarship]. I mean it's one of the things I'm most proud of because I do feel like I was able to take some existing knowledge, but put new perspectives on it, perhaps help people think about it in some new ways. There was a way that I was...constructing and creating...I mean, not just what I wrote but how I thought about things as I was doing it. I'm not sure how to be any more articulate than that about it. (female)

These non-linear aspects, the social-psychological components, are more difficult to pinpoint. There are not the things the participants started talking about, but in deeper conversations, they slowly emerged in our conversations. Although it was not unusual to hear such statements prefaced by a qualifying statement, something preparing the listener for something outside of the norm, these statements began to get at the “heart” of the mysterious aspects of scholarly writing nevertheless.

*Preparing the Future*

With these successful writers having learned how to do it, all of them had used their experiences to teach and mentor others into the practice. What and how do we learn? What and how do we teach? As participants talked, I recognized that many of them mentored or modeled in the same ways they described being mentored or modeled themselves. Much of that process was never addressed or acknowledged, but rather assumed. No one described learning the alphabet as a preschooler, yet that was a necessary component to being a writer. Learning to construct words, sentences,
paragraphs, and how to communicate one’s ideas—all preceded becoming a writer. Yet these pieces were not consciously acknowledged. Similarly, modeling from professors, fellow students, and even one’s parents can provide significant contributions to learning to write. In the process of learning to write for publication, all participants had been exposed to modeling in their graduate programs, whether they acknowledged it or not. This sometimes took the form of direct mentoring—having an individual professor guide them in their writing development in some way. Some mentors invited students to write on a project with them as a way for them to learn. Others “coached” from outside of a project, such as turning a paper written for class into a manuscript ready for submission to a professional journal. These issues become critical areas to consider in the teaching process for graduate students, which I will elaborate on in Chapter V.

Along with this learning process through mentoring and modeling, all participants now were in positions as a mentor or model for others, either through their faculty positions or as collaborators on projects with colleagues. When asked how they mentored, participants related stories of their practice that clearly resembled the process of how they learned. Similar to research about how faculty teach in the way they were taught (Grasha, 1996), it may be that mentoring is practiced the way it is learned. The implications for teaching about mentoring styles are great.

For instance, one faculty participant who learned to write by being invited to co-author with a major professor described the process as being instrumental for her in demystifying the process. Her professor edited work for her, egged her on, created a supportive environment to test things out, and provided a good sounding board for her developing ideas. Now, as a faculty member herself, she encourages students to publish
their papers and invites students to work on projects with her. She said, "Sometimes just hearing that from me is enough for them to try."

Another participant referred to the supportiveness of her committee as "...wonderful. They were incredibly supportive; they were very affirming of my work."

Throughout her doctoral program, she had many opportunities for writing and a training program that held high standards for her writing. She later described her feedback style with students as, "I’m gentle in my approach to giving feedback and I very much try to be helpful and to consider how I provide feedback in that lens...through the lens of helpfulness," reflecting the support she had received herself. She further stated that she "provide[s] a lot of feedback on things that they write. Hold[s] them to a high standard [emphasis added] in terms of their writing."

Another faculty member who had been taught to "crank it out" in his program, said he advises new faculty members now to "...get one out, get one in the hopper, and get one going." And a male practitioner who writes with others related it this way, "I’ve always said that’s what I attempt to do with others is, if I can put my name on something now and that will assist others in their writing, I will do it. And [his major professor] did it for me."

Some participants asserted they had no one who mentored them, but they did speak of how they learned: from watching their professors in their graduate programs, from articles in professional journals as a guide for writing, from guidance and support from supervisors in the field for writing as practitioners, or even from observing one’s spouse engaged in the writing process. For instance, one male faculty member said, "No one mentored me through writing. It’s just something I figured out myself and do in my
own way.” He later related the thoughts and ideas he learned from a couple of professors in his graduate program who encouraged students to think of publishing and referred to his program as “a very rich kind of environment in terms of people getting together and talking about ideas….We sort of saw people writing and working on various projects…There was an environment there for producing things.” Although he might not see it, values were being passed on to him through modeling. These graduate training programs molded future professionals in their ideas about what writing and publishing is and what it is meant to be. As the profession changes, these values in which graduate programs are grounded change as well.

Many participants talked about mentoring and modeling for others as a conscious and intentional process. This process included teaching the techniques of writing, developing critical thinking skills, understanding the process of publication, and assessing feedback.

I am perfectly capable, I’ve realized, of thinking for myself and I think that if I can pass that on to students, that is the best gift I can give them. (female faculty)

It’s [mentoring] a self-efficacy building [thing]. I started asking some of my students to join me on some of those small pieces. (female faculty)

…I had the sense that if they really want to do it, and this is a little bit different than other colleagues, I will work really hard to help them finish it out…I really will spend the time with them to make sure that happens. (male faculty)
Rather than simply inviting students to work on his projects, one faculty member consciously created collaborative work projects that were based on mutual interests for the student and himself, acknowledging and affirming students’ interest through his process of mentoring. Since interest and passion are critical for persisting, this faculty person was setting the groundwork for that.

I’d rather do something that is very meaningful for [student] in trying to figure out what our mutual interest is. Is there anything we really want to sort of collaborate on as it relates to what we are wondering about? (male faculty)

Other faculty participants also included described teaching the social-psychological aspects of writing as well, even though they did not acknowledge it as such. For example, one faculty member related how she hoped her students learned to look at writing and research as “an exciting, generative, cool thing and you may love it!”

Other participants addressed purpose in trying to develop students

I advise students...to at least connect with your heart...and build on that....The degree to which you can write for something you can really believe in your heart is gonna make a contribution as opposed to just writing to produce quantity. (female faculty)

I saw...an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the students. That, to some degree, is why I have written. (male faculty)

There are ample opportunities for incorporating all these aspects into teaching, mentoring, and modeling future professionals. Application of these ideas to teaching is discussed further in Chapter V.
In Being With Others

Much mentoring and modeling is done through a process of collaboration with students on projects. While institutions still put more emphasis and value on single-authored publications for faculty, collaboration in research and writing has been on the rise in the profession (Davis & Liddell, 1997; Saunders, et al., 2000). Collaboration can be defined in many ways, from co-authoring to cooperative writing. All participants had experience in creating a written piece with others. Knowing One’s Process is critical to writing in process with others.

One participant referred to all writing as being a “community effort.” Even the single-authored pieces have reviewers, proofreaders, and editors who contribute to the final project. Additionally, the profession does not occur in a vacuum nor does the thinking of its individual members. When scholarship contributes to the profession, it is responding to what has gone before; it is continuing the conversation in the literature.

In being with others, the self is clearer and more complex at the same time. While working in collaboration, one’s own process is illuminated by its contrast to others. Preferences, idiosyncrasies, and process steps all seem more delineated when the boundaries of the self meet the boundaries of another. The “fit” of self with others was central to successful collaboration. At the same time, working with others involves a complex response to thinking and a dance of negotiation.

There is a negotiation that happens when you write with other people, and I think that maybe the difference is that the negotiation is in process as you’re writing.

But when I write something by myself, the negotiation often happens after I
thought it was finished and I send it to somebody and an editor or a reviewer
wants some negotiation. (female)

Eventually you sort of figure out the people that you’re compatible with in terms
of writing styles, and it gets easier. (female)

This dialectic tension that develops between giving up parts of one’s self and
uncovering other aspects of one’s self that do not usually show up in individual work is
typical of all other relationships. Managing that tension between self and other,
recognizing and accommodating, enriching one’s thinking pattern, are all aspects of
developing the self. It is not all negative as things are gained in collaboration that cannot
come along on one’s own:

I get all kinds of things out of that. I get another perspective. I get the satisfaction
that I collaborated with somebody and we were successful. I get the satisfaction of
knowing that in some cases I was able to get some people published who were
having a hard time doing that. I get the satisfaction of knowing we had a lot of
fun. (female)

Finding this negotiated space also brings forward the opportunity to deepen one’s
work and bring intellectual stimulation.

I think my writing benefits from collaboration because you’ve got more than one
perspective looking at a piece, looking at the data. (female)
It was also a very interesting, intellectually stimulating experience to work with [them]. It was a real joy...I felt pleasure in supporting [a newer professional]...there was a lot of intrinsic reward from it. (female)

I feel that I am smarter in a group than I am by myself. (male)

There’s an opportunity where the collaboration seems very natural; it seems very mutually beneficial. There is some level of reciprocity in terms of what unique contributions people can make to it. (male)

Critical to successful collaborations is that sense of fit. Shared values and complimentary strengths are the foundations that were most referenced by participants. When I’m with someone else it just seems we flow so well...The things that I may be deficient in will be balanced by the other person and maybe vice versa. (male)

They’re people who can finish my sentences and I can finish theirs. I try to write with, and do write with, people who are temperamentally very similar to me....I take deadlines seriously and some people go through their lives and they don’t. It’s not a good match for me. (male)

I think you have to be really careful about who you collaborate with. I think the downside is when the collaborator does not come through with their part of the agreement. (female)
A common theme that stood out among the reflections on collaboration centered on the issue of accountability. Writing with others meant adhering to a schedule and to a commitment to others; it heightened authors’ expectations of themselves. This is where the foundational aspects or the technical knowledge is critical to the social-psychological development. Knowing One’s Process was key to developing a good fit with others.

[Writing with others] helps me to have some external accountability...[I’m] in a situation where I don’t want to let someone else down. And that helps to keep me motivated. (female)

...the pressure of not wanting to disappoint other people who I promised I would do something. (male)

If I’m accountable to somebody else, it will get done pretty quickly. (male)

With the increase in the number of collaborative writing projects in the profession and the common use of collaboration as an opportunity to teach and mentor, understanding one’s fit with others is more crucial than ever. Teaching accountability and collaboration etiquette should also be included in the graduate programs.

Summary

There were seven essential themes that emerged from the words of these participants: Knowing One’s Process, Persisting, Situating the Self with Feedback, Purposeful Voice, Voicing Purpose, Preparing the Future, and In Being with Others. The table below summarizes the themes.
Table 1: Summary of seven essential themes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowing One’s Process</td>
<td>A foundational description of the technical aspects the writing process: the “hows” of writing, assessment of one’s strengths and weaknesses, understanding good writing skills.</td>
<td>This self-awareness increases a writer’s ability to persist, to mentor and teach, to collaborate with other writers, and to accommodate one’s process in order to be successful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persisting</td>
<td>Associated with the learning process, with the construction of ideas for projects, with the actual writing and rewriting and editing of work, with the submission process, with revising and resubmission.</td>
<td>Persistence is a necessary component to finishing written work and getting published. Also important for managing emotions and thinking around feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situating the Self with Feedback</td>
<td>Developing ways to handle feedback on one’s writing and its effect on one’s sense of self-efficacy.</td>
<td>Critical thinking around feedback helps in the development of the writer’s voice and purpose. Important for self-efficacy, completing projects, and writing over the space of a career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purposeful Voice</td>
<td>‘Voice’ in scholarly writing is grounded in writer’s purpose for writing or researching.</td>
<td>Affects the writer’s choices in what is researched, what is written, how it is written, and how much is written.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voicing Purpose</td>
<td>Purpose for scholarly work is grounded in writer’s identity and professional goals. Most participants identified that as ‘making a contribution.’</td>
<td>Affects the writer’s choices in what is researched, what is written, how it is written, and how much is written.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparing the Future</td>
<td>Incorporates mentoring students and new professionals, modeling, and teaching into scholarship.</td>
<td>All participants had been students at one time, and all were assisting students and/or new professionals in development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Being with Others</td>
<td>Collaboration is a standard experience in writing in student affairs.</td>
<td>Collaboration is often used to mentor students and new professionals. Knowing One’s Process helps to facilitate collaborative experiences.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While these themes were experienced differently by the participants, they were all essential to the lived experience of writing for publication. All seven were connected to the other themes, overlapping and mutually influencing. In Chapter V, the implications of these seven themes are explored in further depth.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to initiate a discussion of the findings described in Chapter IV in relation to the original research questions that served to structure this inquiry, to existing literature on the teaching of writing, and to implications for future research, teaching, and student affairs practice. I conclude with a section that addresses the strengths and limitations of this study.

My own questions about writing guided the original curiosities on which this study is based. I had been taught the technicalities of writing, but I was perplexed about the social-psychological or process-focused aspects that were not acknowledged very publicly. I wanted to know what voice was; I wanted to understand the emotions I go through while writing; I wanted to be able to explain the non-linear nature of writing. Guiding my research were basic questions about the experience as lived by those who wrote and published in my profession. Could they answer the questions? Would they be able to shed light on the shadows?

With those guiding principles, I sought to explore three broad questions within a phenomenological framework: What are the emotional and psychological processes that student affairs scholars go through as they write for publication? How did they develop that writing process over time? Has that writing process influenced their identity and if so, how?
In listening to the participants in this study and through immersing myself into the data, I began to see different patterns and themes that I had not even considered as I initially set up this study. Much of what the participants talked about in their interviews with me triggered recollections of some basic theoretical principles that seemed fundamental to the aspects about which they were talking. For instance, in Maslow’s Heirarchy of Human Needs (1954), the needs for esteem and self-actualization parallel much of what the participants described as their purpose for writing and contributing to the field. I also returned to Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) psycho-social work on college student development, seeing their vectors as similar to the process in which published writers learned to write and publish. I start here by returning to those original questions.

Exploring the Research Questions

*What Are the Emotional and Psychological Processes (Non-Technical Aspects) That Student Affairs Scholars Go Through as They Write for Publication?*

Exploring the ways in which student affairs professionals experience the writing process was at the heart of this current study. More specifically, I wanted to hear about how well-published professionals engaged in the writing process from the non-technical side of it. There is plenty of information written on the steps to producing a written product, be it a fictional story or scholarly article, but the less tangible aspects were seldom addressed. I asked all participants to describe their “process” without defining for them what process was. All of them were able to lay out for me the concrete steps they engaged in, their preferences with how they construct a project, and the exceptions to their “typical” process. As I discussed in Chapter IV, they were all very knowledgeable
about and able to communicate the steps of their process. Without prompting, several participants addressed more non-technical aspects such as the need for a readiness to write, either psychologically or emotionally. As I asked participants more specific questions, it became clearer that some were not as “in touch” with the emotional process as others. Those who identified writing as “my job” were less inclined to have an emotional awareness than those who identified writing as “a contribution.” Those were the earliest trained professional who did not acknowledge any aspect of their identity as marginalized.

It was clear that the purpose for writing situated one’s relationship to that work. As the profession is moving toward publishing and research that has a greater purpose for the profession (e.g., researchers choosing topics that relate to their personal identities), the researcher’s engagement with her or his work is bound to be more complex and more significant on the personal level. The traditional advice to just put one’s work out there and let go of the criticism simply cannot suffice any longer. Not every voice in the profession has that privilege.

Another issue that emerged from this question had to do with self-efficacy. Handling feedback within the profession is significant in developing a writing and publishing career. Since many researchers are now more invested in their work as a life choice, the critical feedback holds a different meaning. It is not so easy to brush off comments with “They just don’t know what they were doing…. You can’t sit around and mope about that…. so I tend to dismiss the source” as one White male claimed. In fact, most participants discussed how they incorporate feedback to strengthen their writing and scholarship. Similarly, as reflected in the literature from the counseling psychology
profession on self-efficacy, developing self-efficacy in writing is key to persisting through all the layers toward publication. Finding a way effectively to handle feedback is critical to moving forward.

_How Did They Develop That Writing Process Over Time?_

Participants described how the seeds for writing were planted from a variety of perspectives. Some started to love reading and writing as children and others developed interest in their undergraduate years. By the time they all were in graduate school, the foundations had been laid. How to write a thesis statement, how to construct a paragraph, how to write a paper, how to edit a draft were all familiar processes by then. What began to emerge was the other non-technical aspects, like finding something worthwhile to contribute to the profession, developing competence around handling feedback, finding ways to collaborate with others, and developing motivators that kept them persisting.

All participants had also discussed their development in graduate school as being foundational for their writing careers. Professors giving feedback and encouragement, training programs that stressed writing skills and created environments that promoted students to participate in the professional discourse, reading professional journals and books, attending professional conferences, and collaborating with professors on projects were all noted as significant in the participants’ development. What also emerged was that many of the faculty participants related mentoring to students in similar ways to how they described being mentored. It is important then to apply this knowledge in constructing our training programs and in individual teaching skills. By increasing the consciousness of professors about the significance of some of the “little things” they can do we help to promote greater attention to the actual teaching of writing to our graduate
students. Promoting more focus on writing will encourage more practitioners to contribute to our literature, will create a climate in student affairs departments to support that type of work, and will enrich the professional discourse overall.

*Has That Writing Process Influenced Their Identity?*

The surprising answer to this question was a twist. All participants talked about the pride and excitement they felt at their first publication and that with time many of them felt more authentic in their writing. Many faculty participants talked about coming to accept their identity as “scholar” or “professor.” However, it is more accurate to say that their personal identities influenced their writing process, their choices, and their purpose. Twelve of the 16 participants had some form of marginalized identity that they acknowledged (gender, sexual orientation, or race/ethnicity). Much of the work of those individuals included research, writing, or presenting on aspects of social justice or identity issues. Two of the participants who did not identify with marginalized identities spoke of their work as allies to others and how they acknowledged their positions of “outsider” in their research and writing. These 14 participants spoke about their purpose in scholarship to share their stories or promote justice. Their identities influenced their purpose and their writing choices more than their writing influenced their identity.

Furthermore, several of the participants shared about their own identity development over time and how that influenced the choices they were making in their scholarship. Coming to understand their own marginalized and dominant identities carried into their work and the way they conceptualized the world and naturally their research. One participant explained it this way, “I think my own experiences with coming
to understand my race privilege, see myself as coming from working class background...has certainly influenced what I write about.”

As I have stated previously, listening to these scholars talk about a purpose beyond “getting published” was eye opening for me. I believe it would be for other students and aspiring writers too, and it would be inspiring for them to hear these stories. Personally, I returned to school after 20 years as a social worker specifically to be a part of higher education, feeling a need for my work to have a more purposeful impact on a larger scale. I had always perceived of my time in college as being the most influential in my own life, and I wanted to be a part of that for others. Perhaps that is reflective of my own stage of generativity. However, often I heard jokes from my cohorts and at conferences about people going into student affairs “because they did not want to leave college.” I have heard academic colleagues refer to student affairs as the “party planners.” What I heard from these participates changed my frame of reference. I personally felt more motivated to engage in the discourse with these scholars, to want to be a part of a profession with a high purpose. Not all scholars would express this type of purpose, but it showed me a different side to the profession of student affairs than I had previously seen.

Understanding Through Other Lenses

In listening to the participants in this study and immersing myself in the data, I began to see different patterns and themes that I had not even considered while setting up this study. Much of what they talked about triggered recollections of some basic theoretical principles that seemed fundamental to aspects about which they were talking. For instance, Maslow (1954) proposed that when individual survival needs (such as food
and shelter) are met, then people can explore the higher-level needs for self-esteem and self-actualization. In developing esteem, Maslow proposed that we all need a feeling of adequacy, achievement, and competence based on independent actions. This is coupled with the need to obtain respect and esteem from others by receiving attention, recognition, appreciation, or status. After these lower-level needs have been satisfied, Maslow asserted a person will experience a longing for self-fulfillment or “self-actualization” as he labeled it. This often is evidenced by a desire to use one’s talent and creativity to become everything that one is capable of becoming. He arrived at his conclusions after studying the functioning of exceptional people as opposed to the typical mental health patients studied in psychology. Similarly, this study focused on successful, well-published student affairs professionals. Obviously, working in student affairs provides a means for being part of the middle class and the ability to meet those basic needs for food and shelter. As student affairs professionals develop their careers, one significant way to achieve esteem is through writing and contributing to the professional discourse. The participants in this project talked about their first publication as being exciting and satisfying; it reinforced esteem and a sense of accomplishment. It also challenged some to question whether they were “real” or whether this publication or contribution was a “fluke.” The resolution of these internal conflicts of authenticity led to further work that continued to reinforce one’s integrity. “Ah, this is who I am.”

Another theory of psycho-social development developed by Chickering (1969) and later revised by Chickering and Reisser (1993) is used in student affairs regularly. Their work on college student development, while grounded heavily in White culture and male development, still holds a guiding map for use with college students today. While I
initially perceived myself as looking into the development with well-established professionals, I inadvertently forgot to see them as students at one time. They did not spring forth fully formed, and as I engaged with their stories, I began to see their process reflected in the vectors presented by Chickering and Reisser. Most specifically, the development of a writing career follows the seven vectors quite nicely. In Developing Competence, the technicalities actually established those foundational skills for moving forward. Turning in papers to professors, getting feedback and grades, speaking in class or to one’s professor, all helped to develop a sense of confidence around critical thinking and writing skills. Building on that, future writers then learned to Manage Emotions around critical feedback about one’s work. As discussed in Chapter IV, critical feedback could close down a budding writer at that point, or in learning to think critically about feedback, it could be the jumping point to the next stage.

While these participants were mostly at a stage of autonomy, at one point they were Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence in developing a sense of who they were separate from their professors and mentors. What did they have to contribute? Is it real or not? This was explored most by a participant who was newest in his writing career. He talked about his current process of writing without his mentor and the struggle to establish himself separately from her. As the other participants were further along in their writing careers, this one participant illuminated some other interesting questions for future study specifically focusing on this vector’s tasks.

The next two vectors actually interchange or overlap a little here. Many were Establishing Identity while they were also Developing Mature Interpersonal Relationships: establishing their own scholarship while also developing co-authorships
with others within the profession. At the same time, the sense of identity as a scholar was
critical to mentoring and modeling for future professionals as well. In this research
project, Developing Purpose and Developing Integrity were the cornerstones to
understanding the experiences of well-published professionals. As I explored concepts of
voice, Purpose and Integrity were foundational for almost all participants.

Significance of Context

Shifting Paradigms

Critical to the development of the profession of student affairs was the traditional
paradigm for faculty in higher education—"publish or perish." This formula was
developed at a time when few faculty members (if any) were women and even fewer
were persons of color or from other marginalized groups. It is a dictum grounded in a
traditional cultural perspective and one that encouraged product rather than process.
Scholars learned to think about writing and publishing in a detached way. “Crank it out,”
“get several publications out of each research project,” and “quick and dirty” publications
were standard fare for mentoring advice. It stressed quantity and encouraged, even
demanded, that the researcher not be engaged with their scholarship.

Additionally, the standard research practice in the profession of student affairs
used to be primarily quantitative and qualitative research was not valued in the
quantitative world. As one quantitatively trained participant put it, “You know, I always
thought of [qualitative research] as a sloppy form of good research.” Currently, there is a
trend toward more publications in journals being based on qualitative research (Davis &
Liddell, 1997) and even publications specific to qualitative research in student affairs
emerging (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006). The acceptance and validity of qualitative
research are increasing. This broadening in standards of practice is also going to be reflected in the way research is written and the relationship that researchers have to their work.

Lastly, as more women and other marginalized people join the scholarly discourse, the collective voice begins to sound different. The limitations of “publish or perish” get acknowledged, and those grounded in that training begin to see the effect of disconnect in their careers and seek to change their connection toward the end of their careers. Fewer publications (post tenure), research and writing that is more personally relevant, experiments with different kinds of research, and intentional opportunities to mentor are all examples of this changing paradigm. As the paradigm shifts, so will the education of graduate students and new professionals in student affairs. Being more connected to one’s research means developing different coping strategies for the profession.

_In My Context_

As I have stated before, and repeated often, this study in constructed in a particular place and time, with my own development and the development of my dissertation chair and committee in a particular place and time. When I started writing this dissertation, I initially acknowledged aspects of my identity that were relevant and provided me with a particular lens through which I viewed the world. I have since moved to a new state to take a new job, and different aspects of my identity have become more salient or more intensified in my daily life. When I revisited the data with all that in mind, what I saw was influenced by my marginalized and dominant identities. I laid out those initial influences in the epoche and will return to those in depth in Chapter VI.
For the following sections, I returned to the work I had done with Dr. Croteau and my original thinking and ideas that were constructed in an a priori manner but then set aside to conduct the research. I was excited to find much of that line of thinking was supported by the related experiences of the participants. I was also excited to discover that some of the ideas were not supported, but pointed me in another direction. For instance, I theorized a priori that writing would affect a scholar’s identity more intensely than the participants reported. Instead, their experiences showed that their identity influenced their writing in a way that I had not conceptualized prior to this study. I keep this and my own role as a student in mind as I explore the following implications for student affairs.

Implications for Student Affairs

*For the Profession*

The profession of student affairs has been changing. That is evidenced in the change of scholarship reflected in our journals and professional books. Collaboration, qualitative work, engagement with one’s scholarship, and the increasing number of people with marginalized identities in the profession are providing the basis for that change. The profession’s values will need to change to accommodate a new intellectual generation.

In this study, the participants reflect that changing and shifting paradigm, and did so in a strong and unwavering way. Many spoke to the idea that they did not align philosophically with the traditional push to “publish or perish,” explicating that they chose to focus their research on quality more than quantity. Many discussed their passion
for and connection to their research topics, and they described how they are mentoring new professionals and students into writing and publishing.

The challenge will be how our institutions of higher education, the very home of student affairs work, facilitate a change in culture. How do we evaluate faculty? How do we decide the value of research and writing? Teaching and mentoring? Then with our practitioners, what expectations do we have for contributing to the scholarly dialogue? All of these questions challenge us as we listen to the quality of the work that is exhibited by the student affairs professionals and faculty in this study.

*For Teaching Graduate Students*

The task of writers is to find a coherent way to communicate the ideas they wish or need to express. The task of educators is to find a way to teach this process to students and to contribute to the field by developing and encouraging new professionals to immerse themselves in the process. There are important contributions that need to be in the scholarly discourse to promote and improve the profession from all perspectives.

Most of the participants in this project identified aspects of their purpose and related it to the research choices they made and the voice that came through in their writing. This nebulous aspect of writing, one of the hidden processes I refer to, is critical to illuminate in teaching graduate students. After listening to the voices of these participants, it was clear there are significant points for faculty to consider in teaching writing to graduate students. The participants’ personal stories of development support three a priori concepts that I had discussed in my independent study work with Dr. Croteau: Voice as *connection* to one’s writing, as *self-efficacy*, and participation in the *scholarly dialogue*. Additional specific teaching strategies are included in Appendix K to generate ideas about
intentionally creating opportunities to teach the non-linear aspects of writing to students and new professionals.

Voice

Developing voice needs to be the cornerstone of training scholars in student affairs doctoral programs. In the literature, usually voice is described in a variety of ways and not clearly defined. Two authors have shaped my conceptualization of voice: Rankin (2001) and Veroff (2001). Veroff (2001) referred to voice as “claiming authorship” and maintained that developing voice as a writer depends on a strong sense of self as a possessor of knowledge who is entitled to speak. This was clear with these participants as they spoke to the issue of “having something to say” and “wanting to make a contribution.” Rankin (2001) referred to voice as coming to ownership, realizing one’s authority, and making the writing personal. For her, voice was “having the confidence to integrate who you are as a person with who you are as a professional” in scholarly writing (p. 54). This seemed to be the case for the participants in this study. Voice was connected to their purpose and their identity, and that purpose got communicated through their writing and research choices.

In order to communicate these aspects of voice in teaching, students and new writers first must learn to connect with their writing. Often, students are taught throughout their schooling to disengage from their writing (Diekelmann & Ironside, 1998; Flint, Manas, & Serra, 2001; Veroff, 2001). Students learn not to write about their own ideas, but rather to regurgitate other people’s ideas. This is seen in the passive language that students use in their papers as they refer to others’ work and the absence of their own thinking about what they have found. Rankin (2001) refers to it as a “show
what we know” style. Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) refer to this as received knowledge, knowledge that is acquired from others yet not one’s own. Voice as connection to scholarly writing means grounding writing in one’s own critical thinking and making writing reflective of one’s own lived experiences. Several participants made the assertion that all writing is autobiographical. Voice is also about what they want to say, what they want to contribute. This is the development of a Purposeful Voice.

Essentially, that connection is about centralizing one’s perspectives in the writing. In this study, most of the participants reflected that connectedness in their development. Only two participants, trained under the traditional paradigm of “publish or perish,” reflected less development in this arena, and yet that showed through in their voice as well.

Secondly, new writers need to feel efficacious about their own connections to their writing, similar to Chickering and Reisser’s (1993) Developing Competence vector. Therefore, voice can also be seen as building self-efficacy in their own ideas and perspectives. Believing they have something worthwhile to say, believing their thinking is good enough to contribute to the literature, and feeling a sense of entitlement to speak are all elements of this voice self-efficacy. The participants in the study learned this through feedback from professors, mentors, and cohorts. Their confidence developed over time through persistence and learning to handle critical feedback, but also through the establishment of a purpose behind their writing. For students then, voice self-efficacy could develop as they are able to value their own critical thinking toward student affairs practice, toward literature and research, and toward the application of scholarship to professional practice.
Unlike the first two processes that involve the development of the internal sense of connection or efficacy about one's writing, the third process involves the external action of engagement in the scholarly dialogue. Therefore, voice is a vehicle through which the self connects to community; it is the tool to put ideas "out there." Engaging in the scholarly dialogue involves writing and talking about one's own ideas as well as listening and giving feedback about the ideas of others. Scholarly dialogue occurs in classes, in conversation with students, staff, and faculty, in conference presentations as well as in writing for publication. Huff's (1999) analogy that formal written scholarship is an ongoing conversation that occurs in written format resonates with me. She conceptualized scholarship as a "lively exchange of ideas—conversation at its best" (p. 3). Similarly, Diekelmann and Ironside (1998) called scholarship a dialogue carried out through the literature. It is only through engaging in the reciprocity of speaking and listening within the scholarly community that individual scholars can develop and the student affairs collective scholarship can thrive. The participants in this study reflected that their training programs and mentors provided modeling that was influential in their own development.

These three processes (connection, self-efficacy, and scholarly dialogue) are intertwined and mutually influencing. As self-efficacy builds, the connection to one's writing deepens. As self-efficacy strengthens and connection deepens, engagement in scholarly dialogue increases. Increased engagement in the scholarly dialogue brings helpful critique and feedback from the student affairs community, in turn influencing self-efficacy and connection to one's writing. In this study, participants described the impact of feedback from mentors, editors, conference attendees, and colleagues as helpful
in developing their ideas and their writing. With subsequent successes in publishing, self-efficacy builds, persistence remains, and more successes are experienced.

In addition to concrete actions that faculty can take to teach and mentor students toward voice, faculty also role model their own relationship to writing. As described by participants in this study, many mentor and teach the way they were mentored. That may not always be helpful if a faculty member did not have a good mentoring experience. In training graduate students, role modeling is significant whether faculty plan it or not. During their training, graduate students have ample opportunity to observe faculty members’ attitudes toward their research and writing in classroom interactions, informal discussions, advising sessions, and the inevitable moments of eavesdropping on faculty-faculty conversations. When faculty members find little interest and passion in their writing, they are role modeling the opposite of ‘voice as connection.’ If writing is perceived as a difficult trial that they are barely able to accomplish, they are role modeling the opposite of ‘voice as self-efficacy.’ When faculty members engage in writing with reluctance and only because of tenure, they are role modeling the opposite of ‘voice as lively engagement in scholarly dialogue.’ Faculty members who make a career out of complaining about writing will communicate that attitude to students whether they intend to or not.

In contrast is the faculty member who role models connection and self-efficacy, Voicing Purpose and Purposeful Voice, by having the confidence to excitedly share their newest still rough idea for scholarship in a classroom discussion. The participants in this study are prime examples of the passion and commitment that should be modeled to graduate students and new professionals. However the institutional expectations
sometimes interfere, as one participant said, “There’s also this sense that this is a serious academic institution, you know, you’re not supposed to talk about your joy.” Overall, then the task of faculty members is to nurture their own voices and then be intentional about role modeling voice by making visible their connections, self-efficacy, and engagement with the scholarly community.

Also in contrast is the departmental community that encourages engagement in scholarly dialogue through a series of colloquia or presentations in which students, faculty, and staff discuss their own scholarship. It is critical to involve the student affairs practitioners on campus in this as well. While some participants did not feel they had one-on-one mentoring, they were able to acknowledge the climate of their graduate programs and how scholarship was promoted or not through that climate. Several participants discussed having been trained in or training students in programs that provided newsletters or journals for student publications, having writing discussion or support groups, or providing scholarships and awards for publishing materials.

Teaching and Mentoring the Social-Psychological Aspects

As stated earlier, the strongest theme in this study was the participants’ revelations about voice and purpose. These aspects are the more advanced skills of writing development and seldom are taught formally. Traditionally, college students are taught the edict that good writing involves a linear process: “outline, write, edit, rewrite.” It is imperative that they do learn the foundational skills for writing and hone their skills to create a well-formed paper. Once those skills are mastered, it is necessary for them to learn the social-psychological aspects that are not as evident. Learning, honing, and
mastering those other skills are crucial in the development of scholars contributing to the profession.

Typically, students and new writers have been exposed to scholarly writing in student affairs from the perspective of the coherent, clear, and logical published end product that they read in the professional literature. They tend to not be exposed to the process of arriving at that end product. Thus, student affairs graduate students may expect their efforts at scholarly writing to be a smooth linear progression from initial chaos toward greater and greater coherency. What is hidden from view and rarely taught, is the fluid, non-linear process of writing that involves a mix of intense emotions and a lot of prethinking as evidenced by the participants in this study. This awareness was instrumental in shifting my relationship with my writing, as I detail later in Chapter VI. I believe it is important to normalize this non-linear process for other students while they are developing voice and self-efficacy. Further teaching strategies for social-psychological aspects are provided in Appendix K.

For Future Research

In addition to the vast implications for teaching in student affairs, this exploratory research has brought forth several more questions that could be the foundation for future research. Because race is generally recognized as a component that grounds our perspectives, it may be beneficial to do an in-depth exploration of the process of writing for people of color as this sample was primarily White. How does race reflect in the process of learning? How does race reflect in the establishment of voice and purpose?

Also, there are questions about early development for writers. All of these participant co-researchers were within an 18-year span of age. What would new
professionals tell us? Would they speak differently about the struggles in developing their
process of scholarship while going through them than those who had mastered them? All
participants were also in the generativity stage of life development, so would younger
writers speak differently about their purpose for writing or publishing?

As this study focused on the successful writers in the profession of student affairs,
a future study may focus on those who were not so “successful.” One participant
wondered about individuals who had received the dissertation of the year award through
professional organizations, but then never published after that. What would those
individuals illuminate for us?

Limitations of the Study

I take into consideration that limitations are relevant within this study as within all
research. While my purpose was to explore the experiences of well-published student
affairs professionals, I cannot assert that the experiences reported by this purposeful
sample of 16 participants represents all other individuals. The participants were selected
specifically in this time and place for their publication in the profession of student affairs
in the United States.

Another consideration is that the majority of participants were White, and these
experiences may be different for those from other cultures. However, at the same time,
the majority of participants had some form of marginalized identity (gender, sexual
orientation, or race/ethnicity). Many of the participants had grounded their research and
writing in issues around social justice. Perhaps the findings in this study, especially
around purpose and voice, might look very different for scholars who do not focus on
those issues.
Second, my own lens from which I view the world provided a set of beliefs and pre-assumptions that have influenced this study. In the epoche, I attempted to identify what those may be and set them aside while doing the research. van Manen (1990) defined bracketing or reduction in phenomenology as suspending one’s beliefs in order to study the essential structures of the phenomena under study. I returned to those beliefs and assumptions while writing. Some of those beliefs have manifested in the words of the participants and other assumptions I held were not evident in the material.

Third, as an individual outside of the group I am studying, I personally did not have the experiences that my participants did. I have written and have a few professional publications at this point, but not to the level of the participants. In interviewing these participants, there may have been discomfort on my part or on their part in recognition of our different levels of experience. That may or may not have inadvertently affected the way questions were asked or were answered.

Lastly, in order to protect the confidentiality of the participants, I have eliminated the individual descriptions. Most qualitative studies seek to provide a background story for each of the participants, and this is done easily with small, in-depth qualitative studies. Those details were sacrificed to maintain anonymity. It is common for a researcher to make difficult choices in how she presents the findings. For me, and at the request of some participants, I chose to withhold that information. I believe that the overall information I could get from these well-known participants far exceeded what could be lost in presenting without the individual backgrounds.
Strengths of the Study

While addressing the limitations of the study, it seemed particularly important also to address the strengths of this particular project. The greatest strength is in the participants themselves. I was overwhelmed with the response to my call to participate in this project. The people I sought to speak with are well-known, polished presenters and published writers. They are the busiest in our profession with their many tasks and responsibilities. I expected people to be too busy to participate, but was honored to find 16 interested individuals willing to take the journey with me. These participants are the leaders of the profession; they show a strong commitment to student affairs both in their work and their words. They shared thoughtfully with me the many aspects of their personal process and development as I asked my novice questions. They responded to my ideas with encouragement and kindness, while also helping me to develop my thoughts and my own journey. It is a strength of this study to have the caliber of participants that I did.

Another strong point is the peer review that I utilized. Ongoing throughout the interviews, I discussed the process with my dissertation chair who was serving as the auditor for this research. Plus, all the participants had their transcripts to review in case they wanted to clarify any of their thoughts. They received a draft copy of Chapter IV as I was working on it and they provided valuable feedback as to the fit of what I was explaining. Additionally, I had a student affairs colleague who is also working on his Ph.D. read and review the data for its fit and applicability to student affairs. I had a non-student affairs person, a student with excellent writing skills, review the written
dissertation for how well the ideas made sense to someone outside of student affairs. All of the feedback from all of these people were incorporated into the finished dissertation.

Summary

The participants in the project helped to explore the original research questions with which I started. The findings from this study and my a priori thinking were considered for implications for practice, teaching, and future research in student affairs. I presented my thoughts on the limitations and strengths of this study. Lastly, I will return once again to my own journey and the influence of it on my own writing process in Chapter VI.
CHAPTER VI
IN LIVING THE EXPERIENCE

“There are very few human beings who receive the truth, complete and staggering, by instant illumination. Most of us acquire it fragment by fragment, on a small scale, by successive developments, cellurally, like a laborious mosaic.” Anaïs Nin

This project started with my own journey, my questions, and my curiosities. It is only fitting that I end this document, the record of the journey thus far, with reflections on the influence the process has had on me. I could not escape the surreal sensations as I wrote about writing, as I lived and experienced the very lived experience I was focusing on for the study. In this final chapter, I step back to explore one final analysis—how I was influenced by the very process of which I was in and out of simultaneously.

Changing Context

There were two aspects of my identity that were most salient on this project: my gender and my student role, both where I experienced aspects of power denied. Of course, my identities of power were less noticeable to me except through my ally work, as dominant identities often are. The chapters of this document were written in different places in my life, figuratively and literally. I wrote the first three chapters while I was still in a Midwestern environment in which I had grown up. I proposed my dissertation while still at my school with supportive mentors around me and in an environment as a “student” where learning, researching, and writing were the norm.

Then, I moved to a new home and job in another region of the United States. I no longer held the role of student there, but rather as a full-time student affairs professional in a campus women’s center. Learning, researching, and writing were not the norm for
the job, but rather things I did on the side. The interviews with participants were conducted and the last three chapters written while I was there.

This was complicated for me by the most difficult cultural shock I had experienced in my life as I adjusted to my new city, even though I had had experience traveling to 16 different countries. The hostility and the hatred directed at me and the women who worked with me was astonishing. The laws in the state were seriously out-of-date for protecting women from sexual assault and domestic violence. The community's normalized intolerance meant that daily I heard the worst of overt and demeaning statements. My feminist identity erupted in full rage. In my dominant ally identities, I was consumed by guilt and obligation, feeling compelled to speak up at every prejudicial statement or discriminatory situation. It was a case of the "Emperor's New Clothes"—what had been so normal for me was considered bizarre there. I was greeted daily by marginalized students feeling hopeless and silenced. All this was my environment while I conducted and analyzed the interviews. The struggle and the asset in this was my heightened awareness. How could I not hear the influence of gender in my research? How could I not hear the influence of marginalization?

This cultural change was a painful part of my existence that became an element of the second half of my dissertation. As I interviewed the participants, I marveled at their words that linked their work to their passions, their research to their experiences with identity. All of what I had learned about the nature of qualitative research, about the researcher being an instrument, suddenly was fresh in view. I conceptualized how my identity was fully part of what I was doing and not just a section of a chapter I wrote. It is difficult to describe, but it felt full.
Being Outside

Typically, the researcher may hold aspects of identity that places her inside the group that she studies. Most often, the researcher is also viewed as an outsider by the very role of researcher. While interviewing the participants, I began to see myself as inside and outside the group of participants. However, there was an odd twist, as it was my role as a student that placed me as an outsider more than my role as researcher. I felt less valid as a “researcher” mostly because of the characteristics of the participant pool. These people were very experienced researchers and writers; I was a novice with just a few written publications.

My training program had prepared me to be conscious that the role of researcher carried implicit and explicit aspects of power and authority. That role typically places the researcher outside of the group being studied. HSIRB training constructed my understandings of the rights of participants and heightened my awareness about potential misuses and abuses in research. In previous projects that I conducted or participated on, I did feel some sense of “authority” as the researcher. On this project, I found it to be the opposite. The majority of the participants were faculty members, and the faculty-to-student relationship seemed to override the participant-to-researcher relationship.

I struggled with this strange imbalance, unable to form a view to understanding what I was experiencing. As I called each participant, I was conscious of their advanced experience on the very process in which I was engaging. They all did research. They all interviewed participants. They all wrote and published. Most significantly, many of them had written things that had informed my own education. I was in awe. The majority of participants were very supportive, encouraging, and helpful. However, one participant
had used the interviewing time to tell me how to do what I was doing, even though he was not familiar with phenomenological methods. He told me I was doing things “wrong.” While I typically may have let this go, it kept returning to me as I analyzed the transcripts. His approach was drastically different from the other 15 people. He had never been a practitioner, he did not like to collaborate with others, he “hated” reading student papers, and he had no purpose for his work beyond it being a “job that fit.” He was an “outlier” in my study. I had to struggle with how to incorporate this voice with the others. How do I depersonalize it and yet value it?

That struggle led me to look at the generational training that occurs. Those grounded in a more traditional paradigm expect certain rules to be followed and do their best to do so. Subsequently intellectual generations come along, making changes, diversifying the personnel of practitioners and researchers, and transitioning the profession all during the span of one person’s career. The values have shifted and there is quite a bit of disequilibrium when one loses power as the profession changes so drastically.

Being Inside

At the same time I felt outside of the group I was focusing on, I also was inside. Two aspects made me conscious of being an insider with this project. The first is that I am a student affairs professional just as all the participants were. I experienced a significant shift in the way I thought about the profession as a whole. I had not anticipated that the comments from the participants would lead to the depth of purpose that they did. I marveled at the insight and willingness for them to share, and it resonated within me. I started to think about my purpose and my identity and my work as being
braided together. I began to think about what I wanted my research and writing to say about me and to think longer term about my intentions for that part of my career.

The second insider component was that I was writing, and my writing before the interviews and analysis was dramatically different from my writing after they occurred. An observing ego part of myself kept chiming in, "Oh, look at what you’re doing now!" I found myself much more conscious of my process, how I proceeded non-linearly, but at the same time it was clearly ‘progress.’ I shifted in my relationship to my emotions as I stumbled gracefully through periods of self-doubt and “blocks” in my writing. While I was a master’s and a doctoral student, I would gather lots of information before writing and often waited “to the last minute” before writing, almost as if it was an avoidance. I interpreted that as a fear of success commonly attributed to women. My assessment of that habit transformed radically in this process. I understood and appreciated the level of prethinking that was happening with me. I came to love the process of silences, the percolation of thinking, and with that, the shift in emotions around writing.

They had given me a gift. I had learned from experienced scholarly writers the significance of prethinking and found myself being much more gracious with myself as I immersed in those “other” aspects of writing. Prior to these interviews, I would feel guilty, condemn myself as procrastinating, and feel defeated as I processed things in my head instead of words appearing on the computer screen. Now, breaks from the computer as I walked around talking to myself, or thought about concepts as I ate lunch on the run or did my laundry, all seemed “productive” to me and became integrated into my writing. It actually felt more exciting.
The true nature of a non-linear process was surfacing for me. It was not just about the clear technicalities, it was the clarity of the social-psychological process that was emerging. I learned to recognize my processing of information unconsciously as I would awake in the middle of the night and write thoughts down on a notepad that were emerging from my sleep. I felt I was in conversation on a daily basis. Every day on my walk to work, I was conversing with participants in my head, with my dissertation chair, with my readers. And sometimes it was not just in my head as I would become horrifyingly conscious that I was talking with my hands, walking alone down a public street. I had to chuckle at how pervasive this had become. I found myself giddy with excitement as my mind wrapped itself around what I worked on the night before, whom I talked to that morning, what I read or wrote. And I felt productive. I felt like a scholar. On that daily walk, it was not easy to take notes, so I started phoning myself at home and leaving messages and ideas on my answering machine for me to retrieve once I returned and sat at the computer again. Many of the labels I put on the themes came from those voice-mailed messages.

This was new to me, the consumption of my mind. I was writing, but it was in my head. Hearing the same process related by the participants in this study opened me up to understanding and valuing that dimension more. It was valid. Then, when I sat down to write at the computer, things tumbled out differently, more rapidly. I was censoring myself less on those first drafts. Most importantly, I started to see my voice emerge.

I had found a new ability, an ease and comfort with which I embraced my own voice in my work. As I discovered others with marginalized voices being intentional in that recognition, I found myself liking it more and more in myself. My competence and
confidence would not come from how well I could mimic detached sentences from the
traditional paradigm of "objectivity," much of which I could not relate to my experiences.
Instead, I found myself accepting my process in a way that was true to my identity. When
I started this project, I frequently had asked myself, "Can I own my own dissertation?"
As I wrap it up, it seems a silly question as it has evolved into being just that. This is
what I did, this is what I heard. This is what the research has said to me; this is the lens
through which I saw it. How could it not be mine?
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APPENDIX A

HSIRB Approval for Study
Date: June 22, 2006

To: Donna Talbot, Principal Investigator
    Wanda Viento, Student Investigator for dissertation

From: Amy Naugle, Ph.D., Chair

Re: HSIRB Project Number: 06-06-11

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled “The Writing Experiences of Student Affairs Professionals” has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: June 22, 2007
APPENDIX B

Email Letter to Potential Participants
Dear:

Based on your student affairs publication history, I would like to invite you to participate in a research project on the writing experiences of student affairs professionals. This is my dissertation project, which sprang from special project I was working on with Dr. James Croteau at Western Michigan University.

I seek to explore how student affairs professionals who publish in the field describe their development as writers, their process in writing for scholarship, and whether/how their scholarly art affects their professional identity. To that end, this study is designed to explore those questions.

The process would entail filling out a short demographic questionnaire, signing a consent form, and then participating in a 1-1½ hour telephone interview with me, scheduled at your convenience. If you have further questions about this project, you can either email me or call me at 208-424-0807. You can also contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Donna Talbot at talbot@wmich.edu or 269-387-5122.

If you are interested in participating, I will send you a packet of information that provides more details.

Thank you so much for your interest. Please let me know by (date) if you would like to participate.

Wanda L.E. Viento
APPENDIX C

Information Letter to Potential Participants
Dear Participant:

In this research project, I seek to explore how student affairs professionals who publish in the field describe their development as writers, their process in writing for scholarship, and whether/how their scholarly art affects their professional identity. To that end, this study is designed to explore those questions. For your information, I’d like to give you some of the background that has lead me to this point.

My interest in this topic originated from a desire to learn more about writing for publication. As a doctoral student, I had portions of my coursework focused on the tasks of writing—the ‘how-tos’. These were not unfamiliar tasks, as they concentrated on organization and output. It was helpful to heed advice to become disciplined, to write everyday, to outline and organize thoughts, to edit and rewrite and edit some more. However, something was missing for me. How exactly was I supposed to turn ideas into something that I could contribute to the professional literature, to the discourse of my scholarly community?

I came to realize that the role models I had were varied. I had had 13 years of public schooling, and another six years of college, all focused on academic writing as the regurgitation of other people’s ideas. In college, I had heard some professors complain continuously about the process of writing and publishing; it was a chore to be mastered, a dreaded necessity, something that blocked them from other, more pleasurable, activities. All of this consciously and unconsciously affected my own relationship to writing.

Prior to my doctoral program, I had spent many years of my life keeping a personal journal. Writing had become a source of reflection and process for me. It was
not a daily diary, actually far from it. Journaling was therapeutic, healing, fun, a gift and practice I shared with best friends or therapists. I participated in creative writing classes, took workshops in poetry writing, attended journal writing seminars...all for my own enjoyment. Much of that instruction was focused on the process that one experiences while transposing thought into written form and the personal benefit that the self receives in doing so. The self was not separated from the writing. In fact, it was the writing. Back in college after that, I was having a hard time translating what I knew about writing into formal scholarly work. What was the process? Was not there more to it than outlining and editing? What were all those emotions that were popping up for me?

I needed more, so I decided to ask a professor to guide me on a course of independent study that would focus on writing for publication. Dr. James Croteau agreed, with some bargaining, to take on the project. The project took many turns and extended itself two years beyond the original one semester independent study. As I began to research the teaching of writing to doctoral students in student affairs in higher education, I was startled to find very little written about the subject of writing. Scholarship was addressed in the student affairs professional journals, but writing per se was seldom mentioned. I found instances of student affairs professionals calling themselves scholars, but nowhere did I find practitioners referring to themselves as ‘writers.’ Why not?

As Dr. Croteau and I started writing our project, the personal process of writing in collaboration was something we discussed in our sessions. It became clear that there are easily taught “linear” steps in writing—outline, write, edit, rewrite. However, the personal or emotional process is not linear, not easily taught, and probably very
individualized. If rewriting was actually rethinking, how does one teach students how to think?

I found the process of meeting Dr. Croteau at the local coffee shop with our two laptops to write together transformative. Here was a professor walking me through, step-by-step, the “how-to” of this process, while at the same time we were operating as observers of ourselves. It was encouraging and inspiring to have Dr. Croteau open himself to talking about his own development as a writer and his own view of how he teaches his students to write as professionals. In the course of researching writing, I often found reference made to the importance of mentorship and role modeling with students and subsequently found this to be true to my own learning process.

For me, I believe that our identity is linked to what we write. This may be influenced by my gender and/or my training, but it may also be influenced by my preferred method of research, which is qualitative. Personal and private lives are not so distinct, and the call for awareness of one’s epistemological and theoretical focus requires a greater connection to one’s understanding of the self as a researcher. The generally held belief that subjectivity is inherent in our research allows us the freedom to be more connected to and engaged with our scholarship. Therefore, how we write up our scholarship will essentially reflect this more engaged nature.

I hope that you are interested in participating in this journey with me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Wanda L.E. Viento
APPENDIX D

Potential Questions for Interview
This project involves an open-questioning technique where the precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops.

In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that a participant feels hesitant or uncomfortable, they will be reminded of their right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and/or also the right to withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage of any kind.

This question will be asked of all participants as the starter:
- Describe the best that you can exactly what the process is that you go through when writing a project.
- What are the concrete steps that you go through?
- What emotions do you typically experience?
- Has this changed over time? If so, how?
- What are your rituals?

Some key questions that may be used in the telephone interview:
- When did you first get interested in writing for publication?
- How did you learn to write for publication? Was anyone influential in this process for you? How so?
- How did your writing process for publication differ from your writing process for papers in graduate school? From your dissertation (if applicable)?
- Have you ever written collaboratively with others? How is it different or similar to writing alone?
- How did you react to your first publication? Did it change your professional identity at all? If so, how?
- Could you describe a time that you did not feel successful with your writing?
- Do you have a philosophy about scholarly writing? What is it? What role does scholarly writing hold for you in your professional life/identity?
- Are other aspects of your identity influenced by or influence your writing process? (Eg., My identity as a woman influences my epistemological orientation from a feminist perspective.)
- Why do you write for publication? What do you feel you gain from engaging in professional scholarship?

There may also be follow-up questions that come from the particular answers that a participant gives.
APPENDIX E

Demographic Questionnaire
Demographic Questionnaire

1. Year of birth ______________________
2. Gender __________________________
3. Racial/ethnic identification ________________
4. Please list your education:

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<th>Degree</th>
<th>Year Obtained</th>
<th>Major/Minor or Field of Study</th>
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5. Please list the different professional positions you’ve held in student affairs:

6. When did you first have a professional article/book published?

7. Subsequent to that, how many of each would you say you’ve published:

   _______ books as author
   _______ books as co-author
   _______ books as editor
   _______ books as co-editor
   _______ journals as editor
   _______ journals as co-editor
   _______ chapters in a book as author
   _______ chapters in a book as co-author
   _______ articles as author
   _______ articles as co-author
   _______ other (Please describe)
APPENDIX F

Consent Form
You have been invited to participate in a research project entitled "The Writing Experiences of Student Affairs Professionals." You were selected based on your record of publications in professional journals and books. This research is intended to explore the writing process and development of well-published student affairs professionals. This study is dissertation project Wanda L.E. Viento.

You will be asked complete a short demographic questionnaire and participate in a one to one-and-a-half hour telephone call with Wanda L.E. Viento. You will also be asked to provide general information about yourself, such as age, level of education, years of employment, current employment status, and a history of your student affairs publications.

In the telephone call, Ms. Viento will ask you to describe the process you use when writing for publication. If you have written with co-authors, then she will also ask you to describe how that process unfolds. She will then explore how you perceive the influence that writing and publishing has had on your career and professional identity and the motivations that you have for writing and publishing.

This project involves an open-questioning technique where the precise nature of the questions which will be asked have not been determined in advance, but will depend on the way in which the interview develops. Consequently, although the WMU HSIRB Committee is aware of the general areas to be explored in the interview, the Committee has not been able to review the precise questions to be used.

In the event that the line of questioning does develop in such a way that you feel hesitant or uncomfortable you are reminded of your right to decline to answer any particular question(s) and also that you may withdraw from the project at any stage without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind.

As in all research, there may be unforeseen risks to the participant. If an accidental injury occurs, appropriate emergency measures will be taken; however, no compensation or treatment will be made available except as otherwise specified in this consent form. One potential risk of participation in this project is that you feel some discomfort by the content of the interview; however, Wanda L.E. Viento is prepared to provide crisis counseling should you become significantly upset and she is prepared to make a referral if you need further counseling about this topic. You will be responsible for the cost of therapy if you choose to pursue it.
One way in which you may benefit from this activity is having the chance to talk about your writing and professional identity. It is our hope that other student affairs professionals and educators may benefit from the knowledge that is gained from this research.

All of the information collected from you is confidential. That means that your name will not appear on any papers on which this information is recorded. The forms will all be coded, and the researchers will keep a separate master list with the names of participants and the corresponding code numbers. Once the data are collected and analyzed, the master list will be destroyed. All other forms will be retained for at least three years in a locked file in the principal investigator's office at Western Michigan University (WMU). All written work from the research will disguise any other identifying information (such as institution, published work, professional position, etc.) in order to protect your identity.

You may refuse to participate or quit at any time during the study without prejudice or penalty. If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact either Wanda L.E. Viento at 208-424-0807 or 208-426-4256 or Dr. Donna Talbot at 269-387-5122. You may also contact the chair of WMU Human Subjects Institutional Review Board at 269-387-8293 or the WMU vice president for research at 269-387-8298 with any concerns that you have.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is more than one year old.

Your signature below indicates that you have read and/or had explained to you the purpose and requirements of the study and that you agree to participate.

Signature of participant: ____________________________
Date: ____________________________

Consent obtained by: ____________________________
Date: ____________________________
APPENDIX G

Letter to Participants with their Transcripts
(“Dear _____” handwritten)

Thank you once again for participating in my research project. Here is a copy of the transcript from our phone interview. I have shaded sections that I considered to be identifying statements, which I would disguise in some way if I were to use that particular statement in my dissertation. If you find other things that seem identifying that I had not highlighted, please let me know.

Please feel free to read over the transcript to see if it reads in a way to actually communicate what you had intended. You can either email me any feedback at wandaviento@boisestate.edu or mark on the paper copy and send it back to me.

Thank you so much for your time. I hope your new year has started well.

(“Wanda Viento” handwritten)
APPENDIX H

Email Letter Sent to Participants with the Themes
Subject: Dissertation themes

Here are some initial ideas I've been seeing in reviewing the transcripts--in a very rough draft. Please provide whatever feedback you would like. I am still in the process of fitting things together and trying to find the way I explain them. The titles I have chosen are not firm yet and the order is not set. Please ignore the lack of transitions and incomplete explanations of fit at this point. I did want you to have a chance to respond to the initial ideas with which I've been stewing.

Thank you again for all your participation and help. Please email me at wandaviento@boisestate.edu with anything.

Wanda Viento
APPENDIX I

Themes Sent to Participants for Comment
We pass the word around; we ponder how the case is put by different people;  
We read the poetry; we meditate over the literature; we play the music;  
We change our minds; we reach an understanding. (Thomas, 1979)

Participant Description

I have chosen an aggregate description of the participants simply to keep identities confidential, recognizing that a traditional description of each individual in this study would make it easy to identify persons as they are all known well within professional circles. Additionally, as I use the words of different participants, I provide only the salient aspects of a person’s identity to the quote or theme being referenced. In some way, this sacrifices continuity throughout the reporting of the data, but identifying one person by age, years in practice, gender, race/ethnicity, and sexual orientation could easily be recognized. And in some places where an individual identity isn’t relevant to the theme exploration, there may be no identification. The other consideration I adhered to in selecting material to illustrate these experiences was to remain conscious about how easily recognized people might be in their comments and philosophy. I have eliminated references to others, unless it is a reference to a theory widely used in the profession. While some participants talked about personal identities and life circumstances that have affected their development, to identify specifics could be too revealing. Hence, I have remained vague and broad in some areas I might have otherwise delved into with another sample of less public people. In leaving out some specific cultural and salient identities, I fear I may unintentionally invalidate or disrespect a person’s experience and the value of difference. Some of these decisions were agonizing, as I want to pay due respect to those differences but I would fail to protect anonymity if I did so. To my co-researchers, I humbly apologize for any offense.

In total, 16 people participated in this project with me. Nine were female and seven were male. Three identified as people of color and 13 identified as White or Caucasian. Four identified during the interviews as lesbian or gay while others either did not identify their sexual orientation or identified themselves as heterosexual. This personal identification occurred mostly in reflecting on how personal identity intertwined with their writing. Thirteen also identified as full-time faculty members and three as practitioners or consultants, and all but one faculty member had significant experience as a practitioner before teaching (6 to 30 years). The ages ranged from 42 to 60, with six between 42 and 47, five between 50 and 54, and five were 59 and 60. All participants were within middle age range of Erik Erikson’s psychosocial development model (Erikson, 1959/1980, 1982) which will be explored later in this chapter. Fifteen participants had Ph.D.s in student affairs, higher education, or college student personnel, and one person had some Ph.D. work completed at the time of the interview. All had single-authored and co-authored publications as well as some professional editorial experience with books, journals, or newsletters.

Situating the Findings
Having a large sample for a qualitative study, especially one grounded in phenomenology, posed some challenges. At the same time, it enhanced the essence of what emerged across a larger sample. With a sample of 16 participant researchers, the essential parts of the experiences narrow down. While the essence I describe here was experienced in a variety of ways by these participant researchers, there were some noticeable differences in the how of those essences. Typically, the same one or two participants were the “outliers.” From my standpoint as a conscious feminist (the most salient part of my identity at this time in my life), acknowledging the difference in those voices for me was grounded in my understanding and experience of power and privilege. It was impossible for me not to hear the traditional ways in which society ascribes or imposes privilege on members of particular groups in the words that were glaringly different from other participants.

I pondered, nay, ruminated on this aspect continually. Eliminating participants seemed unethical, but how do I tell other the other stories as well? What essence would be lost? Forward, backward, sidewise I stepped, trying to find the dance that felt right in this place and in this time. What emerged was listening to those voices with similarities, and reflections of various training programs began to emerge. I returned to the demographic information I had and found familiar experiences grouped easily along the timeline of training programs. I began to reflect on how individual identities grow and develop over time, as does an entire group’s identity. The profession of student affairs has done the same. It has developed over time, accommodated changes in thinking and in people, and has been enriched by the contributions of many. Each intellectual generation is trained similarly, integrates the changes of its time, and passes it on to the next intellectual generation. Student affairs today is not the same as it was 60 years ago, nor will 60 years on look like today. But it is all connected, intertwined in its lineage, and that is what I found as I listened. The earliest voices here reflect a place in time, and subsequent voices reflect on that time, while also its own.

As this study is exploratory and hopefully informs further exploration by others or myself in the profession, it provides suggestions for other areas of research. Are these “nearly essential” themes guided by gender? Are they guided by generation? Are they guided by training program and cultural time of that training program from which an author graduated? These may be more quantitative questions being generated, but certainly worthwhile considerations for future research.

In the evaluation of these documents, done as I presented in my analysis process in Chapter III, my engagement with the words of my participant researchers was a non-linear, cycling process of immersion. Repeatedly I would return to the emerging themes and ideas and ask myself how did I see what I was seeing. I looked at what they all described, and recognizing the similarities in there stories, dug deeper into those (pieces) meanings?, hoping to find a way to illuminate that part of the process along with the whole, the “whats” and the “hows.”

Some of these emerging themes are new to the writings on writing while others seem overly logical. It is important to illuminate those “of course” aspects here in order to
provide the broader overview of how the pieces connect. A significant part of this illumination is to ensure that those who are just beginning a journey have as much clarity about the components engaged in by those more experienced. Like riding a bicycle, the nuances we take for granted might be missed as we try to explain it. Part of this research is situated in my current life status, and what might seem matter-of-fact to those who are experienced, through my eyes as a curious grad student, can be enlightening and amazing, much like explaining balance to a new bike-rider. These simplicities at my level were full of “Aha” moments.

With that said, I arrive back at a basic idea I presented in Chapter I where I identified a distinction in my ideas about writing: a technical or content-focused aspect and a social-psychological or process-focused aspect. I described the technical aspects as the concrete steps to good writing that are easier to list, to teach, and to demonstrate. Those have to do with such things as style rules, grammar, outlining, editing, and thesis statements. It also includes common advice like, “Write 15 minutes everyday,” or “Find the time of day that works for you.” The social-psychological aspects of writing encompass those less tangible components focused on the process of thinking and creating, on the more personal and passionate aspects of scholarly writing. This includes how the professional identifies as a writer, what motivates one to write, and how one feels about one’s writing and the process of writing.

In my journey with this study, I arrived at seven essential commonalities: Knowing One’s Process, Situating the Self with Feedback, Persisting, Voicing Purpose, Purposeful Voice, In Being with Others, and Preparing the Future. The first one is definitely a foundational description of the technical aspects of participant researchers’ process. The remaining six are grounded in those more nebulous social-psychological aspects. As I stated in Chapter I, the social-psychological and the technical aspects of writing are not mutually exclusive and should not be interpreted as one being of more value than the other, but that both are necessary for success at writing. “Creativity and self-expression” are not “stifled” by doing the technical aspects of writing well (Alter & Adkins, 2001, p. 497), but they can be stifled at doing the technical aspects of writing poorly. Both aspects need to be taught and developed in potential student affairs scholars.

Knowing One’s Process

Knowing One’s Process of writing was an essential component for all involved, and yet in describing it seemed as perfunctory as describing riding a bicycle. Participants were able to describe what they do and how they do it, while also delineating the exceptions to their process. Each individual process was unique, some highly structured on one end of the spectrum to others who were highly intuitive. Some authors wrote from outlines, some authors never used outlines, and some used what they called frameworks. Some authors kept stacks of notes while others wrote straight out of their heads. They were clear about what worked for them and what did not. This process was learned over time and with lots of practice, and while some aspects of the process changed due to changes in our world (e.g., as with technologies, with more collaboratively written pieces, or with the aging process), the process remained essentially the same for most of them.
But what is significant about knowing one’s process? The consciousness around one’s process allows for more opportunities to construct successes. Self-efficacy in all realms of identity allows individuals to proceed with motivation and a sense of security that they will be successful. These authors came to know how the process works for them, developed over time through experiencing and re-experiencing.

One part of the writing process all participants talked about is what I have labeled “prethinking.” Thinking, reading, and talking were continually cycling through people’s process. Thinking about the project, the research, and the format of the written work consumed a great deal of time, sometimes for months, prior to actually writing. Participants related that their ideas come from doing conference presentations on their research and listening to reactions from attendees, from reading current professional journals, and from talking with colleagues. Truly, the idea of engaging in an ongoing conversation within the professional literature is represented in this process. Reading was referenced often as a concurrent passion along with writing, and this was beyond the normal expectation to keep up with current professional literature. Many of the participants stressed the importance of reading, as a part of their development, from a variety of perspectives: good fiction authors who construct language that moves them; authors in the profession whose ideas inspire them; and recommendations from other authors.

Another element in the process that emerged was the sense of writing to one’s strengths, particularly as it manifested in collaboration with others in research and writing projects. Writers were conscious about their own process, they knew what worked, what they were good at, and what they struggled with or got stuck on. Understanding one’s strengths and weaknesses in writing facilitated persisting, the experience of success at writing, and effective or satisfying collaboration with others. These strengths and weaknesses ranged from conceptualization to technical tasks. Some examples of this spectrum of awareness are:

Conceptual thinking doesn’t come easily to me. (female)

I like the conceptualizing. I like the being creative...I like to communicate. (male)

I am the utility in-fielder who has squeezed as much learning from each process in order to continue. (male)

I look at what’s being said, how it’s being said, so I tend to be the wordsmith. (male)

So I end up writing in a way that is very compatible with who I am and what I believe, so it works very well in that process. (male)

I write fairly direct and concise...that’s sort of my strength, is concise writing.... I don’t like the editing process. It’s very time consuming and tedious. (female)
More specifically, participants had definite practices around what “worked best” for them. Time of day, amount of time, and a space for writing were frequently acknowledged as aspects they constructed. All participants had some kind of preference, whether at home or office, with computer or paper and pen, or a preferred time of day. Several participants discussed the need to have a full day stretched in front of them to be able to write, as sort of “psychological space” they needed to construct for readiness to write. Whether they used the whole day or not was inconsequential as they just “felt” that they needed that stretched out before them. Writing in spurts was a necessary skill learned to accommodate all those other demands of their career and still persist in writing. A common shared frustration was the lack of time available for writing. The intrusion of other duties and responsibilities often would limit or interrupt them.

Another common description in knowing one’s process revolved around the personal gains received from writing, outside of the instrumental gains associated with job requirements. The most cited gain was the pleasure of the writing process. One may not like some or many of the specific tasks, but there was an overall enjoyment of writing expressed by the participants, frequently referenced as “a joy” or “a love.” Doing something one enjoyed was certainly recognized as a personal gain. There was also a personal gain associated with writing as a way to understand one’s own experience of something, writing as a healing practice, or writing to satisfy a curiosity. Certainly, these descriptions are not the traditional language heard from scholars, but clearly a motivator for many. This aspect provides a level of inspiration and motivation for scholars, which will be addressed more specifically in the Voicing Purpose section.

Persisting

While persistence may seem to be a fairly simple concept at first glance, it actually appears to be grounded in several layers of understanding. Participants explicated ideas of persistence associated with the learning process, with the construction of ideas for projects, with the actual writing and rewriting and editing of their work, with the submission process, with revising and resubmission. According to their descriptions, there are far more opportunities for persistence than there are for “successes” in publishing written work. Yet without persisting, there would not be successes.

In one way or another, all participant researchers acknowledged that writing is a time intensive part of their work. As discussed in Knowing One’s Process, time or the availability of time was linked in many ways to a psychological readiness to write. Other participants detailed learning to write in “spurts” or “hunks” out of necessity rather than preference, persisting in finding a compromise that works for them. This necessary persistence starts with the seed of an idea, staying through the prethinking process, the writing process, and the submission process. While it often may be suggested to students to “keep at it,” a truer understanding of what that entails can be explored and taught. For students, there needs to be more that a statement; there needs to be a demonstration.
One participant, in coming to understand his own strengths and weaknesses, used his self-knowledge and persistence to become published and to keep on publishing. He persisted in learning and he persisted in the continuation of the process.

I think that I have got average skills, but what has allowed me to publish is paying attention to feedback, getting feedback, continuing to be open to learning about the writing process and the academic writing process, and developing the sense of confidence that I have had success before, I have made a contribution, therefore I believe that I can continue to do that.

Another participant persisted in building on what he had learned in graduate school as he worked in the field as a practitioner.

...then I just continued when I graduated to write small little articles for the newsletter or something until I got to the point that I did the book.

Many others talked about their writing actually coming from the rewriting stages. Editing, rewriting, and rethinking were words used to explain the continually revising nature of working on a project. “I’m one of these people who edits and edits and edits...[it’s] likely to go through six or seven, maybe more, edits.” And another described it this way, “It’s best when it’s writing and rewriting and writing and rewriting and at some point, you know is it ever really done?” Persisting with a project through its re-editing and re-writing and re-submitting are constant expectations for participants.

Learning to manage one’s reactions to and incorporate feedback from others was central to this theme of persisting as well. Finding a successful way of situating oneself with the feedback seemed central to success. The ability to handle feedback entwined with self-efficacy as well. Negative or unhelpful feedback, difficulty getting a piece accepted for publication, or lack of interest in your ideas could impact ones’ sense of competency and one’s motivation to persist. One participant described it this way:

I was working really hard and kind of doing my part, and I had a real hard time getting some things published.... It didn’t happen that often, just often enough that it was discouraging....So I started to lose confidence, and thought ‘Maybe I’m not as good. Maybe this isn’t as good or I’m not as good as I thought,’...and really internalizing that a little too much. (female)

She persisted through this dry spell by sending her manuscripts to friends and colleagues, and searching out more critical feedback from people she trusted.

Another participant addressed the mindset that allowed him to persist.

The mindset, that sort of ‘confidence in the face of despair,’ because I know in each project that I have ever written on...there often comes points where I think either I don’t have anything to say or what I have to say won’t make a difference, somebody has already said it...those kind of things and having sort of the
confidence that that is a phase and that eventually I will work through that...
(male)

It was also clear that the submission process required the same need for persistence. “I’ve learned that succeeding about writing is about as much about persistence as it is about having good ideas...I just decided to say, ‘I’m going to get this thing published.’” Some had to keep at it to find a publisher that a certain piece of scholarship could fit. Others talked about choices in submitting designed to accommodate rejections. “Everything that I have submitted for publication has been rejected at least once.” And still some others noted the constant revisions and resubmissions that took place. “That [particular piece] from the day it was conceived until the time it was published probably took 8 to 10 years.” This commitment to persisting was described by one woman as loyalty.

I can probably get this done and get it out of there. Even if it takes a decade to do it. [laughs] And that, my friend, is loyalty! It’s loyalty to an idea which...I believe is important.

Given the need for long-term commitment to a project, the role of passion for one’s scholarship was also a repeated theme. As one participant stated, “If you don’t love the topic, you’ll never finish.”

This also layers into the mentoring/modeling aspect of education. What do we tell students about this? How do we demonstrate persisting toward the goal? One faculty member acknowledged the need to communicate this very thing by advising, “Make that investment; see it through; don’t throw in the towel part way....If you hang in there with it, I think it makes a difference.” (female)

Situating the Self with Feedback

As previously explored, a writer’s sense of self-efficacy is important to one’s persistence and subsequent successes, which in turn enhance self-efficacy. Another theme critical to developing that self-efficacy and persistence that all participants discussed was learning to handle feedback on one’s writing and its effect on one’s sense of self-efficacy. Feedback takes many forms from having colleagues review work before submitting it, to editors and reviewers critiquing it, to response from readers and students once it is published. What a scholar did with this feedback related to the ability to develop self-efficacy around writing. Success helped to build self-efficacy and provided motivation to persist in writing and publishing.

Student affairs professionals are becoming more intentional in their scholarship. As persistence is necessary to get through the time-consuming tasks of writing, rewriting, editing, submitting, revising, and resubmitting, a strong commitment to the topic is nearly mandatory. Consequently, focusing scholarship around things participants feel passionate about also promotes a different value attached to their work. One participant summed it up this way:
I feel kind of fragile in my writing, so getting feedback is sometimes difficult for me. I think that clearly says, in terms of feedback, that it's not a critique of my work, it's a critique of me. Many of the things that I have written on [have been] about something that I cared deeply about. So yeah, I think those things are an extension of myself. I think for people who are doing scholarly writing that is on the edges or on the fringes or it's pioneering, it's particularly important to be able to trust yourself about what you think is important to do. (female)

Traditionally, this has been perceived as being constructed along gender lines—women supposedly having more of their identity attached to their work. (citation) As student affairs professionals engage in more qualitative or longitudinal scholarship, more of the self is reflected in that work. Additionally, many participants talked about how they perceived all writing and research to be autobiographical to some extent. Being encouraged to find passion in one's research holds other meanings for "putting it out there" and getting critique back, for both women and men. One participant summed it up this way.

...the feedback that you get can sometimes be very harsh....Things have gotten a little bit easier for me, but the first couple of times I put my work out there and got feedback, I mean, it was like a dagger in my heart. (female)

How feedback is received, interpreted, and integrated becomes more essential to persisting. On one end of the continuum, some participants handled feedback simply by "ignoring" it or attributing stupidity to the person providing the critique. "Well, they just don't know what they were doing....You can't sit around and mope about that....so I tend to dismiss the source." (male) "I don't take myself too seriously, so when people don't like my work, I'm never too surprised." (male)

On the other end of the continuum, feedback has the potential to crush or damage one's ability to move forward. One participant came to conceptualize his writing separate from his identity, but reflected on others who could not.

I had been rejected again and I was experiencing it as a personal rejection....I think it's what keeps people from sharing their writing, from getting it critiqued by other people. I think it is why some people who win dissertation of the year awards aren't successful as faculty because they can't release their writing to other people for review, comments, critique, and possible rejection.... What we write is not who we are. (male)

And then many participants fell in the middle of the continuum, searching for ways to write from their passion while learning to think critically about feedback, balancing when to incorporate it and when to challenge it. One participant described how she learned to balance her investment in her work with the feedback. A professor guided and encouraged her in the "how to's": to think critically about the feedback, to integrate what worked, and to defend her position on what she chose not to integrate.
This ability to think critically about the feedback, keeping it balanced with one’s emotions and intellect, and learning to integrate appropriately was a key for many of the participants. Other participants reflected on that very attitude:

I believe that this [particular project] is something that should be out there and if others don’t think it’s important, well that’s too bad, but I just keep throwing it out there and I’ll keep making changes that I can live with and I won’t change anything that I can’t live with. (female)

When I started writing for publication, I think I was much more emotionally attached. But, that’s not to say I don’t have emotional attachments now....[Now I say] what am I willing to do and what am I not willing to do and to justify that to the editor. (female)

A lot of times, you’ll get competing responses from editors....I’m a believer that you’re going to get some whacky stuff from people and you’re going to get some positive stuff. I just try to balance it. (male)

For some participants, assessing feedback about the personal side of their work was grounded in an internalized sense of commitment or trust of oneself.

I think for people who are doing scholarly writing that is on the edges or on the fringes or it’s pioneering, it’s particularly important to be able to trust yourself about what you think is important to do. (female)

And from a perspective of writing, what is the cost associated with having your authentic voice show up?....The fear of having voice get rejected is dwarfed by the fear of never putting my voice out there....It’s a social responsibility thing....I think as my professional confidence grows, and has grown, my comfort with writing and my comfort with recommending things that are more ‘out there’ has also increased. I feel like I’m more willing to take risks with what I’ll write and with what I’ll say.” (male)

In addition, there are numerous rounds of feedback that one must learn to manage. Most participants used outside readers before submitting their work: students, colleagues, friends, and family would provide one layer of feedback. The next would come from reviewers and editors. A mindset that looked to feedback as a way to improve one’s writing and ideas seemed necessary to persisting through these levels.

I learned very early on the power of critical feedback... I would say that probably the people who have been most influential [in my writing development] have been anonymous reviewers... I now really see it as...the more critical the feedback, the more information to help me write a stronger piece and the more potential I might learn something else about the writing process. (male)
I think my writing is much better because of the feedback that I’ve gotten from others. I think as painful as getting reviews back on your work is to me, I also have learned a lot and I’m sure my writing is stronger from feedback that I’ve gotten. (female)

My motto is I write to be edited because I think that the editorial process makes my writing better...Peer review happens at every level of the writing and don’t be scared of that. When someone critiques your writing, they’re doing you a favor. (female)

This mindset seemed to be a learned process through repeated experience. Instead of crumbling into one’s disappointments, creating a context to manage that feedback and turn it into a positive force shifts the thinking paradigm.

I think the first couple of times you receive feedback...from editors who are very prominent in the profession...I mean, the amount of red ink is at first very startling! But then once you realize that that is often the case and you know it’s not unusual for even very talented writers to receive that much feedback, I think you become more used to it.... I don’t become as defensive or as hurt by the amount of feedback as I used to. (female)

In conveying that kind of judgment and perspective, and very much separating out that this isn’t about you, this isn’t about us as people, this is about our abilities or our successes at being clear. But it also depends on what a reviewer or what an editor is interested in hearing or what they think is a match or what they think is important. And that was just a really helpful perspective to hear. (female)

Purposeful Voice

Two themes, Purposeful Voice and Voicing Purpose, are intricately intertwined and mutually influencing, which is why I have chosen to label them this way. In my process of trying to capture and understand what ‘voice’ is, translating it from creative writing venues, I actually have come to recognize it in scholarly work as Purposeful Voice. It is much more than just how a writer comes across to readers or how well readers think they can know a writer, but is actually a voice grounded in one’s sense of purpose, often referred to by participants as making a contribution. This may be very specific to scholarly writing and especially to scholarly writing grounded in qualitative explorations.

This purpose in writing and scholarship affects what is written, how it is written, and how much one writes. The self cannot help but showing up in scholarship when it comes from one’s passions. It is a challenge to the traditional paradigm of publishing just to be published, which shows up in one’s voice anyway. One participant put it this way:

... for many, many years that’s sort of been the notion of what good writing is [not having one’s self show]. You know, very objective and... a kind of distance between the writer and what’s written and you would not interject your own voice.
into writing. But I don’t know, I think there is a voice even in that approach. Maybe the difference between your inside voice and your outside voice. (female)

This “inside voice” and “outside voice” correspond to our positionality in research—the insider/outsider positions that scholars have within any research project. As the profession becomes more engaged in understanding the importance of situating ourselves in the research (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006), that voice will become more discernable in research and writing. Some participants addressed their perceptions of their voice:

I was concerned that my paper would be looked upon as too simple, because it was very simple language. I wasn’t citing these theorists. It was really about an experience I had. So I think it is from my voice....I tend to use very simple language and I think the topic gets deep, but I try to use simple language. And I think part of that is my working class background where people who used really big words were deemed faked and inauthentic and who are they just trying to impress. (female)

I try to write in a way that allows the authentic me to surface....For me, it was just important that there not be a disconnect between how I work and how I live and how I write. That I didn’t want to have to get in touch with a different self [chuckles] in order to write. I wanted the same me to show up in all forms of all the work that I do. (male)

It does feel like I am doing some things that are sort of reflective of who I am…my identity I think does influence my writing. (male)

I think the voice in writing is the artist painting a picture or telling a story....I think that voice comes from who we are, our past experiences, our cultures, that voice of representation of all it is that we bring to the writing process. (female)

Nowhere does this voice become more critical than when we acknowledge the marginalized voices in higher education. Part of the mission of student affairs has been to create space for those voices to be heard and validated. Certainly, the scholarship in the profession has been instrumental in changing practice and changing culture within our institutions. When researchers choose to focus their scholarship on their own marginalized identities, then aspects of those voices shine through.

I would be remise if I said that my sexual orientation did not influence my writing at all, because it does....The reality is that when you’re talking about social justice issues you gotta bring yourself in. I don’t believe you can write around, about social justice issues and NOT bring yourself in. No way can I leave my gender outside the door. It’s gonna show up. Now I can minimize the bias that could be there or acknowledge it and say from upfront ‘Here is a bias’ or ‘Here is a potential researcher bias.’ (male who identified as gay)
I really feel like a responsibility to get this information out. So I very much position myself within the research....I started doing this research because I didn’t see my own story in the literature.... If you’re gonna do research on your own group, you’ve got to be pretty comfortable in your skin within that group (female of color)

Voicing Purpose

"You have to have the inspiration along with the skills to be able to do it," said one female participant. This become evident when participants talked about why they do what they do. Sometimes that was connected to one’s role (i.e., faculty member), but more often it was connected to one’s identity and the purpose for writing situated one’s relationship to that work. Although most participants acknowledged that an “instrumental” answer to the why was that research, writing, and publishing was a job requirement as a faculty member, only two participants saw it primarily as their “job” and did it because it was a good fit for them. While there is a strong pressure in academia for faculty to “publish or perish,” much is now being written to challenge and revise the adage. “Publish and Flourish” (Gray, 2005) and “Publish and Prosper” (Byron & Broback, 2006) are two examples of the shift in ideology. As the profession is moving toward publishing and research that has a greater purpose for the profession, the researcher’s engagement with her or his work is bound to be more complex and more significant on the personal level.

Participants who were faculty members were also conscious of the impact of the profession and their institutions on their writing choices. Rules about what kinds of publications quantities, and authorships were rated are more or less valuable than others. The impact of APA style on what they want to write, expectations of journal editors or reviewers, an institution’s expectations for publishing as faculty, traditional paradigms for research, and required formats for journals or books were all mentioned as outside factors affecting one’s writing. The challenge in all that was to retain one’s own voice and purpose within such constrains. Many authors talked about their work in a way as to understand the rebounding effect on the profession—one where the traditional paradigm had begun to shift as new voices emerged in our professional literature.

Other participants spoke to purpose in their scholarship being aligned more with their identity than their role, acknowledging authenticity and integrity, which would also be reflected in voice or Purposeful Voice. Therefore, one’s purpose in writing was reflected in their voice. The voices of those who identified their expectations as to “crank it out” sound very different from the voice of those who identify their purpose as contributing to the profession or having something worthwhile to say. However, many participants addressed a hopeful shift into finding a balance, in doing what is expected, but doing it with purpose. Some of the words used by the participants were truly awe-inspiring on this. I must confess I felt a sense of pride in my profession as I listened. One faculty participant shared these words about speaking to her classes about the accessibility of scholars in our profession to newcomers “It’s really nice to have that kind of integrity in the field.”
The purpose of writing, or why one chooses to write or continues writing, was a very enlightening part of this project for me. Voice and standpoint also were reflected in participant researchers identifying purpose. All participants with some form of marginalized identity that they acknowledged had a sense of purpose connected to informing others and informing the profession outside of it being a job requirement.

Furthermore, there was a beauty in how participants expressed the purpose behind their work, often cited as springing from a desire to make a true contribution. It developed out of an awareness of something “missing” in practice, in literature, or in research in the profession. It shaped early career directions and choices. It was also influenced by personal identities and not just their roles. Writing was a process by which they were able to enact their purposes, a vehicle to achieve a goal on a greater level, and that purpose showed up in their body of scholarship and voice. The perfect words come from the participant researchers themselves:

I started doing this research because I didn’t see my own story in the literature….I became a faculty member to do this research out of a passion for recognizing that my voice is not in the literature…. If you’re gonna do research on your own group, you’ve got to be pretty comfortable in your skin within that group…I really feel a responsibility to get this information out….I think my research attempts to talk to practice….I think if it’s not worth reading than I’m not writing it. I think writing for the sake of writing is useless….I really try not to write stuff that doesn’t really, truly make a difference. (female of color)

I started to encounter ideas that I wanted to challenge or that I wanted to enrich, and so really started with a belief that I’ve got a perspective that I would like to have influence this conversation, or enter this discussion on this important issue….You have ideas or you have beliefs or you have commitments that you might have lost track of and when you write about it, it gives you a chance to get back in touch with those things that are… important parts of who you are as a person or as a professional….I try to write in a way that…allows it to be an expression of who I am or who I aspire to be and my hopes for the world. Or my hopes for our work, or my hopes for higher education or student affairs, but it’s somewhere embedded in there. I try to embed my hope…. I try to write in a way that allows the authentic me to surface….I just feel a responsibility to share with people, ‘Here’s another way of being.’ We’ve got a responsibility to liberate the human spirit, …to affirm and support the identities of members of our community, that we have a shared responsibility to improve the condition of the space that we share. (male of color)

I feel a fairly strong duty to the community of scholars, which includes students, of course….Duty isn’t a word that flies really well in higher education…. [I have] this oh-my-gosh incredibly cool job where they pay me to do this stuff…I’m so aware that that is not the world that hardly anybody else gets to live in….You get entrusted with this and, darn it, you owe something back. [She cites a quote from the Bible to illustrate: ‘Of those to whom much is given, much is expected.’] And
you don’t just owe back doing good scholarship, but you owe back creating a space for other people...You pay it forward. It’s the duty. (White female who identified as lesbian)

I guess one of my underlying or fundamental beliefs about scholarly writing is that it ought to serve a greater good....I don’t believe that my writing, nor do I want my writing, to be perceived as inaccessible esoteric work that only a few people are going to read, understand, and be able to apply to their practice. I believe that writing ought to inform and transform. (White female identified as lesbian)

I just want to get stuff out there and influence practice....It’s very clear to me that if something’s not in writing somewhere in our field, most people can’t benefit from it.... I think it’s a moral obligation [to advance knowledge in the profession]. (White female)

For some, part of this purpose of making a contribution centered around ideas of generativity. In Erik Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial Development, Stage Seven is middle adulthood (40-65 years old) and involves a task of generativity vs. stagnation (Erikson, 1959/1980, 1982) Each adult must find some way to satisfy and support the next generation, and most relevant to this study, in the sense of working productively and creatively. Strength comes through care of others and production of something that contributes to the betterment of society.

I have always been a generative person....It’s why I have liked being in student affairs work—to give to others, to bring along others, to empower others....And so writing down ideas and writing down things that could help other people, things that someone might find useful or doing research that really matter, it is very motivating....(60-year-old female)

It’s the more generative policy impact stuff....to have a broader impact. (42-year-old female)

I guess one of my underlying or fundamental beliefs about scholarly writing is that it ought to serve a greater good. (51-year-old female)

It’s feeling a little less ego driven than it did for a little while there. I think it’s a generativity notion in there... (45-year-old male)

If I’ve caused anybody to think a little bit, or if I’ve helped someone with practice, or how people think about college students, then that’s been successful for me. (59-year-old male)

I know that it will be a contribution and I think that is an important part of what drives me in doing this stuff...I’m not a fan of just publishing something to

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publish it...I say, 'Do I think this is going to make a difference? Is it really going to make a contribution?' (59-year-old female)

I felt pleasure in supporting [newer professional]...there was a lot of intrinsic rewards from it. (60-year-old female)

Also related to this generativity development in Erickson’s model is the impact of the fear of meaninglessness. One participant, who currently described his writing voice and purpose as in a significant transition for himself, described it this way:

I sometimes have the sense that you’re nobody, at least within the faculty rings of student affairs, unless you’re published and your name is out there a lot. And I kind of got caught up in that ego trip a little bit...I’ve thought hard about this. What am I aspiring to be? Am I doing it for my ego or am I doing that because I really think I’ve found something?

One other related intrinsic reward or benefit was that scholarship provided an avenue for making meaning out of one’s own experiences. A parallel notion exists in researching what one is curious about, one’s passions and experiences, and while explicating others’ meaning of life experiences, our own become clearer to us as well.

At the heart of everything, I have a better sense of who I am and what I believe.... Writing helps me understand what I think. I become much, much more precise in what I’m thinking, I have a much clearer sense of what is going on and so that writing process I think pushes that even further to help me understand who I am and sort of what I believe and how those beliefs sort of shape the ways in which I interact with people. (White male)

I write because I can make sense of who I am and the world. ...Writing is very central to who I am and has been for a long time...Writing is an avenue for expression and meaning making. (White female)

I tend to write about things that I experience rather than things that are theoretical. I think I start off with theory, but it gets to trying to make meaning of my experience. (White female)

Also, a metalanguage of creation or art began to creep into many of the participants’ descriptions as they discussed the purpose behind their writing. “Create” as a word was used repeatedly to describe creating scholarship, writing, space, encouragement, support, ideas, flow, change, opportunities, images, and pictures.

I guess if I were to say that there is an art to writing, that it would be right from the heart. (female)

I was going to say write from your heart, but I probably say connect with it because I think scholarly writing probably has to be about more than just what’s
in our hearts. But to connect with that and to build on that. Um, I’d…well, I think, um, I mean…I’m censoring myself in a sense which probably isn’t what you want me to do…(female)

It’s more about serendipity maybe… Part of it is a gut sense…if it’s a gut sense that there needs to be something more…It’s kind of like a journey. (female)

I see writing as a creative process…the writer as an artist and the writing as an artistic rendering of an area of inquiry or an area of interest to the writer. (female)

I love words. Every word I think conveys meaning and poignancy. (female)

My writing process is a fairly private thing for me….I want to create by myself. (female)

I feel like I’m just repeating the word ‘creating’ or using a different word, but it feels like—how am I going to kind of construct something? How am I going to help both myself, because it’s a learning process for me as I write? Particularly I think again about [a particular piece of scholarship]. I mean it’s one of the things I’m most proud of because I do feel like I was able to take some existing knowledge, but put new perspectives on it, perhaps help people think about it in some new ways. There was a way that I was…constructing and creating… I mean, not just what I wrote but how I thought about things as I was doing it. I’m not sure how to be any more articulate than that about it. (female)

Preparing the Future

What and how do we learn? What and how do we teach? As participants talked, I recognized that many of them mentored or modeled in the same ways they described being mentored or modeled themselves. Much of that process was never addressed or acknowledged, but rather assumed. No one described learning the alphabet as a preschooeler, yet that was a necessary component to being a writer. Learning to construct words, sentences, paragraphs, and how to communicate one’s ideas—all preceded becoming a writer. Yet these pieces were not consciously acknowledged. Similarly, modeling from professors, fellow students, and even one’s parents can provide significant contributions to learning to write. In the process of learning to write for publication, all participants had been exposed to modeling in their graduate programs, whether they acknowledged it or not. This sometimes took the form of direct mentoring—having an individual professor guide them in their writing development in some way. Some mentors invited students to write on a project with them as a way for them to learn. Others “coached” from outside of a project, such as turning a paper for class into a manuscript ready for submission to a professional journal. Some participants asserted they had no one who mentored them, but they did speak of things they learned from watching their professors in their graduate programs, how they used articles in professional journals as a guide for writing, how they received guidance and support from supervisors in the field for writing as practitioners, or even how they learned from observing one’s spouse.
engaged in the writing process. These issues become critical areas to consider in the teaching process for graduate students, which I will elaborate on in Chapter V.

For instance, one male faculty member said, “No one mentored me through writing. It’s just something I figured out myself and do in my own way.” He later talked about the thoughts and ideas he learned from a couple of professors in his graduate program who encouraged students to think of publishing and referred to his program as “a very rich kind of environment in terms of people getting together and talking about ideas... We sort of saw people writing and working on various projects... There was an environment there for producing things.” Although he might not see it, values were being passed on to him through modeling.

Along with this learning process through mentoring and modeling, all participants now were in positions as a mentor or model for others, either through their faculty positions or as collaborators on projects. When asked how they mentored, participants related stories of their practice that clearly resembled the process of how they learned. Similar to research about how faculty teach the way they were taught (Grasha, 1996), it may be that mentoring is practiced the way it is learned. The implications for teaching about mentoring styles are great.

One faculty participant who learned to write by being invited to co-author with a major professor described the process as being instrumental for her in demystifying the process. Her professor edited work for her, egged her on, created a supportive environment to test things out, and provided a good sounding board for her developing ideas. Now, as a faculty member herself, she encourages students to publish their papers and invites students to work on projects with her. She said, “Sometimes just hearing that from me is enough for them to try.”

Another participant referred to the supportiveness of her committee as “…wonderful. They were incredibly supportive; they were very affirming of my work.” Throughout her doctoral program, she had many opportunities for writing and a training program that held high standards for her writing. She later described her feedback style with students as, “I’m gentle in my approach to giving feedback and I very much try to be helpful and to consider how I provide feedback in that lens... through the lens of helpfulness.” She further stated that she “provide[s] a lot of feedback on things that they write. Hold[s] them to a high standard in terms of their writing.”

Another faculty member who had been taught to “crank it out” in his program, said he advises new faculty members now to “...get one out, get one in the hopper, and get one going.” And a male practitioner who writes with others related it this way, “I’ve always said that’s what I attempt to do with others is, if I can put my name on something now and that will assist others in their writing, I will do it. And [his major professor] did it for me.”

Many participants talked about mentoring and modeling for others as a conscious and intentional process. This process included a teaching the techniques of writing,
developing critical thinking skills, understanding the process of publication, and assessing feedback.

I am perfectly capable, I’ve realized, of thinking for myself and I think that if I can pass that on to students, that is the best gift I can give them. (female faculty)

It’s [mentoring] a self-efficacy building [thing]. I started asking some of my students to join me on some of those small pieces. (female faculty)

...if I had the sense that if they really want to do it, and this is a little bit different than other colleagues, I will work really hard to help them finish it out...I really will spend the time with them to make sure that happens. (male faculty)

One faculty member talked about creating work that was mutually interesting for the student and himself, acknowledging and affirming students' interest through his process of mentoring.

I’d rather do something that is very meaningful for [student] in trying to figure out what our mutual interest [is]. Is there anything we really want to sort of collaborate on as it relates to what we are wondering about? (male faculty)

Other faculty participants also included recognition of purpose in trying to develop students.

I advise students...to at least connect with your heart...and build on that....The degree to which you can write for something you can really believe in your heart is gonna make a contribution as opposed to just writing to produce quantity. (female faculty)

I saw...an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the students. That, to some degree, is why I have written. (male faculty)

And another faculty member related how she hoped her students learned to look at writing and research as "an exciting, generative, cool thing and you may love it!"

In Being with Others

Much mentoring and modeling is done through a process of collaboration with students on projects. While institutions still put more emphasis and value on single-authored publications for faculty, collaboration in research and writing has been on the rise in the profession (Davis, & Liddell, 1997; Saunders, et al., 2000). Collaboration can be defined in many ways, from co-authoring to cooperative writing. All participants had experience in creating a written piece with others. Knowing one's process is critical to writing in process with others.
One participant referred to all writing as being a “community effort,” even the single-authored pieces. There are reviewers, proofreaders, and editors who contribute to the final project. Additionally, the profession does not occur in a vacuum nor does the thinking of its individual members. When scholarship contributes to the profession, it is responding to what has gone before; it is continuing the conversation in the literature.

In being with others, self is clearer and more complex at the same time. While working in collaboration, one’s own process is illuminated by its contrast to others. Preferences, idiosyncrasies, process steps all seem more delineated when the boundaries of the self meet the boundaries of another. The “fit” was central to successful collaboration. At the same time, working with others involves a complex response to the thinking and a dance of negotiation.

There is a negotiation that happens when you write with other people, and I think that maybe the difference is that the negotiation is in process as you’re writing. But when I write something by myself, the negotiation often happens after I thought it was finished and I send it to somebody and an editor or a reviewer wants some negotiation. (female)

Eventually you sort of figure out the people that you’re compatible with in terms of writing styles, and it gets easier. (female)

This dialectic tension that develops between giving up parts of one’s self and uncovering other aspects of one’s self that do not usually show up in individual work is typical of all other relationships. Managing that tension between self and other, recognizing and accommodating, enriching one’s thinking pattern, are all aspects of developing the self. It is not all negative as things are gained in collaboration that cannot come along on one’s own:

I get all kinds of things out of that. I get another perspective. I get the satisfaction that I collaborated with somebody and we were successful. I get the satisfaction of knowing that in some cases I was able to get some people published who were having a hard time doing that. I get the satisfaction of knowing we had a lot of fun. (female)

Finding this negotiated space also brings forward the opportunity to deepen.

I think my writing benefits from collaboration because you’ve got more than one perspective looking at a piece, looking at the data. (female)

It was also a very interesting, intellectually stimulating experience to work with [them]. It was a real joy…I felt pleasure in supporting [a newer professional]…there was a lot of intrinsic reward from it. (female)

I feel that I am smarter in a group than I am by myself. (male)
When I’m with someone else it just seems we flow so well... The things that I may be deficient in will be balanced by the other person and maybe vice versa. (male)

There’s an opportunity where the collaboration seems very natural; it seems very mutually beneficial. There is some level of reciprocity in terms of what unique contributions people can make to it. (male)

They’re people who can finish my sentences and I can finish theirs. I try to write with, and do write with, people who are temperamentally very similar to me....I take deadlines seriously and some people go through their lives and they don’t. It’s not a good match for me. (male)

I think you have to be really careful about who you collaborate with. I think the downside is when the collaborator does not come through with their part of the agreement. (female)

A common theme that stood out among the reflections on collaboration centered on the issue of accountability. Writing with others meant adhering to a schedule and to a commitment to others; it heightened authors’ expectations of themselves. Knowing One’s Process was key to developing a good fit with others.

[Writing with others] helps me to have some external accountability...[I’m] in a situation where I don’t want to let someone else down. And that helps to keep me motivated. (female)

...the pressure of not wanting to disappoint other people who I promised I would do something. (male)

If I’m accountable to somebody else, it will get done pretty quickly. (male)
APPENDIX J

Example of the Range of Experience on the Theme "Voicing Purpose"
Table 2: Range of experience on the theme “Voicing Purpose.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voicing Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want to make sure that whatever I’m developing is a contribution to the literature...that it contributes to higher education learning...Everything I’ve done is something that I’ve felt strongly about in some sort of way....I try to set an example for other practitioners about how you can still write and still stay current while still being employed in higher education...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel like a responsibility to get this information out....I started doing this research because I didn’t see my own story in the literature....I really do reflect on my responsibility in putting out the research....I really try not to write stuff that doesn’t really, truly make a difference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think because of my working class roots, I tend to write about things that I experience rather than things that are theoretical....it gets to trying to make meaning of my experience....My philosophy is it’s [writing] fit in when other things are taken care of, when other nurturing things are taken care of. So it becomes a patch in the quilt, but it’s just a patch or two and it works best for me when it’s woven in with the other pieces...So not just about my career, and not just about advocating for the profession...but about things more personal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do the writing that I do because I think it’s important information to get out. Because it’s interesting to me and I think it adds something to what other people can...It’s sharing knowledge or sharing some kind of insight or interpretations...but it’s also trying to help other people with what we know.... My hope is that what I write and contribute is useful to other people....I mean it was useful to me and I thought it was important or I wouldn’t have done anything with it...And that’s my impetus is that I want to share something and I want to be useful and I want my stuff to be useful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And I know that it [her writing] will be a contribution and I think that is an important part of what drives me in doing this stuff....That is why I’m always looking at the project that I’m working on to say, “Do I think this is going to make a difference? Is it really going to make a contribution?”...Is it going to make a difference in practice?...I guess the one thing that came out is that the idea of making a contribution....So I think this idea that my philosophy is that what we are doing, it isn’t scholarship for scholarship sake, per se, it is scholarship [that] adds to the knowledge base of the profession. Our scholarship I hope enhances the practice of the profession....So we need to answer the “so what?” question, so how is this making a difference? How can this information help us? Just asking oneself that question I think—Is it worth it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I started to encounter ideas that I wanted to challenge or that I wanted to enrich, and so really started with a belief that I’ve got a perspective that I would like to have influence this conversation, or enter this discussion on this important issue....The co-author and I on this article were truly trying to introduce a different lens and the people who were editing wanted us to write through the lens that they felt comfortable with....Part of it is that whenever I’ve written something, it’s been a topic for which I’ve had passion...And so it gives me a chance to really give form to something that I might have been wrestling with....You have ideas or you have beliefs or you have commitments that you might have lost track of and when you write about it, it gives you a chance to get back in touch with those things that are...important parts of who you are as a person or as a professional...I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
try to write in a way that...allows it to be an expression of who I am or who I aspire to be and my hopes for the world. Or my hopes for our work, or my hopes for higher education or student affairs, but it's somewhere embedded in there. I try to embed my hope....I write in a way that allows the authentic me to surface....I felt like I've always had this ability that regardless of what the prevailing values or mindset was that I was able to sort of stand up for what I am, whatever the cost was going to be with that....What’s really important is that I know my commitment, that I know what I believe, and that my responsibility is to share with others, but they don’t necessarily have to endorse it....The fear of having voice get rejected is dwarfed by the fear of never putting my voice out there. It’s a social responsibility thing....I just feel a responsibility to share with people, “Here’s another way of being.”...We’ve got a responsibility to liberate the human spirit, to affirm identities, to affirm and support the identities of members of our community, that we have a shared responsibility to improve the condition of the space that we share. ...I really love the practical aspects of what I do and so the day to day activities are...but I also feel like the intellectual and the affective components of what I do that show up in teaching and writing are very important to me.

I'm more interested in people having something to say...It just seems like it [his research] is no different than a lot of other people do, just in a slightly different venue in terms of trying to help people think differently about their practice....Writing helps me understand what I think....But there is another part of that it is probably equally if not more gratifying, which is you get a better sense of who you are, you learn about stuff that you don’t know much about in those instances it’s really time well spent....Oftentimes I don’t really try to write to solve or to offer advice or recommendations. I frame it occasionally that way, but a lot of it is to help people to understand sort of the complexities of what is going on more than smug answers and sort of tope ten lists or solutions and such.

What I’m doing is what I like to do and what the university appears to reward...It’s my job. I’m a faculty member; scholarship is important in the university where I am associated, so it’s what I need to do. ...If I’ve caused anybody to think a little bit, or if I’ve helped someone with practice, or how people think about college students, then that’s been successful for me.

I use writing to express good thinking rather than good thinking to figure out writing I guess....It's a good fit....You know, I have no illusion that most of the stuff I write nobody cares about but a few select folks with me at the head of the list....It [writing] has always been a source of fulfillment for me personally. I enjoy writing and publication is kind of a challenge I guess.

I think the mindset that I approach is sort of each project is I am seeking to make a contribution in some way and try to keep in mind sort of the broader audience....My identity is someone who is trying to make a contribution to the greater profession....I saw this [shifting jobs] as an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the students. That to some degree is why I have written. Do I love seeing my name in print? Absolutely! Did it help me get tenure? Absolutely! But those are secondary by-products. My desire is to make a contribution and to make a difference.

I guess one of my underlying or fundamental beliefs about scholarly writing is that it ought to serve a greater good....I believe that writing ought to inform and transform. I don’t mean that in kind of an arrogant way, that my writing is so powerful that it’s gonna
change lives or change the world, but I think I would like to believe that if I hold that as a
goal, that my writing or the area of inquiry does make some small contribution towards
greater good, then I think that I’ve accomplished something small…It’s incredibly
fulfilling for me because I think for me writing is about artistic expression and scholarly
contribution…I write because it’s the way that I can make sense of who I am and the
world.

…I think the

degree to which you can write for something you can really believe in your heart is gonna
make a contribution as opposed to just writing to produce quantity.

There are things that need to be said; I am very much of a social activist…I really can
make a contribution…My scholarship is usually for me, it’s things that I’m hoping that
warm the cockles of my heart…And there are more things I have that I want to say and
there is more I want to do….You know, if I live long enough, maybe what I’m thinking
will be status quo and there is nothing that would make me feel happier if people started
treating each other like equals and each person is unique and let’s listen to their story
before we judge and condemn…It [her writing and research] certainly has a social
action/social change/social justice component to it…those concepts are embedded in
everything I have done. …Yeah, I’m definitely motivated to write about those things of
which I am passionate.

I just want to get stuff out there and influence practice….It’s very clear to me that if
something’s not in writing somewhere in our field, most people can’t benefit from
it…I’ve probably avoided doing a lot of research writing because I wanted to do things
that could clearly be seen as useful in practice. I wanted to go to ACPA and NASPA and
have people say, “That helped me a lot, what you do or what you wrote.”…It’s why I
have liked being in student affairs work—to give to others, to bring along others, to
empower others. And so writing down ideas and writing down things that could help
other people, and that’s truly an altruistic motive, writing things that someone might find
useful or doing research that really might matter. And then people could use it and
somebody’s life would be better because of it…it’s very motivating. The instrumental
answer is you need to publish as a faculty member, and if faculty aren’t writing, who
will? …And so I think it’s a moral obligation.

…Because I write about things of which I am part and things of which I am not part…so
I think that’s a piece of the identity that affects my writing a lot. Both what I choose to
write about and where I choose to publish it and how I do it….I feel a fairly strong duty
to the community of scholars, which includes students…I have a strong duty back to that
to create a space for people where it’s okay to go up and say, Hey, I read your work. I
liked it” or “I didn’t like it.” …Duty isn’t a word that flies really well in higher
education…[I have] this oh-my-gosh incredibly cool job where they pay me to do this
stuff…I’m so aware that that is not the world that hardly anybody else gets to live
in….You get entrusted with this and, darn it, you owe something back. [She cites a quote
from the Bible to illustrate: ‘Of those to whom much is given, much is expected.’] And
you don’t just owe back doing good scholarship, but you owe back creating a space for
other people…You pay it forward. It’s the duty….I also write because I think I have
things I want people to hear from me…I do really feel like, here I have something to say
or I can create a space for other people to say stuff or something. I feel just that self-
important.
It’s not a question of can I say it...but do I have anything that anyone would want to hear? ...And am I doing that because I really think I’ve found something or I really want to contribute to the knowledge base or is this underlying thing of I’ve got to keep getting stuff out there to keep up with the other players....I guess I really struggle sometimes with is this really about being a writer or is this about an ego trip? ...And it’s feeling a little less ego driven than it did for a little while there. I think it’s a generativity notion there in some people. ...[Quotes a phrase from another author—'pedestrian writing’] I remember reading that and thinking, “I don’t want my work to be...pedestrian writing. I want it to be meaningful or something that’s really important to me. I’m not doing it just for the publication kind of a thing.” ...Or what can I say that’s going to be useful to people, not what can I say that people will read, but the ones who read it, will they find it useful?
APPENDIX K

Strategies for Teaching and Mentoring the Social-Psychological Aspects
Teaching and Mentoring the Development of Voice

I advocate that the development of voice be consciously integrated into teaching and mentoring student affairs graduate students in writing for publication. In doing so, it is first important to understand that student affairs students’ prior academic work may present an obstacle to their developing voice. For example, historically a frequent practice in some academic writing involved authors speaking of themselves in a disconnected way, for example as “the researchers” or “the author” instead of “we” or “I.” In my experience with student cohorts, students have often felt encouraged to use this disconnected, distant style of writing in their previous academic training. Such training hinders students’ recognition and use of their own ideas in their writing. A contemporary example comes from one of my graduate level classes. The students were required to read proposals for original research and provide feedback. The most common comment offered among the students was to remove the personal references and all personal pronouns. Although the APA Publication Manual (2001) states that it is less vague and actually preferable to refer to the self with pronouns, these students had learned somewhere along their educational paths that it was “professional” to remove themselves from their writing. Additionally, the use of the self promotes connectedness to one’s writing, which also promotes connectedness to one’s purpose for writing.

In this section, I will offer several brief practical ideas for the process of teaching and mentoring for voice in scholarly writing, some of which I had constructed in my work with Dr. Croteau. These examples are not meant to be an exhaustive list or give step-by-step directions for implementation, but, instead, to illustrate and stimulate
creative thinking about how to teach and mentor for the development of voice. Each example, as well as other productive methods, helps students and new writers with the three interrelated processes of developing voice. More specifically, each example involves helping them to notice their own thinking, to make owned connections to scholarly material, and then to use that voice of connection or ownership to shape their scholarly writing. Each example also communicates a valuing of their ideas, and thus involves helping students and new writers to develop voice in terms of self-efficacy in their writing about their own ideas.

All the examples give direct practice in verbal or written interchange about scholarly ideas, or direct experience in engagement in scholarly dialogue.

- To develop a sense of joining the scholarly discourse, students can be encouraged to read literature while constantly noting their own critical reactions, questions, and responses to the author’s main points. For students who are already responding critically to the content of the reading they do, have them notice and react to their sense of the author’s voice, e.g., what is the author’s paradigmatic framework (scientific, social constructionism, postmodernism, etc.), ideological or theoretical perspectives (feminist theory, multicultural, student learning imperative, developmental perspective, etc.), or their professional experience base (area of student affairs, areas of interest/involvement, amount of professional experience, etc.). These activities can be used in more formal dissertation advising or classroom teaching. Students can be assigned to identify and read a key piece literature on their dissertation or another scholarly topic, then write a response directly
to the author(s) that focuses on the students' own reactions, including points where they disagree with the author(s), their own ideas that add to the discussion, and areas they identify as not fully acknowledged or explored.

- To develop confidence around contributing to the professional literature, have new writers and students first generate ideas for scholarship from their own experiences. Then have them read relevant literature and further shape their ideas in a way that will contribute to that existing literature. Students can be encouraged or required to use this process in the context of developing ideas for class papers that are meant to be more like professional scholarship, for independent scholarship or research projects, and for dissertation and thesis work.

- To help develop a sense of voice, have students and new writers start by talking through their thinking about their own way of integrating a scholarly topic. This can be done informally, for instance, while discussing the scholarly topic an individual can be encouraged to key in on the parts of the discussion that reflect their own original thinking and then use that thinking in their writing. More formally, in individual, small group, or classroom discussions, this can be done by having students tape-record their conversations and later transcribe them. By seeing their own words and thoughts represented in written form, students can better envision the use of those ideas in formal scholarly writing.

- To help students move away from simply reporting the work of others, one helpful exercise is to have students write a draft of a paper starting each
sentence with “I think” or “I believe.” Then, have them critically evaluate which statements need to start with ownership, which ones do not, and which ones need to be supported by literature. By walking through a paper step-by-step, students’ consciousness about the overuse of others’ ideas and the underuse of their own ideas is made explicit.

- Developing voice also involves managing emotions around feedback, as many of the participants discussed in learning to handle editor comments. Have students reply to your critiques on their papers, indicating whether they agree or disagree and why.

- To demonstrate the prethinking process, have students and new writers make a list of personal experiences they have had which would be of interest for them to research. Have them write what motivates them to question those experiences. This helps to ground students in an understanding of the personal being part of their scholarship as well.

- Use examples of first drafts and final products to normalize the process for students.

- Share your personal process with your students.

- Have a list of faculty and practitioners’ who will talk with classes about self-identified idiosyncrasies and their personal writing process.

- Encourage students to be conscious of the process.

- Encourage students to create their own rituals or routines around the writing process.