

Chapter 1

The Multiple Meanings of Motivation to Write

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Although over the past three decades motivational research, on the one hand, and writing research, on the other, have greatly developed, studies on the motivational aspects of writing are relatively recent. This introductory chapter is aimed at highlighting the motivational variables that have been particularly investigated in their relations to writing: in particular, interest, self-efficacy, and self-regulation. The motivational implications of the socio-constructivist approach to writing are also underlined. At the end of the chapter, the organization of the volume is presented.

There are two questions that language skills teachers frequently pose to writing researchers. First, why are students so often not motivated to write? Second, how can their motivation to write be increased? This volume that, as far as we know, is the first book which exclusively deals with motivational aspects of academic writing, addresses these questions from different theoretical approaches and perspectives. The diversity of the chapters reflects the state of the art of a developing field that in the future may become more integrated.

The introductory chapter has three objectives. The first one is to clarify how motivation and writing are conceptualized and to examine their relationship. As both constructs have multiple meanings, we have focused on the aspects of motivation and the types and contexts of writing that are relevant for student's positive or negative attitudes to writing. The second objective is to outline the main research areas in which the relationships of motivation and writing are currently investigated, and in which the chapters of the volume are framed. Finally, the organization of the book is presented.

1 Motivation and Writing: What Relations?

Motivation is so broad a research field that it is difficult to analyze its various aspects. A useful way of organizing the variety of motivational constructs is by referring to the three

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main areas into which recent motivational research can be divided (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002b), and considering how each area may be related to writing. The first area regards the motives – e.g., goal orientation (mastery vs. performance vs. avoidance goals), needs, values, interests – which activate a student’s behavior. In relation to writing, it can be exemplified by a middle school student’s interest in exposing his/her ideas on a relevant topic in written form, or a novelist’s intention to narrate an involving story. In contrast, the novelist’s lack of motivation to write is probably different from a middle school student’s negative attitude toward the composition assigned by the teacher. However, in both cases the writers have an orientation to write, or not to write. A second area regards the writer’s perceptions of his/her ability to write in relation to the difficulty of the task and the resources of the context. Again, a novelist’s concern with critics’ comments and audience response to his/her work is probably different from a student’s concern with his/her teacher’s evaluation. Both writers, however, have positive or negative representations of themselves as writers. Such representations include self-efficacy, self-concept, and self-perceptions of competence. Finally, both professional and student writers, when dealing with a demanding task, try to manage it by using various, more or less productive strategies: from planning time, to adopting metacognitive tools, to resisting the temptation of giving up writing. That is, they regulate their cognition, affect and behavior to achieve the objective of a demanding writing task. As motivational researchers have often underlined (e.g., Hidi, Berndorff, & Ainley, 2002; Pajares, Britner, & Valiante, 2000; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 1999), these areas are rarely, if ever, separate from one another. The “will” (or lack of will) to write is closely connected to a writer’s self-perception of ability, as well as to the ways and tools he or she can adopt for self-regulating. For instance, in a recent intervention study Hidi et al. (2002) found that 6th graders’ general interest in writing and liking and self-efficacy of writing several text types were closely related both before and after the intervention, thus suggesting that these variables develop in concert and may have reciprocal influences on each other.

Not only is motivation a construct with multiple meanings, but also the conceptualization of writing is complex. Psychological research on writing over the past three decades has developed by elaborating and integrating contributions from various theoretical approaches to literacy, from information processing to literary theory to social constructivism. This research did not produce a unitary conceptualization of writing. Cognitively oriented scholars view writing as interrelated processes of different levels of complexity (e.g., Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Collins & Gentner, 1980; Graham & Harris, 1989a; Harris & Graham, 1992, 1996; Hayes, 1996; Hayes & Flower, 1980), whereas the approach of social constructivism emphasizes the connections of writing activities – practices, not processes – with the social and cultural contexts in which people are “motivated” to write (e.g., Englert, 1992; Hiebert, 1994; Nelson & Calfee, 1998; Spivey, 1997). In general, these different perspectives on writing have not placed particular emphasis on the motivational aspects of the activity. However, through analyses of the processes and functions of writing, they have highlighted two main potentially de-motivating features of academic writing which help answer our first question: Why are students so often not motivated to write?

A major contribution towards understanding students’ lack of motivation to write comes from studies, mainly from a cognitive approach, that have shown the complexity of writing

processes and the difficulties students, particularly novice ones, have to deal with. Among literate practices, writing is particularly demanding for children, and in general, novice writers. There are various kinds of writing difficulties, extensively described by recent research, and for which effective instructional strategies have been identified (e.g., Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1982, 1987; Harris & Graham, 1992, 1996). To perform a demanding writing task, such as those assigned in high school, a writer must use strategies of knowledge integration, as well as create unique combinations and links between his or her prior knowledge and the new topic. The difference between expert and novice writers is that an expert writer is able to recognize and overcome difficulties when writing – for instance, how to connect two paragraphs in a convincing way, to outline the various aspects of a problem clearly, or to avoid inconsistencies – whereas a novice writer tends to be aware of his or her weaknesses only through a teacher’s feedback on his or her written production. These two types of perceptions are apparently very different: for an expert writer a difficulty is basically perceived as a problem to be solved, whereas a novice student sees a problem as an obstacle which makes a writing task “dangerous” and unattractive.

The second potentially de-motivating aspect of school writing is inherent to its role in the traditional curriculum, that includes not only the rigidity of genres, but also the separateness of writing from other school subjects (Boscolo & Carotti, 2003). Emphasized in recent times by the socio-constructivist approach, the rigidity of writing genres in school has been anticipated by Britton’s studies in the early 1970s. In 1975, James Britton and his colleagues published “The development of writing abilities (11–18)”, an extensive study on English adolescents’ writing. Britton and his colleagues did not analyze writing according to the traditional literary categories of narrative, argumentation, and so on, but on the basis of a distinction between informational and literary uses of language. Britton’s system included three main categories: transactional, poetic, and expressive. The transactional (or informational) function is used to persuade, record and convey information or ideas. In the poetic or imaginative function, language is used to express an experience in literary form. This category includes stories, plays, and poetry. The expressive or personal function regards the uses of language that focus on a writer’s interests and feelings. When the authors applied the function categories to their corpus of writing samples, they found that transactional or informational writing accounted of 63% of school writing, and that students did little poetic writing, and produced even less expressive texts.

Britton et al.’s work has been seminal for two reasons (Durst & Newell, 1989). The first reason was the construction of a reliable category system that described student writing across different subject areas. The second reason and most relevant for our concern, was the authors’ emphasis on the limited functions of writing in school and its limited power to foster reasoning and exploration of ideas. The limited functions of writing can be viewed in a developmental perspective. Through school levels and grades, writing tends to be reduced to a very limited number of academic genres. Whereas in elementary school students practice a variety of genres, from free writing to personal narratives to report of classroom experiences, this variety of genres is progressively reduced in middle and particularly high school, where students almost exclusively write compositions on given (by the teacher) topics and reports (Boscolo & Carotti, 2003). These types of compositions tend to focus on literary and historical questions, about which students are required to elaborate what they have learned from the study of literature and history.

Compositions may also be about topical subjects, on which students are asked to express and sustain their own points of view. They are usually demanding tasks, in which students have to express appropriate ideas in a correct form (writing a “good” text), and demonstrate what they have learned. In other words, writing is mostly used as a rhetorical exercise and evaluation tool.

The limited function of academic writing is increased by its being separate from the other school subjects. Although writing, like reading, is a cross-disciplinary activity which also serves school subjects other than language skills, in middle and high school it is taught and evaluated as a discipline itself. By cross-disciplinary writing we mean both the production of texts within disciplines different from language skills (e.g., a scientific report), and the writing used by students to record and organize knowledge, such as notes, outlines, and summary. However, unlike reading, which develops its cross-disciplinary identity quite early, at all school grades writing is essentially perceived by teachers and students in its disciplinary function, and this perception is strengthened by teachers’ methods of teaching and evaluating writing. When writing is used as an aid to other disciplines (e.g., essays or scientific reports), teachers’ evaluations focus mainly on the amount and organization of knowledge conveyed by the text. Notes, outlines, and summaries are viewed as a student’s personal strategies and therefore tend not to be evaluated.

This instructional conceptualization of writing limits students’ occasions to write, to discover interactions between subjects, and to use writing as a communicative tool, and thus, to find writing an interesting activity, not only an academic task. Students in schools are seldom aware that writing is a powerful tool for fixing, using, changing, and re-elaborating their ideas and knowledge as well as for collaborating with other people, schoolmates, for instance, and/or others outside the classroom, as partners in the construction and negotiation of meaning through discourse. In addition to not recognizing the collaborative aspects of writing, students are unlikely to be motivated to write for themselves. Although writing for oneself can be a resource for approaching, understanding, and analyzing problems in a more personal and gratifying way, this type of informal writing is rarely encouraged by teachers.

The above problems of academic writing instruction do not mean that students are never interested or excited about writing. As any language skills teacher knows, there are occasions in which students write with interest and satisfaction. Unfortunately, such a gratifying experience is more often due to a writer’s engagement in a topic, than to writing instruction aimed at fostering motivation. Thus, from elementary school onwards, the motivational salience of written composition tends to decrease progressively, except when it involves an interesting topic, and written production often becomes a routine and rigidly scheduled task, aimed almost entirely at assessment.

2 Trends in Research on Motivation and Writing

In spite of the significant increase of motivational research over the past two and half decades, on the one hand, and the remarkable development of writing studies, on the other, the topic at the intersection of the two fields has been only partially explored. The initial scarcity of studies on the motivational aspects of writing is not surprising though as most

motivation researchers have been mainly focusing on students' general orientation to learning (e.g., learning goals, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, expectancy, self-efficacy), rather than on students' approach to specific disciplines. Moreover, in the area of writing, the powerful cognitive approach has privileged the investigation of cognitive processes, which has influenced the teaching of writing and resulted only in an implicit concern with motivational problems. Thus, over the past two decades, teachers have been more concerned with how to improve children's ability to write than with how to increase their interest in writing. The socio-constructivist research, representing the other powerful approach to writing, tends to neglect motivational aspects of writing as it assumes that motivation is inherent in writing as an authentic activity.

However, over the past decade and half some researchers have started to recognize the importance of motivational issues of academic writing (Bruning & Horn, 2000; Hidi & Boscolo, 2006). A first field was related to the "discovery" of interest as an individual's affective response to specific features of the environment (Hidi, 1990; Renninger, Hidi, & Krapp, 1992). Starting from the late 1980s, this research field contributed to highlighting the role of this variable in learning in specific domains, including writing. A second line regarded the application of Bandura's (1986) socio-cognitive theory of human agency. Writing tasks are often complex, demanding, and perceived as risky by students; therefore, writing lends itself to be investigated in terms of a writer's beliefs of his or her ability to compose a good text (Pajares & Johnson, 1994, 1996; Schunk & Schwartz, 1993a, b; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). Finally, the complexity of writing, which requires careful planning and control of time and resources, has stimulated studies in another important motivational aspect: self-regulation (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2002; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). On the side of literacy learning research, emphasis was particularly on students' engagement in reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000), but a few significant contributions to the study of motivational aspects of writing came, in the 1990s, from the socio-constructivist approach to literacy learning (e.g., Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Oldfather & Dahl, 1994).

3 Writing on an Interesting Topic vs. Writing as an Interesting Activity

Several studies investigated the conditions which make a writing task attractive to students and may contribute to a long-lasting positive orientation to writing. Some studies, conducted for the most part with middle school students, have investigated the role of interest in writing, in the light of the distinction between situational and individual interest (Hidi, 1990; Schiefele, 1991). Hidi and McLaren (1990, 1991) hypothesized that situational interest, that is the interestingness of themes and topics, which has been shown to influence children's comprehension, should also influence children's production of expository texts. The authors found that the positive effect of topic and theme interest on the quality and quantity of the written expositions was confounded by knowledge factors, that is, the level of students' knowledge of the content they were required to write about. There is some limited evidence, though, to support claims of an association between interest and writing quality. Unlike Hidi and McLaren (1990, 1991), who considered interest as

generated by text topic, Benton, Corkill, Sharp, Downey, and Khramtsova (1995; see also Albin, Benton, & Khramtsova, 1996) focused on interest in a topic as an individual difference. The authors found that writers' high or low level of topic interest was associated with particular aspects of writing quality.

In these studies of interest in writing, topic attractiveness has been viewed as the basic motivational source of writing. Interest has tended to be viewed as rather static: students were thought to be interested or uninterested in a particular topic about which they wrote. Interest in writing on a specific topic is an example of situational interest, that is, triggered by a stimulating or involving topic. However, the type of task in which the topic is treated can also be an aspect of situational interest. Hidi, Berndorff, and Ainley (2002) hypothesized that interest would emerge in social activity viewed as meaningful by the students themselves, as they performed tasks in a fashion that they viewed themselves as competent. From this perspective, interest is a student's orientation to writing, which is triggered, stimulated, and to some degree maintained, by attractive features of the activity which emerge in a specific situation, such as the possibility of using writing in an unusual and enjoyable way, a writing task of which students can perceive the usefulness, collaborative planning, and writing of an important document. Interest is the result of the activity in a situation; a student therefore finds writing interesting if the instructional situation allows him/her to discover and practice the attractive, unusual, and challenging aspects of the activity, which may not, and usually do not emerge from traditional writing tasks. In turn, by experiencing and enjoying new aspects of writing, a student feels more competent and able to face the difficulties of writing.

4 Self-Perception of Competence in Writing

Research on students' self-perceptions in the 1990s has drawn researchers' attention to the role of perceived competence and control in student motivational orientation, and their relationship with the stimulating features of an instructional environment (e.g., Brophy, 1999; Harter, 1992; Pajares & Johnson, 1994; Pajares & Valiante, 1997; Renninger, 1992; Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1989, 1995). An optimal learning environment for writing – and literacy generally – is one which provides students with tasks and activities at an appropriate level of difficulty (“challenge”) and autonomy (Bruning & Horn, 2000). Being able to choose and manage challenging but solvable tasks and problems helps students to perceive themselves as competent learners. This self-perception, in turn, is believed to foster their engagement and motivation in literate activities (Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000; Turner, 1995).

The roots of research on writers' self-perceptions of competence can be found in the studies on writing apprehension conducted in the 1970s with high school and college students. Apprehension was defined as the tendency to avoid writing situations or to react in an anxious manner if forced into them, because of the anticipation of negative consequences (Daly & Miller, 1975a, p. 243). Daly and Hailey (1984) distinguished a dispositional or trait-like form, measured by self-report questionnaires, and a situational anxiety, which was perceived to be transitory and dependent on the particular characteristics of a

writing situation. The two forms were considered complementary, although studies on apprehension have focused on the dispositional form. As a trait, writing apprehension was measured by a 26-item questionnaire (e.g., “I am nervous about writing”, “I don’t like my composition to be evaluated”) (Daly & Miller, 1975b). In the late 1970s and in the 1980s the construct was used in several studies, which demonstrated that low-apprehensive writers scored significantly higher on tests of grammar mechanics and writing skills, whereas high-apprehensive ones tended to develop avoidance behaviors. However, differences in writing competence seemed to be only partially related to apprehension: writing apprehension was found to affect writing quality when the writer was limited by time constraints (Kean, Glynn, & Britton, 1987), and when he/she wrote personal texts (Faigley, Daly, & Witte, 1981). The writer’s feeling of distress not accompanied by any objective shortcoming of writing was called the “paradox of writing apprehension” (Madigan, Linton, & Johnson, 1996).

Studies in writing apprehension represent an isolated research area, although measures of apprehension have been used in recent writing research (e.g., Pajares & Johnson, 1994; Pajares, Cheong, & Valiante, this volume). A major reason of this isolation seems to be the theoretical weakness of the construct, conceptualized before the development of writing models, on the one hand, and of motivational theories, on the other. Now, research on writing self-efficacy has become the dominant area in which writers’ self-perceptions are examined. Self-efficacy for writing represents individuals’ beliefs of their ability to write certain types of texts (Pajares & Johnson, 1996; Schunk & Schwartz, 1993a; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). Many investigations over the past 20 years have demonstrated a relationship between self-efficacy for writing and writing measures. For example, Schunk and Swartz (1993) found that 4th and 5th graders’ writing self-efficacy was highly predictive of their writing skills and use of strategies. They concluded that self-efficacious writers are more likely to choose and persist at writing tasks than students who do not feel competent. Several other researchers found that older students and adults’ self-efficacy was predictive of their writing performance, intrinsic motivation to write, and self-regulatory processes (McCarthy, Meier, & Rinderer, 1985; Meier, McCarthy, & Schmeck, 1984; Pajares & Johnson, 1994; Shell, Corvin, & Bruning, 1989; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). Interestingly, Zimmerman and Bandura (1994) found that increased levels of writing self-efficacy resulted in higher-level goals that students set for themselves, thus, linking self-perceptions of writing competence to writers’ goal setting. Considering learning-disabled students’ self-efficacy beliefs, Graham and Harris (1989a) demonstrated that these students tended to overestimate their abilities for creative writing. Self-instructional strategy training for these students not only improved their self-efficacy judgments, but also their composition skills.

Although research on interest and self-efficacy developed independently, some researchers maintained that increased interest was an outcome of increased self-efficacy (e.g., Bandura & Schunk, 1981; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 1997, 1999). However, Hidi et al. (2002) argued that self-efficacy is associated with interest, and that these two motivational factors may reciprocally influence each other’s development (for a review of the theoretical and empirical aspects of this problem see Hidi & Boscolo, 2006).

5 Self-Regulation of Writing

A writer has to coordinate cognitive, metacognitive, and linguistic processes when producing extended texts. She or he has to select sources to gain information, make choices about ideas to be included, adopt strategies about the use of time. In other words, the writer must self-regulate at several levels. In addition to cognitive and metacognitive aspects, self-regulation also includes motivational aspects. For example, a self-regulated writer should have positive feelings, interest and self-initiated thoughts that would lead him/her to activities that attain various literary goals, such as improving their writing skills and the quality of the text they create (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997).

According to the socio-cognitive model (Bandura, 1986; Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 1999, 2002; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997), self-regulation of writing is viewed as involving three elements: the person, the behavior, and the environment. Based on this view, various writing self-regulatory activities can be identified, grouped according to these three elements. A writer *controls internally* the writing activity such as setting specific objectives and assigning time for the writing task. The writer also controls his or her *behaviour*, for instance, by using the best ways of expressing ideas, and by taking into consideration the already produced text. In addition, he or she establishes a suitable writing *environment* such as a quiet place.

Zimmerman and Kitsantas (1999) further argued that the strategies of a self-regulated writer can be described in the frameworks of recursive writing models, such as Rohman's (1965) and Hayes and Flower's (1980), which hypothesized three phases of writing: planning, transcription, and revision (see Zimmerman and Kitsantas's chapter in this volume). Zimmerman and Kitsantas's (1999) also hypothesized that there are four progressive levels in the development of writing self-regulation. The first level of self-regulation involves the learner observing a model (e.g., a teacher who illustrates how to best combine simple sentences into a complex one). The second level of self-regulation involves emulation, that is, when the student attempts to copy the model's performance. For example, at this level the writer composes the complex sentence based on the teacher's demonstration. The third level of self-regulation involves self-control; the learner can plan and use a particular strategy and self-monitor the process. At this level the learner's self-satisfaction is related to awareness of matching or surpassing the model. Finally, the fourth level is actual self-regulation, i.e., students adapt their performance to various internal and external conditions. At this level, the primary sources of motivation are high levels of self-efficacy and interest in writing. According to Zimmerman and Kitsantas (1999), a major aspect of self-regulation is the ability to shift from processes goals to outcome goals, that is, from the steps through which a skill is achieved at a proficiency level to the target a writer wants to achieve. In two empirical studies, the authors have supported various aspects of the model.

Zimmerman and Kitsantas's studies demonstrated that teaching students self-regulatory strategies contributes to improving their writing performance, attitude to writing, and self-efficacy. Graham, Harris, and colleagues (e.g., Graham, Harris, & Troia, 2000; Harris & Graham, 1996; Harris, Graham, Mason, & Saddler, 2002) designed a writing program, called Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD), that targeted struggling writers, under the assumption that a self-regulated writer is also one who wants to write. Their research program demonstrated that the SRSD improved problem writers' performance.

6 Writing as a Meaningful Activity: The Socio-Constructivist Approach

Although motivational aspects are not central to the social constructivist approach to literacy and literacy learning, it represents a resource for conceptualization of motivation to write, as some of its constructs are salient for how to improve the teaching and learning of motivated writing in the classroom. In a socio-constructivist view, writing is a process of construction of meaning (e.g., Gambrell, Morrow, Neuman, & Pressley, 1999; Hiebert, 1992; Kostouli, 2005; Nelson & Calfee, 1998). Studies on the teaching of writing conducted within this approach over the past two decades have emphasized that two main instructional conditions should be respected in order to help students construe writing as a meaningful activity, and make them feel motivated to write. The first condition regards overcoming or limiting the traditional isolation of academic writing, and linking it closely to other classroom activities. By participating in classroom activities, a student learns the functions of reading, writing, and the other literate practices, and is able to construe what it means to be literate. Thus, writing is portrayed as a multi-disciplinary activity. Although, occasions to write in school tend to be related to the teaching of language skills, writing can be used for many objectives and in various subjects, such as science, social studies, and mathematics; that is, across the curriculum (Petraglia, 1995). Stimulating occasions for engaging in writing and a positive teacher attitude are powerful means for helping a student develop a sense of competence and control as a writer, as well as a sense of the self as a literate person, who is a member engaged in the social practices of the community of discourse of the classroom (e.g., Benton, 1997; Langer, 1986; Langer & Applebee, 1987; Mason & Boscolo, 2000; Rosaen, 1989). The socio-constructivist concept of genre, as a typified response to situations which are construed socio-culturally as recurrent, in contrast to the idea of text types as fixed and “general” models for writing instruction, contributes to limiting the isolation of academic writing (Bakhtin, 1986; Berkenkotter & Huckin, 1993; Chapman, 1995; Freedman, 1995; Freedman & Medway, 1994; Dias, Freedman, Medway, & Paré, 1999). More specifically, according to socio-constructivist view of genre, there are as many text types as there are recurring situations, in and out of school, whenever writing is required to express, elaborate, and communicate feelings and ideas, information and events, rules and instructions; in other words, when it makes sense to write (Bromley, 1999; Burnett & Kastman, 1997; Gambrell & Morrow, 1996; Hiebert, 1994).

The second condition regards the social nature of writing. In addition to experiencing writing as an authentic activity (Bruning & Horn, 2000), the occasions in which writing is a social activity, and students are to different degrees involved in collaborating to the writing of a text can have a motivational relevance for students, also increased by the use of computer technology in the classroom. Research into the social nature of writing shows affective as well as cognitive advantages associated with collaboration in a community of learners and writers (see Nolen, this volume). Classroom collaboration is one of the best conditions for creating a community of discourse practices through which students can discover their identities as learners (e.g., Boscolo & Ascorti, 2004; Daiute, 1989; De Bernardi & Antolini, this volume; Flower, Schriver, Carey, Haas, & Hayes, 1989; Hidi et al., 2002; Higgins, Flower, & Petraglia, 1992; McLane, 1990; Morrow & Sharkey, 1993; Oldfather & Dahl, 1994; Spivey, 1997).

7 A Concluding Comment

In selecting the various chapters of this volume, our aim was to provide a fairly representative sample of current research on motivation and writing. The variety of contributions focusing on different motivational aspects related to academic writing and providing different perspectives is, in our opinion, a major merit of this volume. However, the selected chapters also make two limitations of current research emerge. The first limitation is the lack of integration of motivational constructs related to writing. For example, although several studies over the past two and half decades – some of which included in this volume – have shown a close connection between interest and self-efficacy on the one hand, and self-efficacy and self-regulation, on the other, a theoretical integration of these constructs has not been developed. In this perspective, Lipstein and Renninger’s chapter is a valuable starting point.

A second limitation, related to the first, seems to be due to the origins of studies on motivation and writing. As we mentioned in the first part of this chapter, studies on the topic were conducted mainly from the motivational rather than from writing research perspective. When, in the late 1980s, interest researchers, on the one hand, and social cognitive researchers, on the other, applied their constructs to writing, the cognitive complexity of the activity appeared to be a promising field for motivational analysis. From those early studies onwards, emphasis was on the motivational aspects of academic writing. This volume reflects this emphasis. Although, Nelson’s rhetorical analysis of motivation to write and Zimmerman and Kitsantas’s concept of self-regulation can be applied to various types of writing, basically this volume focuses on elaborative writing, that is writing aimed at expressing ideas and thoughts elaborated by students from reading and listening in academic settings. We are aware that writing is not only academic elaboration of previous knowledge, as Iran-Nejad and co-authors argue in their chapter. One may disagree on the quite sharp distinction between a “determinate” and “indeterminate” zone highlighted in their chapter; after all, whereas elaborative writing is not necessarily creative, no creative writing can be produced without knowledge elaboration. Admittedly, a few of the “multiple meanings” of writing, such as those not related to academic contexts (e.g., literary and personal writing) are left out of this volume. Hopefully, future research will relate these types of writing to the motivational constructs that have proved to be so fruitful when applied to academic writing.

8 Outline of the Volume

The volume has four general sections. The first group of chapters, including the contributions of Nelson, Lipstein and Renninger, Zimmerman and Kitsantas, and Iran-Nejad, Watts, Venugopalan and Xu, provides theoretical analyses of motivation to write and/or reviews of related literature. The second group report empirical works aimed at clarifying various aspects of the relationship between motivation and writing. The authors included in this group are Boscolo, Del Favero and Borghetto, Cumming, Kim and Eouanzoui, Pajares, Valiante and Cheong. The chapters included in the third section by Berninger and Hidi, De Bernardi and Antolini, Hidi, Ainley, Berndorff and Del Favero, and Raedts, Rijlaarsdam, van Waes and Daems, present interventions studies aimed at improving motivation and/or writing performance. The fourth section includes the chapter by Nolen and

Oldfather and Hynd, reporting longitudinal studies on the development of writing motivation. However, our categorization of the chapters should not be considered fixed, as some of the chapters could be included in more than one of the above categories.

In her chapter, Nelson analyzes motivation to write from a rhetorical perspective, not focusing exclusively on academic writing. The origin of the word “motivation” is the Latin verb *movere*, that means to move. According to the author, there are two main meanings of motivation in writing related to movement: the writer’s reason, goal or motive to write, and the effect or movement his or her writing produces on a reader. The movement metaphor is closely related to motivation to write, of which Nelson analyzes some aspects such as fluency in writing, *hypergraphia*, blocks, and closure. In her view, writing is not only a dynamic process but also an interaction, in which a writer is motivated to produce a text as well as to use it as a communicative tool.

Iran-Nejad, Watts, Venugopalan, and Xu analyze writing-to-learn as a tool for critical thinking in the light of the determinate/indeterminate zone of practice dimension. According to the authors, this distinction is particularly appropriate to research in school learning, including writing, which has been traditionally conducted with analytic methods aimed at guaranteeing scientific rigor. The determinate zone of practice characterizes writing as a mind-regulated elaboration of knowledge, whereas the indeterminate zone is brain-regulated and characterized by complexity, flexibility, and professional artistry. Iran-Nejad and collaborators argue that a new type of understanding for researchers, educators and students is required, in which complexity is not unduly simplified. Regarding motivation, students may have an approach or alternatively, an avoidance attitude to the indeterminate zone of practice. Students in the determinate zone view writing as the translation of existing knowledge into definite prose, and assume an avoidance orientation in front of the complexity of experience, whereas those in the indeterminate zone use writing in a divergent and creative way, being more concerned with taking multiple perspectives (e.g., creating metaphors) than with reducing writing to the reproduction of knowledge. An interesting and novel aspect of this chapter is the idea that writing-to-learn has different levels of cognitive and motivational complexity, according to the zone in which a writing experience or task is located.

The Zimmerman and Kitsantas’s chapter analyzes self-regulation of writing as a motivational construct that influences writers activities, and the quantity and quality of output. Self-regulation is defined as self-initiated thoughts, feelings and actions that writers use to produce texts and to improve their writing. The authors emphasize the importance of self-motivational beliefs, such as self-efficacy, and the role of self-regulatory strategies in motivation to write. In addition, they present a social cognitive cyclical model that describes key self-regulatory processes not restricted to academic writing. The model is applied to a particular example of writing instruction in the classroom that deals with teaching to students the use of a sentence revision strategy through social modeling experiences.

The chapter by Boscolo, Del Favero, and Borghetto presents a study conducted with high school students, aimed at demonstrating the positive effect of writing from multiple texts on a topic on their interest in the texts and in the topic. Whereas in several studies on interest and writing interest has been considered as the variable influencing writing (e.g., Hidi & McLaren, 1990, 1991), in this study the opposite relation was hypothesized, that is, elaborative writing was viewed as potentially facilitating the development of interest in a topic.

The study also addresses issues relevant to text processing and writing, for example, the influence of students' general interest in writing and self-perception of writing competence on specific aspects of topic and text-based interest. Whereas the hypothesis of a positive effect of writing on topic interest was not confirmed, and interest turned out to be lessened rather than augmented by writing, significant relationships were found between interest and self-perception of writing competence, on the one hand, and various specific motivational and cognitive measures involved in writing from multiple texts, on the other.

Cumming, Kim, and Eouanzoui examine the motivation to write, perceptions of the writing abilities and self-regulation of the composing processes of a unique population of adult ESL (English as second language) learners who plan to enter university programs in Canada. They report three studies that examine the goals and motivation of ESL students for writing improvement and their self-efficacy and ability to self-regulate their composing processes. Their results indicate that ESL students' motivation to write can be best explained by both extrinsic and intrinsic factors, and their self-efficacy regarding the composing processes are generally comparable to American students beginning university studies.

In Lipstein and Renninger' chapter, the method of portraiture is used to analyze 12–15-year-old students' attitudes to writing and relate them to the four-phase model of interest elaborated by Hidi and Renninger (2006). Portraiture is a method of presenting case descriptions that reflect the response of a similar group. It does not present individual responses, but the response of a group of individuals sharing certain characteristics: in this case, a certain degree of interest for writing. Interest in writing is conceptualized as a pattern of cognitive and motivational variables: interest for writing, conceptual competence about writing, effort to write, self-efficacy, goal-setting in writing, and preferred writing activities. The authors identify and describe four "portraits", that is four degrees of interest for writing corresponding to the phases of the interest model – low interest, maintained situational interest, emerging individual interest, and well-developed individual interest. A valid aspect of the portraiture method is that the different aspects related to writing – competence as well as motivation – are highlighted in their relationships at different levels of interest development.

The aim of Pajares, Cheong, and Valiante's chapter is to provide a developmental perspective on students' writing self-efficacy beliefs based on data obtained from cohorts of students ranging from age 9 to 17. The authors are concerned with how students' self-efficacy beliefs change with school grade, and how they are related to students' gender orientation. The various motivational variables examined in the study included achievement goal orientation, self-regulation, interest in writing, and writing apprehension. The results show that these variables are positively related to self-efficacy, and also to writing competence. However, the relationship between competence and self-efficacy was weaker for high school than for elementary school students. Regarding gender, girls reported higher self-efficacy in writing than boys, but these differences were made nonsignificant when controlling students' gender orientation beliefs.

Berninger and Hidi's chapter describes a specialized instructional intervention – Mark Twain Writers' Workshop – aimed at improving the spelling and composition abilities of 4th, 5th, and 6th graders with learning disabilities. The study is one of the very few dealing with the motivational aspects of writing in this population. The authors reject the common belief of many teachers that a unidirectional relationship exists between motivation

and learning; that is, that motivation causes learning. Instead, they argue that motivation can be a consequence or result of learning. Regarding writing, children with LD can also be taught to learn and master the basic skills needed for literacy learning, and to change their negative attitude learned through repeated failure experiences.

De Bernardi and Antolini's chapter presents an intervention conducted with 120 8th-graders, aiming at improving students' performance in and attitude to argumentative writing. Argumentative writing is a complex and rather difficult genre that students often deal with in school with scarce or no personal involvement. In the intervention, students' interest for argumentative writing was stimulated by making them write on topics related to their own experience, by creating collaborative writing contexts, and enabling the use of various sources (traditional, such as volumes and newspapers, and the Internet) to seek information. The intervention proved to be fruitful for the improvement of argumentative writing, as well as for students' involvement and self-efficacy. Interestingly, no significant difference emerged due to the use of traditional documents vs. the Internet.

Hidi, Ainley, Berndorff, and Del Favero examine how interest can facilitate science-related expository writing, and how interest and self-efficacy measures are associated. An additional objective of the study was to investigate the effects of resource materials provided to students electronically (put either on the web or written by the researchers) vs. resource materials presented in paper. Students had to write on two topics four months apart. In each case the resource materials were presented prior to the writing task. Several measures relating interest and self-efficacy were collected. Unexpectedly, in general, computer presentation of the learning resource materials did not positively affect students' motivation and writing performance; in fact, in the case of one of the two topics the hard copy condition was associated with the highest holistic ratings of writing. Statistically significant positive relations that were found between various interest and self-efficacy measures support the hypothesis of a reciprocal influence between the development of these variables.

Self-efficacy is also investigated in the chapter by Raedts, Rijlaarsdam, van Waes, and Daems, aimed at demonstrating that observational learning may be a valuable tool in academic writing instruction. In their intervention study, the authors set up an experiment to test whether first-year university students' self-efficacy for a complex writing task – a literature review – improved through observation of peers performing under think-aloud conditions. The results indicated that the students in the observational condition were not only more able to predict their scores in the writing performance, but also wrote better reviews than students of the control group. Moreover, although the intervention did not influence students' knowledge about relevant text features, a significant effect was found for their knowledge of writing strategies.

Nolen's chapter outlines the role of the classroom as a literate community and its effect in the development of students' writing interest. By "literate community" the author means a classroom in which literacy activities establish and maintain the relatedness of individuals; or, in other words, where reading and writing provide opportunities to experience writing as a tool for self-expression and communication, whereas in traditional classrooms writing is a basically individual activity. From a socio-constructivist perspective, Nolen emphasizes the importance of the social interaction in the classroom for the development of interest in writing and literacy in general.

Also Oldfather and Hynd's chapter assumes a socio-constructivist perspective. On the basis of the results of longitudinal and cross-cultural studies in writing instruction conducted in United States and in Georgia (Russia), they emphasized that motivation to write really develops when students can write on personal and emancipatory experiences: that is, the expression of ideas, constructions and beliefs. They analyze the aspects of the classroom culture, which may hinder motivation to write, such as emphasis on teacher's evaluation and focus on correct form. Epistemological empowerment is defined as "a sense of intellectual agency and ability to know that emerges from a strong sense of the integrity of one's process of constructing meaning".