

Expertise Development in the College Classroom

New Insights

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When the editors of this book asked us to write a chapter that reflects our work and thoughts about issues that relate to change and improvement of institutions, environments, and people, we immediately decided to focus on the college classroom and how college teachers and students adapt to new forms of instruction. In our own research we examined the adaptations that college teachers make to existing teaching methods in order to take into account the way students learn and we also analyzed the students' response to these innovations. More specifically, we studied students' developing interest in a course as a function of their changing appraisal of affordances and constraints in the learning context. We also examined the emotions that were triggered in the college classroom and how these emotions influenced the students' self-assessment of their self-regulation strategies. In this chapter we will focus mainly on our studies that focused on the students' expertise development in relation to an important academic skill, namely scientific writing. We will examine how self-regulation of scientific writing develops and how it is affected by students' beliefs about the quality of the learning environment and the positive and negative emotions they experience while engaged in the course.

The chapter is divided into four main sections. In the first section we focus on the domain-specific self-regulation strategies students need to acquire in order to be able to steer and direct their scientific writing. In the second section we describe the learning setting within which university students acquire the skill to write a scientific paper. In the third section we refer to the important role that students' perception of fulfillment of their psychological needs plays in expertise development. In the fourth section we illustrate the role that affect plays in skill development. In the final section we bring all these variables together and show how they jointly affect skill development in the college classroom.