Writing and Becoming:
Agents, White Matter, and Genre, Oh My!

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Student writer agency and self-efficacy

- **Agency:** recognizing a role (Bandura 1987)
  
  - Mastery
  - Vicarious
  - Social
  - Physiological (Usher & Pajares, 2008)

- **Self-efficacy:** acting on that role (Bandura 2006)
  
  - Intention
  - Forethought
  - Self-reactivity
  - Self-reflectivity

- **Modes** (Bandura 2006)
  
  - Individual
  - Proxy
  - Collective

- **WID/WAC** may rely on student writer agency and self-efficacy to a greater extent than FYC or disciplinary content, to analyze, move knowledge, see/learn genre, and understand context: varying rhetoric, transfer, genre, discourse, etc.
Social Psychology (2500+)

- Operationalized Bandura’s concepts in tangible ways
- Agency, self-efficacy, and applied specifically to academic writing
- Still outside the head and trying to look inside
- Frequently perception scales, questionnaires, self-perception surveys
- Extremely focused research
- Repetition is essential
Learning Theory/Studies

Sprague & Stuart, 2000

- **Unconscious Incompetence**: You don’t know that you don’t know how to do something.

- **Conscious Incompetence**: You know that you don’t know how to do something and it bothers you.

- **Conscious Competence**: You know that you know how to do something and it takes effort.

- **Unconscious Competence**: You know how to do something and it is second nature; you rock at it.
Learning Theory/Studies

- Dualities: good/bad, right/wrong
- Multiplicity: it’s a matter of opinion and everybody has one
  
  Dweck: “Fixed mindset”

- Relativism: all views are not equal and can be evaluated

- Commitment: reasoned selection and building
  
  (Ambrose, et al., 2010)
  
  Dweck: “Growth mindset”
What is the brain doing?

- Physical brain development continues into early 20s (Mar, 2004; Blakemore and Robbins, 2012)

- Shift from grey matter to white matter production (Bartzokis et al., 2001; Giedd et al., 1999)

- Myelinisation (Bennett and Baird, 2006)

- Synaptic pruning (Bennett and Baird, 2006)
WAC/WID often works to develop

- Rhetorical facility: ethos, logos, pathos (Aristotle)
- Transfer/portability: students’ active movement of learning (Salomon & Perkins)
- Genre: context dependent (Waldo)
- Discourse community: disciplinary texts constituting and describing social actions (Soliday)
- All depend on a student writer’s agency (‘I act’) and self-efficacy (‘I decide how to act’).
Further complications: young adult psychology

- Emotional before executive
- Risk-taking—debated
- Evolutionary, life-stage
- Frame of reference, roles
Axes WAC/WID/CAC must consider

- Agency
- Unconscious ignorance
- FYC
- Dualism
- Grey matter
- White matter
- Reasoned argument
- Capstone
- Unconscious competence
- Self-efficacy
So, what does it all mean?

WAC/WID are programs populated by individuals.

A WAC/WID program can engage multiple perspectives in and about writing by design for those individuals.

- So, tell me something I don’t know . . .
  - NSSE: not arrogance or ignorance but opportunity to support developing agency/self-efficacy
  - Encourage internal locus of control
  - Repeat and reinforce processes
  - Reason over emotion may not be as simple as choice
  - Expertise begins with awareness of ignorance
- Design thinking: empathy, define, ideate, prototype, test

(Stanford d.school)