WHEN EMOTION STANDS TO REASON:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF COMPOSITION INSTRUCTORS’
EMOTIONAL RESPONSES TO PLAGIARISM

Dissertation
Submitted to
The School of Education and Health Sciences of the
UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
The Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership

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December, 2015
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ABSTRACT

WHEN EMOTION STANDS TO REASON:
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Plagiarism has been the focus of considerable scholarly research in recent decades, much of which has examined the number of students who are plagiarizing, why they plagiarize, and what instructors can do to teach students to effectively and ethically integrate their own words and ideas with those of their sources. Overlooked in this scholarship is empirical research on how student plagiarism affects writing instructors. This dissertation describes a qualitative, phenomenological study of writing instructor emotions when students in their composition courses plagiarize. This research identified the specific emotions that were experienced as well as the many ways these emotions impacted instructor pedagogy and relationships with students, administrators, and colleagues. In addition, this work examined how instructor gender played a role in composition instructors’ emotional responses.
To understand how instructors emotionally reacted to plagiarism, this research employed semi-structured, one-on-one interviews and written pre-interview responses from 12 composition instructors at a mid-sized public university in the Midwest. Based on an analysis of the interview and written responses, the researcher found that a considerable focus of the work composition instructors perform centers on nurturing students’ growth as writers, yet there exists an equally important responsibility to enforce academic integrity policies by policing student plagiarism. As such, suspecting plagiarism in student writing serves as a significant catalyst for writing instructor emotion.

This research revealed that participants worked at controlling their emotions during experiences with plagiarism in various ways according to what they felt was appropriate for the profession and their institution. This “emotional labor” (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7) complicated and shaped their professional identity, their pedagogical choices, and their relationships with students. In addition, the research showed that negative, or undesirable, emotions emerged for participants during their interactions with colleagues and administrators when student plagiarism was involved. An analysis of emotional responses by participant gender revealed that participants’ written and verbal responses aligned with gender emotion stereotypes, and there were considerable gender differences between the emotions expressed in writing and those discussed in interviews.

An analysis of the findings of this dissertation suggests that far more can be done by higher education administrators and writing program directors to acknowledge and value the emotional work composition instructors experience when their students plagiarize. Faculty development and graduate teaching assistant training efforts should
be offered to explore the impact of emotions on teaching, to discuss writing instructor professional identities, and to help instructors find ways of better balancing their responsibilities as instructors with their professional stances in the writing classroom. In addition, administrators are urged to reexamine the policies, procedures, and penalties involved in plagiarism to take into account the complex nature of plagiarism and the emotional costs involved for instructors. Work such as this could substantially reduce the emotional labor that is involved for writing instructors when their students plagiarize.
This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, who made me believe I could do anything I set my mind to as long as I tried hard enough and who trusted me to make the right decisions. It is also dedicated to my wife for her amazing encouragement throughout my academic career as well as for her remarkable copyediting skills, from which I continue to benefit. Lastly, thanks to our two children who each day help me remember what is most important in life.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to especially acknowledge my committee chair, Dr. Michele M. Welkener, for her remarkable confidence in me and her exceptionally wise, calm advice throughout all stages of this journey. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Charles J. Russo, for his expertise on the legal aspects of plagiarism, Dr. Carolyn S. Ridenour, for gently urging me to explore the research process farther and deeper, and Dr. Stephen Wilhoit, for inspiring me to want to be a writing teacher in the first place and for continuing to stand beside me as mentor and colleague.
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CHAPTER I
OVERVIEW OF THE PROBLEM

Student plagiarism frustrates many in higher education, but perhaps more so those in composition studies, whose very subject matter focuses on teaching students to write with sources and who are often responsible for introducing beginning college students to the expectations of academic writing in higher education. As such, composition instructors are commonly viewed as the first line of defense for teaching students about academic integrity and, in particular, plagiarism avoidance strategies.

Considerable research has noted a rising prevalence of plagiarism and cheating on college campuses in recent decades, despite the curricular focus on academic integrity in general education composition courses (Baldasare & Washington White, 2012; Lester & Diekhoff, 2002; Lovett-Hooper, Komarraju, Weston, & Dollinger, 2007; Martin, Rao, & Sloan, 2009; McCabe, 2005). Plagiarism can be an extremely troublesome and emotionally complex problem for writing instructors, who not only are charged with teaching about plagiarism but also must pursue, confront, and report students who plagiarize.

This chapter outlines the problem to be addressed in this study and the significance of the research. In addition, this chapter describes the research methods as
well as the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. It concludes with a list of definitions used in the research and a brief explanation of the chapters that follow.

**Statement of the Problem**

Wilhoit, 1994; Williams, 2007), and the many challenges students have incorporating sources into their writing (Howard & Robillard, 2008; Howard et al., 2010; Blum, 2009; Pennycook, 1996; Shei, 2005; Thompson & Williams, 1995; Williams, 2007).

Plagiarism has become a significant problem and focus in higher education. Even so, scant attention has been paid to how writing instructors react to it emotionally and how those emotions impact their teaching, their interactions with students and others, and their sense of themselves as professional educators. A growing body of literature has shown that teaching, by its very nature, is both socially-constructed and infused with emotion (Hargreaves, 1998, 2005; Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991; Nias, 1996; Palmer, 2007; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Perhaps the most frequently discussed emotion related to teaching is caring; in fact, teaching is commonly referred to as a caring profession (L. S. Goldstein, 1999; Noddings, 1995), and the feeling that one cares deeply about the success of one’s students has been described as a characteristic good teachers share (Hargreaves, 1998; Nias, 1996; O’Connor, 2008).

Not surprisingly, poor performing students can make teachers experience a variety of negative, or undesirable, emotions, such as frustration and anger, which can influence their feelings about and relationships with students (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003). Sometimes instructors suppress emotions to avoid having their feelings impact their teaching or relationships with students, a behavior that can have its own negative consequences for teachers and their sense of professional identity (Zembylas, 2002). Moreover, scholars have explored the effort instructors exert when they regulate their emotions, believing that certain emotions are more appropriate for inside or for outside the classroom (Hargreaves 1998; Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991; Lasky, 2000; Morris &

The composition classroom is a unique setting where instructors work closely with their students, often in one-on-one conferences and small groups, encouraging and empowering them to explore and express ideas through writing. Scholars have noted the deeply personal relationships that composition instructors commonly form with their students, bonds that develop from mentoring, coaching, and guiding students throughout the research and writing process (Robillard, 2007; Yoon, 2005). In stark contrast to this liberatory, empathy-laden climate are requirements that instructors aggressively police their students for plagiarism transgressions. Although instructors across the disciplines are typically encouraged to enforce academic integrity, this charge may be particularly problematic for composition instructors who face a paradox in the classroom between two conflicting professional identities, one as supporter the other as adversary. This dissertation research examines this paradox in order to provide insight into the emotions that emerge for composition instructors at the intersection of these two highly disparate identities and how those emotions may influence their lives as professionals (See Figure 1).
If “emotions are at the heart of teaching” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 835), then far more attention should be paid to how composition instructors’ emotions are involved when their students plagiarize. In particular, how instructors feel when they discover plagiarism in their students’ texts may have strong implications for how they respond to and relate with students, the pedagogical choices they make, and how they feel about the work they perform as professionals.

Defining “Plagiarism”

A significant challenge of any study of plagiarism is the difficulty of defining exactly what the researcher means by the term “plagiarism” because no universally accepted definition exists. Although scholars have noted that some conflate it with copyright (Dames, 2007; Mawdsley, 1994; Posner, 2007; Rife, 2013), plagiarism “is an
ethical, not a legal, offense and is enforceable by academic authorities, not courts” (P. Goldstein, 2003, p. 8). Similarly, in its definition of plagiarism, *Black’s Law Dictionary* notes that “Generally, plagiarism is immoral but not illegal” (Garner, 2009, p. 1267). So, unlike copyright, which is governed by statute, plagiarism is an “academic concept . . . defined and enforced according to the interpretation of the individual higher education institutions” (Mawdsley, 1994, p. 81). Plagiarism is concerned with how material is used regardless of whether the material involved is or is not copyrighted (Latourette, 2010; Mawdsley, 1994).

Furthermore, although legal scholars generally agree that plagiarism involves misappropriating someone’s words without acknowledgment (Garner, 2009; Mawdsley, 1994, 2008, 2009; Parrish, 2006; Weidenborner & Caruso, 1982), much disagreement exists regarding whether intent should be considered when finding fault (Mawdsley, 2009). For example, at Western Michigan University, intent is central to the official definition: “Plagiarism is intentionally, knowingly, or carelessly presenting the work of another as one’s own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source)” (Western Michigan University, 2013, “Definitions of Academic Integrity Violations”). In contrast, at Michigan State University, intentional and unintentional plagiarism are treated equally: This policy states, “Plagiarism may be accidental or blatant and there is even self-plagiarism. However, students are held to the same standards whether they knew they were plagiarizing or whether or not they were plagiarizing themselves or someone else” (Michigan State University, 2013, “Plagiarism”).

Some institutions, such as Iowa State University, avoid any mention of intent, defining plagiarism as “the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or
words without giving appropriate credit” (Iowa State University, 2014, “Research Misconduct”). Similarly, at the institution where I conducted this research, intent is not included in its definition (Note that I will not be including a direct quote from this institution’s plagiarism policy in an effort to protect the organization and participants’ identities). Yet, from a legal perspective, intent is a defining characteristic of plagiarism, as evidenced in Black’s Law Dictionary: “The deliberate and knowing presentation of another person’s original ideas or creative expressions as one’s own” (Garner, 2009, p. 1267).

Throughout this dissertation I will utilize Black’s (Garner, 2009) legal wording for the operational definition of plagiarism, with the additional phrase “regardless of intent.” (Please see “Definitions.”) Mawdsley (1994) noted that the effectiveness of any definition of plagiarism “depends on agreement between the author and the evaluator concerning both the nature of the subject matter (e.g., areas of general knowledge) and the nature of the use (e.g., verbatim reproductions, paraphrase)” (pp. 14-15), and one cannot rely on a single definition without such mutual understanding. He explained that definitions of plagiarism can vary among disciplines, and it is therefore “impossible to define in a common definition for all students (and faculty)” (Mawdsley, 1994, p. 15). (For a more detailed view of how plagiarism has been defined, see Chapter II.)

The complex mix of issues involved in what is termed plagiarism can emotionally complicate writing instructors’ reactions to it and create significant pedagogical challenges. With no universal definition of plagiarism that is accepted by all disciplines, universities, and cultures (Blum, 2009; Bennett et al., 2011; Jamieson, 2008; Liddell, 2003, Mawdsley, 2008), writing instructors face a conundrum: How can one teach about
and enforce what cannot be clearly defined? Even among writing faculty much disparity exists about what the term means (Blum, 2009; Howard, 2000; Pennycook, 1994). Some have questioned whether there even is such a thing as originality in writing (Blum, 2009; DeVoss & Rosati, 2002; Howard, 1999; Rife, Slattery, and DeVoss, 2011; Woodmansee & Jaszi, 1994), a concept that makes teaching about source use and plagiarism complicated at best.

In an effort to better understand the many issues involved, scholars have tried to identify why students plagiarize, and yet the wide variety of reasons scholars have identified has served to further complicate the issue of how writing instructors should best respond to it. For these reasons and many others that will be explored in Chapter II, it can be difficult to teach students what plagiarism is and how to avoid it as well as difficult to identify plagiarism in student writing.

The complex notion of plagiarism notwithstanding, composition instructors are required to enforce academic integrity rules, policies, and punishments when their students misuse source information in their writing, a situation that can emphasize power relationships in the classroom and turn the student-instructor relationship adversarial. This may be a particularly complex dynamic for composition instructors, who scholars have suggested may be characteristically maternal in nature (Enos, 1996; Micciche, 2002; Robillard, 2007; Yoon, 2005), a notion that will be further explored in Chapter II. It follows that female instructors might experience different emotions than male instructors when they discover a student’s plagiarized text and, as a result, how they respond to the incident and feel about themselves as educators may differ as well.
Scholars from a variety of disciplines have suggested that men and women experience emotions differently and express or suppress certain emotions to adhere to specific gender stereotypes (Brody, 1993; Brody & Hall, 2008; Hess, Senécal, Kirouac, Herrera, Philippot, & Kleck, 2000; Plant, Hyde, Keltner, & Devine, 2000). For example, considerable research has argued that women react more emotionally than men (Brody & Hall, 2008, Fabes & Martin, 1991; Simon & Nath, 2004) and experience more feelings of forgiveness and guilt than men (Ferguson & Eyre, 2000; Plant et al., 2000; Toussaint & Webb, 2005), while others have argued that some emotions, such as anger, are more commonly experienced by men (Diener & Lucas, 2004; Hess et al., 2000; Plant, et al., 2000). Accordingly, if female writing instructors, who make up the vast majority of composition faculty in the United States (Enos, 1996) have different affective responses to plagiarism than their male counterparts, knowing these differences and how they impact instructors’ behavior and professional identity may help inform efforts to more effectively support all composition instructors who face plagiarism from their students.

I believe we risk overlooking a significant contributory factor when we neglect to examine the presence and import of instructor emotion when students plagiarize. In this dissertation I explored the ways composition instructors emotionally respond to plagiarism as well as how this impacts their relationships with students and colleagues, their pedagogy, and their sense of professional identity. Secondarily, I was curious to see if gender patterns emerge in composition instructors’ emotional experiences and responses after discovering plagiarism in their students’ texts.
Significance of this Research

By paying closer attention to composition instructors’ emotional reactions, much more can be learned about their lived experiences, including how they make meaning of plagiarism and respond to it in student writing, how plagiarism alters their perceptions of professional identity, and how this impacts their relationships with students, administrators, and colleagues. Insofar as the emotions of teaching are significant, better understanding the emotions of plagiarism will add to the knowledge base of what impacts job satisfaction and longevity in the teaching profession, particularly for those who work in the writing classroom. Likewise, understanding, acknowledging, and thus legitimizing the complex challenges and the affective effects undergirding the plagiarism experience can help

1. provide for a shared understanding of the plagiarism experience as an emotional and social situation with a variety of outcomes;

2. add to the scholarly conversation on plagiarism in a new way that leads to a deeper understanding of this phenomenon;

3. tailor faculty development and graduate teaching assistant (TA) training to more effectively support instructors during episodes of plagiarism; and

4. motivate educators across the curriculum to acknowledge and address the types of plagiarism and disciplinary-specific issues related to source use.

Although it is undoubtedly helpful to better understand what causes plagiarism, to know how we can more effectively prevent it in student writing, and to improve plagiarism policy and detection, it is not enough. Listening to and valuing instructors’ emotions in response to student plagiarism can lead to a more comprehensive
understanding of the power of plagiarism in higher education.

**The Research Approach**

Because I attempted to capture and understand a particular lived experience, a qualitative, phenomenological approach was appropriate (Merriam, 2002). Using this lens, I focused on the individual, subjective experiences of participants in an effort to better understand the essence and meaning of what they perceive to be their emotional experiences. A phenomenological approach was particularly appropriate for this research because being faced with plagiarized writing is not an uncommon experience for composition instructors, and I sought to understand their perceptions of the interactions between themselves and their world (Merriam, 2002).

**Research Purpose, Questions, and Methods**

The purpose of this research was to understand how composition instructors emotionally react to incidents of plagiarism and how those reactions impact their teaching, their relationships, and their professional identity. The following research questions guided this research:

1. How do composition instructors emotionally react when faced with plagiarized texts?
2. In what ways do incidents of plagiarism potentially complicate and alter composition instructors’ relationships with their students and colleagues?
3. In what ways do composition instructors’ emotional responses to incidents of plagiarism potentially impact their pedagogy?
4. In what ways do composition instructors’ emotional responses to incidents of plagiarism potentially affect their sense of professional identity?
5. In what ways might gender play a role in composition instructors’ emotional responses to incidents of plagiarism?

Interviews were the main data collection method for this research. Merriam (2002) identifies interviews as the primary data collection method for phenomenological research. Interviews enabled me to enter what Ashworth (1999) called the “life-world” (p. 708) of participants, hearing their words as well as observing their nonverbal responses. I conducted open-ended interviews (Patton, 1990) with 12 composition instructors to learn about their experiences with plagiarism and how they emotionally reacted.

Prior to interviewing the participants, I asked them to respond in writing to open-ended questions about their experiences and emotions when confronting and responding to plagiarism. These written responses served two purposes in my research: First, they allowed participants time to thoughtfully reflect on their plagiarism experiences and feelings before responding verbally during an interview. In addition, these written responses provided a secondary data source for analysis. Likewise, having participants describe their thoughts and emotions in writing is a particularly appropriate framework to employ for composition faculty, who are typically adept and at ease with expressing themselves in writing. I believe using two methods of data collection helped me reach a fuller, richer understanding of the shared, lived experiences of composition instructors’ emotional reactions to plagiarism.
Assumptions Underlying the Study

This dissertation is grounded in a number of assumptions about the nature of composition instruction, plagiarism, and emotions. The following are particular assumptions underlying this research:

1. Teaching is a profession deeply infused with emotion (Caswell, 2011; Chinn, 2012; Cowie, 2003; Hargreaves, 1998, Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991; Neumann, 2006; Nias, 1996; Palmer, 2007; Saunders, 2013; Schutz, Hong, Cross, & Osbon, 2006; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009; Stephens, 2004; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003): I believe that emotion plays a significant role in an instructor’s life, and an instructor’s emotion informs his or her pedagogy.

2. Emotions can be expressed in words (Lindquist & Barrett, 2008): Putting emotions into words can be a challenge, and one runs the risk of inadequately expressing in words how one truly feels. I believe that the words I heard and read from participants were the closest they could come to expressing how they truly felt during the times they were recalling.

3. Composition instructors want to support their students and improve their writing.

4. Composition instructors form relationships with their students based on what students write as well as how they interact with students inside and outside of the classroom.

5. The bond composition instructors have with their students affects how they respond to students and, therefore, impacts their pedagogy.
Research Delimitations and Limitations

A delimitation of this research relates to the boundaries with which I will accept the words participants use to describe their emotional experiences. Because this study did not attempt to record an instructor’s emotions at the exact moment he or she discovered plagiarism in a text or at specific moments throughout the plagiarism experience, I needed to rely on participants’ recollections of those lived experiences. Therefore, I accepted as knowledge and data the self-reported emotions, feelings, and responses of participants (expressed both verbally and in writing) of their prior experiences.

In addition, there are three limitations to this research. First, some participants might have altered their responses and words, telling me what they thought I wanted to hear or possibly changing their words for fear that I would be judgmental. This might have occurred because the emotional attachment between instructor and student in the composition classroom creates an expectation that instructors are strongly supportive of students rather than adversarial (Enos, 1996; McLeod, 1995; Richmond, 2002; Robillard, 2007; Yoon, 2005). Some participants might have believed that admitting to negative feelings, such as anger or frustration, toward students would be perceived as admitting their failure at being a supportive and nurturing instructor. Likewise, a writing instructor who has a student plagiarize might fear he or she would be viewed as failing to adequately teach source use. As Robillard (2007) has noted, “our identities as writing experts, premised at least in part on the notion that we are able to distinguish between ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ writing, are challenged when our prevention methods do not work” (p. 16).
Secondly, some participants may not have wanted to appear to me (a female researcher) as being overly emotional (and, perhaps, not in control of his or her feelings). Lastly, some might have been averse to admitting to feelings of shame, frustration, confusion, or other emotions that could be associated with a teacher whose students plagiarize.

In my discussion of gender and emotions, there may have been additional limitations. For example, Brody and Hall (2008) described the difficulty of self-report measures of emotion. In particular, they noted that gender and social stereotypes can affect participants’ self-concepts and how they describe their emotions. Moreover, research has found that women are “more emotionally expressive than men report themselves to be” (Brody & Hall, 2008, p. 397) and “the differential expression of emotions for the two sexes is adaptive for the successful fulfillment of gender roles” (Brody & Hall, 2008, p. 405). Thus, I am aware that participants might have altered their self-reported emotions because of pre-conceived gender expectations as well as social and cultural expectations of what it means to be an effective instructor. All of these limitations will be further explored in Chapter II.

Because I am a composition instructor and writing programs director, my views on participants’ responses were likely impacted by my sense of empathy with their experiences. As writing programs director, I direct composition program assessment, oversee the composition curriculum, and am in charge of composition instructor faculty development. I am not involved in hiring, reviewing, or managing faculty (those responsibilities fall to the department chair).
As someone who has taught composition and writing studies for 18 years, I have had many personal experiences with students plagiarizing, and my own emotional responses have run the gamut. Nevertheless, I attempted, through the discussion of my research methods and positionality in Chapter III, to emphasize and acknowledge my potential biases. Likewise, I used thick, rich description (Merriam, 2002) of the research context, research methods, the data collection process, analysis process, and discussion of findings to help ensure participants’ voices and narratives remained at the center of this research.

**Definitions**

This study employed nine terms with which some readers may not be familiar. The following list clarifies the meaning I attach to particular terms used in this research:

*Composition courses.* First- and second-year composition courses introduce students to scholarly discourse conventions, typically by focusing on rhetoric, academic literacy, and research-based writing. These courses introduce students to the conventions and styles of academic discourse, including those associated with source acknowledgement.

*Composition instructor.* The term *composition instructor* and *writing teacher* are used synonymously.

*Emotion.* Emotions are states of mind or phenomena in which “certain feelings and behavioral inclinations tend to intrude upon ongoing thought and behavior. They seem to assume control, tend to persist over time, and may do so even when prevailing conditions make it advisable for them not to do so” (Frijda, 2008, p. 68).
Feelings. Feelings are the conscious awareness or sensation of an emotion. In other words, a feeling is “The experience of having an emotion (as opposed to just a simple ‘feeling’) as embodying the thoughts, judgments, and other cognitive elements” (Solomon, 2008, p. 10).

Identity. Someone’s identity is the type or kind of person one is recognized as being, which can be context specific and changeable (Gee, 2000).

Instructor. The words instructor and teacher are used synonymously.

Negative emotions. Undesirable feelings, including anger, frustration, sadness, fear, anxiety, shame, and guilt. Negative emotions are typically stress-inducing.

Plagiarism. The “presentation of another person’s original ideas or creative expressions as one’s own” (Garner, 2009, p. 1267), regardless of intent.

Plagiarism experience. An event spanning from when an instructor suspects a student’s writing is plagiarized, to when the instructor confronts and responds to the student and/or class of students, to when the instructor modifies her or his teaching in light of the incident.

Positive emotions. Desirable feelings, including happiness, joy, pride, amusement, empathy, and love.

Summary

If we fail to acknowledge the role emotions play in how instructors react and respond to incidents of plagiarism, we overlook the significant role emotion plays in shaping the climate of the writing classroom and the learning that takes place there. Likewise, we run the risk of ignoring an important factor in how writing instructors feel about themselves and their professional identity. This first chapter provided an overview
of the problems that exist in understanding and teaching about plagiarism, discussed the need for additional research on the impact of emotions on the plagiarism experience, and framed the primary research questions this dissertation will address. In addition, this chapter introduced the assumptions and limitations underlying the research and provided definitions of key terms to give readers a clearer understanding of the language used in this research.

Chapter II provides a review of the scholarship on plagiarism, emotions, teaching and emotions, gender and emotions, and instructor responses to plagiarism. Chapter III details the methodology and methods of this study, and Chapter IV presents the findings. Chapter V, the final chapter, includes discussion and analysis of my findings as well as my conclusions.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

To preface this study, I conducted a literature review to identify prior scholarly work and fundamental theories that serve to frame the issues regarding emotion and teaching, and to situate this research contribution in the knowledge base. This chapter highlights approaches scholars have taken to understanding emotions and what they have learned, including how emotions play a role in teaching as well as how emotions are involved in the writing classroom and writing assessment.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first presents an overview of the literature on plagiarism, specifically how it is defined and why scholars believe it occurs. The second reviews the literature on emotions, examining how they have been defined and analyzed from various disciplinary perspectives. Included here is a discussion of how scholars have viewed the links between gender and emotion as well as how humans recall and express emotions. The third section discusses the literature on emotions and teaching, including how emotions impact instructor identity and what has been learned about instructor gender and emotions. The fourth section describes how composition instructors have typically responded to plagiarism. This section concludes with a discussion of the limited scholarship related to instructors’ emotions when plagiarism is discovered in their students’ work.
In all, the sections in this chapter explore the relevant scholarly conversations, theories, problems, assumptions, and research findings in these areas. It is the intent of this literature review to illustrate the themes and trends of prior scholarship as well as to reveal a gap in the knowledge base that this dissertation is intended to address.

The Literature on Plagiarism

An article in the August 2011 edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* began as follows: “Plagiarism is making us crazy. No, the mere thought of plagiarism is making us crazy. Collectively, as a professoriate, we're obsessed with it” (Jenkins, 2011, para. 1). Indeed, the enormous body of literature on plagiarism reflects this obsession, which is likely fueled by findings indicating plagiarism is a significant problem in higher education, and it may be getting worse. For example, in an extensive study of more than 40,000 undergraduates that spanned two years, McCabe (2005), a leading scholar on cheating in higher education and founder of the Center for Academic Integrity, found that 51% of students admitted to cheating on written work, and four out of five of those who admitted cheating said they did so by plagiarizing Internet sources or by submitting a purchased paper (p. 28).

Research by many other scholars has led to similarly disturbing findings. Over the last 20 years, studies have found that anywhere from 50% to 90% of students cheat (Baldasare & Washington White, 2012; Graham, Monday, O’Brien, & Steffen, 1994; Hollinger & Lanza-Kaduce, 1996; Lester & Diekhoff, 2002; Love & Simmons, 1998; Lovett-Hooper et al., 2007; Martin et al., 2009; McCabe, 2005; McCabe & Bowers, 1994; McCabe & Katz, 2009; McCabe & Trevino, 1997; McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001; Vandehey, Diekhoff, & LaBeff, 2007).
Technology has clearly had an impact on these high percentages. As Howard and Robillard (2008) noted, what has been described as an “epidemic” (p. 2) of plagiarism can be attributed to the ease with which one can find source information today as well as detect plagiarism in student writing.

The seemingly straightforward task of teaching students about plagiarism can pose significant challenges that can emotionally complicate a writing instructor’s life. Composition instructors, and indeed faculty across the disciplines, often approach discussions of plagiarism as if it were “something fixed and absolute” (Price, 2002, p. 89), and therein lies the problem: The meaning of plagiarism is anything but concrete. Browse through the scholarly literature on plagiarism in higher education and you will find hundreds of definitions (Liddell, 2003). For example, The Council of Writing Program Administrators’ definition of plagiarism explains that it “occurs when a writer deliberately uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source” (“Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism,” 2003).

But what about when a student turns in a paper he or she has written for another class? The Office of Research Integrity of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services maintains self-plagiarism is a “questionable writing practice” that “occurs when authors reuse their own previously written work or data in a ‘new’ written product without letting the reader know that this material has appeared elsewhere” and notes that this can “violate the ethical spirit of scholarly research” (“Self Plagiarism,” 2013). Indeed, at the University of Dayton, self-plagiarism is considered a violation of the academic integrity policy. Likewise, is what we call “common knowledge” the same in
all disciplines and all contexts? Can plagiarism occur when students collaborate to co-write a team project? And what about students who might inadvertently commit plagiarism when struggling to apply a complex system of citation and conventions for the first time? Should instructors consider a student’s intent when determining plagiarism? Questions like these suggest that in actuality, plagiarism is an extraordinarily slippery term.

Scholars cited throughout this chapter have offered numerous opinions for why students plagiarize and have suggested countless pedagogical strategies for how to teach plagiarism avoidance. Yet, the problem continues to plague composition instructors, who, as the frontline for teaching the conventions and values of academic discourse, often shoulder the blame for students’ writing transgressions. This section presents an overview of the literature on plagiarism and why the simple act of defining plagiarism is only the start of what may be making so many writing instructors “crazy” (Jenkins, 2011).

Legal Perspectives on Plagiarism

Students are often surprised to learn that plagiarism is not a crime or against the law, that “no plagiarist has ever been prosecuted for theft” (Green, 2001, p. 170), and that plagiarism “does not serve as a legal cause of action” (Latourette, 2010, footnote 71). Rather, plagiarism is “an ethical or moral offense whose proper hearing venue is that of the college or university or professional association” (Latourette, 2010, Plagiarism Regarded as a Potential Criminal Offense section, para. 1).

According to Latourette (2010), plagiarism is a legal issue only when it also involves copyright infringement, and Mawdsley (1994) noted that copyright and
plagiarism are legally distinct. Unlike copyright, which focuses on ownership of material, plagiarism focuses on how that material is used, regardless of who owns it or whether the material was copyrighted, exempt because of fair use, or in the public domain. In other words, one can plagiarize someone whose work is not copyrighted. One can even plagiarize when paraphrasing someone else’s words rather than copying words verbatim (Ryesky, 2007).

Even though plagiarism by itself is not a crime, “cries of theft, criminal wrongdoing, and moral turpitude on the part of wrongdoers are asserted by academic authorities,” and “some academics regard plagiarism as a capital offense potentially meriting the academic death knell for students” (Latourette, 2010, Conclusion and Recommendations section, para. 3). Latourette (2010) cautions faculty and administrators against “constructing academic policies rife with criminal connotation” (Latourette, 2010, Conclusion and Recommendations section, para. 5).

From a legal perspective then, plagiarism is far from black and white. Mawdsley (1994) characterized the dilemma for education scholars when he wrote, “Plagiarism can be especially difficult to define since ideas, terms, characterizations, story plots and even exact phrases may remain in a writer’s consciousness long after the course or the book, or perhaps even the knowledge that there even was a prior source, has been lost from memory” (p. 11). Legal scholars have remarked that when intent to plagiarize is a part of a school’s academic integrity policy, determining fault involves subjectivity on the part of the academic disciplinary committee, which must deduce from the evidence whether a student intended to cheat as well as interpret the language of the school’s plagiarism policy regarding intent (Mawdsley, 2009).
In addition, while most students clearly understand what is meant by the word “cheating,” telling students not to plagiarize can be highly problematic, particularly due to the contextual nature of the term (Mawdsley, 1994). For example, using crib sheets during an exam would be considered to be cheating, regardless whether occurring in a physics or history class. Plagiarism, on the other hand, must address both problems of the nature of the subject matter, a discipline-specific question that can vary among different subjects, and the nature of the use which has elements common to all academic disciplines. (pp. 13-14)

The courts have suggested that if intent is not a part of the school’s policy, academic integrity committees can determine plagiarism by objectively determining, such as by using plagiarism detection software, whether plagiarism occurred (Mawdsley, 2009). However, one sticking point regarding this occurs with wording that is considered common knowledge, as “the line between general knowledge and attributable materials is not always easy to determine” (Mawdsley, 2009, The Elements of Plagiarism section, para. 2).

Institutional policies, such as the University of Dayton’s, which state that information must be cited unless it is common knowledge, are assuming that common knowledge is easily understood by evaluators regardless of discipline. Nevertheless, legal scholars often acknowledge the ambiguous nature of plagiarism, and, in particular, how the social norms and contexts in which the plagiarism occurs can make determining any fault extremely complex (Green, 2001; Latourrette, 2010; Mawdsley, 1994). This may be one reason why “Courts are reluctant to second-guess a school’s disciplinary determinations for plagiarism and other infractions if reasonably fair notice and due
process are afforded to the student” (Ryesky, 2007, Judicial Review of the Battle Against Student Plagiarism section, para. 2).

When a student is found to have violated an institution’s plagiarism policy or code of conduct, the offence can have a variety of academic consequences depending on the university’s policy, from a lower grade on the assignment, to failure of the course, to putting a student on probation, to expulsion from school. Most litigation addressing student plagiarism has focused on due process; that is, determining whether the accused was treated fairly and that his or her legal rights were not violated (Green, 2001; Latourette, 2010; Mawdsley, 2009; Ryesky, 2007).

For instance, in Kalinsky v. State University of New York at Binghamton (Kalinsky, 1995), a junior college student who extensively plagiarized a paper written by her housemate for an archeology course, brought suit seeking to annul the decision, claiming her due process rights were violated. The student argued that the similarities between the two papers were due to conversations she and her housemate had shared about the topic. The university’s academic honesty committee had found that the student plagiarized and denied her registration to the college the following semester. On hearing the case, an Appellate Court in New York found that the dean and academic honesty committee were at fault having not provided the student with a clear statement of the evidence against her in a timely manner as well as the reasons for the imposed penalty.

In another case (Jaber v. Wayne State Univ. Bd. Of Governors, 2012), after officials at Wayne State University revoked her doctoral degree, determining that portions of her dissertation were plagiarized, a student claimed her due process rights were violated. On appeal, the court found that the school had given her notice that her
degree could be revoked, that she had adequate time to prepare a defense, and that she failed to provide evidence that the school’s decision was biased.

Of equal concern to higher education administrators is the potential of defamation claims that can result from accusing a student (or faculty member) of being a plagiarist (Latourette, 2010). Some faculty may be hesitant to accuse a student of plagiarism (Ryesky, 2007) with the knowledge that an accusation of plagiarism can be particularly stigmatizing, and litigation has resulted from plagiarism damage claims. In *Slack v. Stream* (2008), a state university professor was awarded $212,000 for compensatory damages and $450,000 in punitive damages after his chair widely distributed a letter accusing the professor of plagiarizing. In another instance, a graduate student sued Virginia Commonwealth University for defamation and conspiracy to ruin his reputation after being expelled for plagiarism (Childress, 1998). The student claimed he suffered from dysgraphia, a disability affecting his ability to transcribe written language, and this had impacted his ability to write.

In contrast, the courts have agreed that missing or overlooking plagiarism in students’ writing can have serious consequences for instructors. In *Carton v. Trustees of Tufts College* (1981), Dr. Lonnie Carton, a faculty member, sued her college when she failed to receive tenure, claiming sexual discrimination. In their explanation of the reason for tenure denial, the college’s Tenure and Promotion Committee cited a letter they received from another faculty member who expressed concern that Dr. Carton had failed to discover plagiarism in a student thesis and that this was an indication of her failure to adequately supervise students and that she lacked trustworthiness. These issues, in addition to her lack of scholarship and integrity, played a role in the court’s
decision that Dr. Carton failed to prove her claim.

The courts have also been involved in determining whether students’ rights are violated when faculty submit students’ work to plagiarism detection service Turnitin.com. In *AV ex rel. Vanderhye v. iParadigms* (2009), high school students sued iParadigms, Turnitin.com’s parent company, for using and archiving their papers in its database for the purpose of detecting the plagiarism. The court noted that students had clicked “I Agree” to the user terms of agreement on Turnitin.com’s website and, in so doing, entered into a legal agreement with the company allowing it to use the students’ work. The 4th Circuit Court found that iParadigms was not at fault and, in fact, determined that Turnitin’s practice of archiving student papers constituted fair use under the Copyright Act.

**Education Scholarship on Plagiarism**

Outside of the legal arena, defining, determining, and adjudicating plagiarism is equally complicated. Pennycook (1994) attempted to understand what he called the “complexity of the contexts” (p. 277) in which plagiarism occurs and to show how difficult plagiarism is to recognize and define for both instructors and students. He borrowed a questionnaire that Deckert (1993) had used in a prior study that determined whether English as a second language (ESL) students in Hong Kong could identify plagiarized passages in six writing samples. Pennycook (1994) asked 22 English instructors at his institution, Hong Kong University, to complete this same questionnaire. He found that the instructors were unable to agree on what constituted plagiarism. Likewise, there was “remarkable similarity” (p. 278) between Deckert’s (1993) student responses and Pennycook’s (1994) instructor responses regarding which examples were
plagiarized. Significantly, none of the instructors answered correctly (Pennycook, 1994). He concluded that when we ascribe academic norms to our teaching and views of plagiarism, we vastly underestimate the true complexity of the concept.

Jamieson (2008) directly experienced this complexity when working with colleagues from other disciplines to create an academic integrity policy for the campus. “We all agreed about paper mills and cheat sites . . . and about cheating on tests,” she wrote, “But it was impossible to generalize or universalize pretty much anything else--from what to cite to how one should indicate the work of others or even why one cites at all” (Jamieson, 2008, p. 77).

Even within the same discipline there can be differences in how instructors define plagiarism. In a study by Bennett, Behrendt, and Boothby (2011), 158 psychology instructors, who were contacted through three academic listservs, completed an online questionnaire that listed seven common behaviors associated with plagiarism (e.g., submitting a paper written by another student; using direct quotes without citation; copying from group members on team projects). The researchers found there was general agreement that many behaviors were plagiarism, with one exception: There was little agreement about whether recycling past work (sometimes called repurposing or self-plagiarism) was plagiarism. A little over half of respondents believed this behavior constituted plagiarism, 22% did not think it was, and 24% were neutral (Bennett et al., 2011).

Bennett et al. (2011) reasoned that the fact that these were psychology instructors might have played a role in their findings. They wrote, “views regarding recycling may vary given the fact that many scientific writers borrow (intentionally or unintentionally)
parts of one manuscript or chapter to put in another” (Bennett et al., 2011, p. 33). Thus, if instructors repurpose their own writing in their scholarly work, they will likely be far less apt to accuse their students of self-plagiarizing. Likewise, they wrote that psychology instructors “may believe that such a practice is prudent in our time-sensitive work environments,” and therefore, “may perceive this practice to be a time-saving strategy, not as a means of doing less work” (Bennett et al., 2011, p. 33).

A similar opinion on the ethics of self-plagiarism was discussed in The New York Times. Klosterman (2013), writing for “The Ethicist” column, offered advice to a writer who had asked whether it was ethical to submit a paper for one class that he had written for another. Although admitting the student might have sensed this was wrong and that he had likely violated school rules, Klosterman (2013) wrote, “fuzzy personal feelings and institutional rules do not dictate ethics. You fulfilled both assignments with your own work. You’re a clever, lazy person” (Klosterman, 2013, p. MM18).

In addition to the ethical fuzziness of plagiarism, the struggle to define exactly what it is has been vastly complicated in recent years by findings from writing studies scholars who are closely examining the nuanced ways students write with sources. In particular, Howard (1999), a leading scholar on plagiarism, noticed that her students often copied source text, changing a word here and there, in a practice she labeled “patchwriting” (p. xvii). This concept had briefly emerged in earlier discourse with the idea that beginning college students may be committing plagiarism as they struggle to find a voice in their own writing (Bowden, 1996b). Howard (1999) examined this concept more closely, arguing that patchwriting was a form of *mimesis* (i.e., imitation or mimicry) and something all academic writers do--even the most experienced. She
believed students patchwrite when attempting to sound scholarly; that is, they are experimenting with academic language in "a move toward membership in a discourse community" (Howard, 1999, p. 7). She argued that as students attempt to master the conventions of a discipline or genre, their patchwriting is simply a developmental step on the way to becoming academic writers. Therefore, Howard (1999) argued, “Patchwriting belongs not in a category with cheating on exams and purchasing term papers but in a category with the ancient tradition of learning through apprenticeship and mimicry” (p. xviii).

In her later work, Howard (2000, 2001, 2008) continued to struggle with the notion of patchwriting as well as the definition of plagiarism. In particular, she maintained that a huge variety of transgressions fall under the umbrella of plagiarism in scholarship and policy, such as “insufficient citation; failure to mark quotations; failure to acknowledge sources; and taking brief strings of discourse from a source and patching them, verbatim or slightly altered, into one's own sentences” (Howard, 2000, p. 487-488). She argued that because of the complex ways plagiarism is defined, academics should stop using the term altogether in favor of “less culturally burdened terms: fraud, insufficient citation, and excessive repetition” (Howard, 2000, p. 475). While this may be a step in the right direction, Zwagerman (2008) questioned whether Howard’s suggested terms were any less fraught with cultural baggage than the word “plagiarism.”

Along with the complications involved in defining (and teaching and adjudicating) something that evades definition, scholars have noted the intense rhetoric associated with plagiarism violations across the academy and the vehemence with which it is pursued. Plagiarism comes from the Latin word *plagiarius* for kidnapping (in
Roman law the kidnapping of slaves or children) (Garner, 2009), and the notion that plagiarism constitutes serious theft permeates higher education today: To commit plagiarism is to commit a terrible crime.

Nevertheless, plagiarism is not illegal under U.S. law, although it can be introduced in copyright and contract litigation (Green, 2001; Latourette, 2010; Posner, 2007). Even so, scholars have noted that students who commit the offense have been labeled, for example, slothful, deceitful, lazy, confused, and struggling (Williams, 2007) as well as intellectually and morally deficient (Howard, 1999). Howard (2008) argued that “Much of the literature on plagiarism assumes that plagiarists are either unethical thieves or hapless folk who haven’t learned how to cite sources” (p. 93). Indeed, plagiarism itself has been called a “sin of neglect” (Posner, 2007, p. 97), a “cheating disorder” (Murphy 898), a “disease” and “infectious silence” (Bowers 545), “a worm of reason” (Kolich 141), and an irritant, “like a thin wood splinter in the edge of one’s thumb” (Murphy 899).

Most academic integrity policies and honor codes reflect this strongly negative rhetoric, using fear and threats of severe punishment for violations that are based on unclear and often conflicting definitions of plagiarism. And, just like definitions of plagiarism, academic policies regarding plagiarism vary from institution to institution. Some focus on the textual transgressions inherent when students plagiarize, such as failing to acknowledge where words and ideas originated or failing to employ the appropriate textual conventions (such as quotation marks or footnotes). Others focus on the plagiarism act itself as an ethical lapse. Perhaps because of this disparity of opinions on what it is exactly and how it should be pursued, composition textbooks typically
reduce their discussions of plagiarism to rules about style (such as those of the Modern Language Association and the American Psychological Association) and explanations of how to properly punctuate direct quotations and in-text citations (Jamieson, 2008). Like textbooks, most academic dishonesty policies do not allow for the rich and nuanced ways plagiarism can be defined (Howard, 1995).

**The Problem of Originality.** Many scholars of plagiarism (e.g., Adler-Kassner et al., 2008; Bennett et al., 2011; Blum, 2009; Bowden, 1996a; DeVoss & Rosati, 2002; Howard 1993, 1995, 1999, 2000; Howard & Robillard, 2008; Howard et al., 2010; Jamieson, 2008; Murphy, 1990; Pennycook, 1994; Power, 2009; Robillard, 2008; Zwagerman, 2008) agree that citation styles and conventions are complex, evolving, and difficult even for the most experienced writers. Yet, even if one conquers the intricacies of a discipline’s conventions, Howard (1999) suggested what she believes may be the most significant complication composition instructors face when teaching students how to avoid plagiarism: She wrote

> The fear of plagiarism is only compounded by the widespread suspicion that there is no such thing as originality--that all “originality” is actually “influenced.” If plagiarism is immoral, transgressive--a threat to culture, the academy, and writing--and if its binary opposite, originality, does not exist, then all writers are plagiarists. (Howard, 1999, p. 26)

Howard’s (1999) concerns reflect what has been described as the postmodern view of composition studies that conceives of authorship as being socially constructed; that is, authors today create new things by combining, remixing, and repurposing prior information and ideas (Blum, 2009; DeVoss & Rosati, 2002; Rife et al., 2011; Williams,
2007), and as Howard (1999) argued, this paradigm presents a considerable dilemma for instructors who must lecture about acknowledging original sources. Sampling of earlier work is celebrated today in many disciplines, particularly music, art, and film, as an innovative practice. Works of this kind are viewed as original in their own right and as part of a rich tradition of appropriation and intertextuality (Pennycook, 1996; Thompson & Pennycook, 2008a, 2008b).

This remixed notion of original authorship challenges the Romantic view of the author as sole originator and creator of his or her work. These implied challenges and the “argument that meanings are in a sense in circulation, that language is constantly cycled and recycled, raise profound questions about how we consider the notion of textual borrowing or plagiarism” (Pennycook, 1996, p. 211). Lunsford and West (1996) acknowledged the complications of this distinction in their discussion of the poststructural theorists, who “have for the past three decades called attention to precisely the point that knowledge is a cultural production, one that can never be attributed to a stable, knowable, singular agent” (p. 391).

DeVoss and Rosati (2002) expanded on this idea in their work, which examined how the Web further complicates the concept of single-author originality and how this can affect student writers and writing instructors. The authors suggested that faculty may be asking too much when they expect “students to come up with and develop an original idea, while requiring them to find plenty of material to back up their supposedly new and original idea or perspective on a subject” (DeVoss & Rosati, 2002, p. 195). They added that requiring students to navigate and negotiate what may be an original idea as distinct from their supporting source material can leave students “in an intellectual lurch.”
Common questions may include: Where does one person’s work leave off and another’s begin? What can be considered ‘common knowledge’? Does everything have to be cited?” (DeVoss & Rosati, 2002, p. 195). As Posner (2007) suggested, this confusion is exacerbated when students notice that their textbooks often avoid citation of source ideas. This avoidance occurs because in the textbook publishing industry,

there is no pretense of originality—rather the contrary: the most reliable textbook is one that confines itself to ideas already well accepted by the experts in the field. And since students have little or no interest in the origins of the ideas they are studying, source references would merely clutter the exposition. (Posner, 2007, p. 18-19)

More than a little ironically, sometimes universities borrow their academic policy statements from other universities without citation (Adler-Kassner et al., 2008) and more than a few times these apparent transgressions include copying other schools’ plagiarism policies (Pennycook, 1996; Tufte, n.d.). Further complicating this notion for writing instructors and students can be the hierarchical power structures inherent in conversations about plagiarism and its various sins. For example, “When a student borrows a paper to turn in for class, that’s plagiarism. When an academic borrows another teacher’s materials to produce a class lecture without citation, that’s scholarship” (Wiebe, 2011, p. 34). Thus, it is quite common--and often encouraged as a show of collegiality--for composition instructors to exchange assignments, activities, and syllabi without a thought of the ethics or impropriety that might be involved in not citing the original owner.

Clearly, “this plagiarism thing” (Howard, 2000, p. 487) is wickedly troublesome for those who teach beginning student writers. Pennycook (1994) summarized well some
of the key contextual challenges composition faculty must consider during the plagiarism experience:

Plagiarism needs to be understood relative to the context of the concept (Western academic concepts of authorship, knowledge, and ownership), the context of the students (their cultural and educational backgrounds), the context of the institution (the demands of English-medium institutions in a colonial context), the context of the specific tasks required (assumptions about background knowledge and language ability), and the context of the actual use and “misuse” of text (the merits and demerits of the actual case of textual use). (p. 278)

Is it not surprising, given the complexity of these challenges, the rhetoric which accompanies conversations about plagiarism, and the gendered connotations that may be attached to those conversations, that writing instructors experience strong emotions when faced with plagiarized texts? Likewise, might it be problematic for instructors that academic policies spell out such specific punitive rules and regulations for plagiarism (and expect writing faculty to enforce them) when the term is “inherently indefinable” (Howard, 2000, p. 473)?

As the very notion of what counts as original authorship has become blurred in recent years, the tension and ambiguity surrounding the meaning of plagiarism are increasing. If no shared concept of plagiarism exists (even within a single institution) how can composition instructors teach about it and enforce it? Clearly, what is called plagiarism is far more nuanced than may at first be thought. How might emotions play a role in composition instructors’ lives when their pedagogy must more or less rely on a definition of plagiarism similar to the one Justice Potter Stewart famously uttered in his
definition of obscenity in *Jacobellis v. Ohio* (1964): You know it when you see it.

**Why Students Plagiarize.** Reasons why students plagiarize, however one chooses to define it, have been widely explored in the literature (Anson, 2008; Blum, 2009; Bowden, 1996b; DeVoss & Rosati, 2002; Engler et al., 2008; Howard, 1993, 1995, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2008; Molnar et al., 2008; Molnar et al., 2005; Scanlon & Neumann, 2002; Walker, 1998; Williams, 2008). One caveat should be considered in plagiarism research that relies on students’ self-reports. As Power (2009) cautioned, “students have such a confused notion of what actually constitutes plagiarism that such self-reporting cannot be taken as entirely reliable” (p. 643). Nevertheless, considerable scholarly conversation has emerged on why students plagiarize that has primarily relied on such data. Clearly, some students plagiarize out of a desire to cheat, such as when they purchase a paper from an online paper mill. But there are many other reasons, and the drive to pinpoint them arises from the belief that if writing instructors only understood why students plagiarize they could prevent this behavior.

Certainly much of the blame has been aimed at the Internet and technology and the remarkable ease with which students can locate source information online, copy it, and paste it into their own work (Anson, 2008; Williams, 2007). A survey by the Pew Internet and American Life Project (2011) of more than one thousand college and university presidents assessed the level of plagiarism on their campuses, finding that more than half believed plagiarism had increased at their institutions over the past 10 years and, of those respondents, 89% believed computer technology was the reason. In other studies, students were found to believe that plagiarizing was more acceptable for them, their friends, and other college students when the computer and the Internet were
involved in the process (Molnar et al., 2008; Molnar et al., 2005).

DeVoss and Rosati (2002) have extensively studied how emerging technologies and the Internet impact how students think about sources and incorporate them into their work. They suggested that students might become confused and unable to distinguish their own ideas from those found on the Internet, particularly when a source lacks information that typically signals to students that a print-based source should be cited, such as the author’s name, page numbers, and publication dates (DeVoss & Rosati, 2002). Similarly, sometimes students think information found online, such as on Wikipedia, is collectively authored and is, therefore, common knowledge, so citation is not necessary (Gabriel, 2010). DeVoss and Rosati (2002) question whether writing students are capable of navigating this dynamic without considerable help from their instructors, and that this might be a reason why some students inadvertently plagiarize.

**Learning the Language of Academic Discourse.** In general, students are taught that they can avoid plagiarism if they give credit to the original source authors (Robillard, 2006); however, that does not apply in all disciplines, contexts, and modalities. Some have suggested that students plagiarize because they are simply bewildered by the complex rules of academic citation or are perplexed by notions of ownership, authorship, copyright, and originality (Blum, 2009; Walker, 1998). Robillard (2006) has further argued that logic alone cannot determine whether or how a student uses citation. She suggested that citation practices are influenced by emotion; that is, students have a feeling of indebtedness to the source authors they use. Missing that feeling, for instance, when the author is unknown or his or her work is far-removed from the student online, may be a reason why the student inadvertently plagiarizes.
Howard’s (1999) notion of patchwriting is commonly cited in the literature as a reasonable explanation for why students have trouble incorporating sources in their work without plagiarizing. Others before her have similarly grappled with this idea. In particular, in her classic composition book *Errors and Expectations*, Shaughnessy (1977) explored how basic writing students’ work is naturally filled with errors because that is how they learn to write; that is, writing students are learning to use words and phrases as they enter a discipline, and in these attempts as beginning writers, they will make mistakes. From this perspective, writing is a process of language learning that involves “assimilating and reusing chunks of language” (Pennycook, 1994, p. 282), and this can easily result in plagiarism. Therefore, writing instructors may need to consider this when determining whether a student’s work is plagiarized.

Likewise, when students are taught to use credible sources to support their written arguments, additional challenges can emerge that can lead to plagiarism. What is considered credible (and original) in one discipline or by one audience may not be considered as such in another (Adler-Kassner et al., 2008). Students learn a discipline’s conventions of source acknowledgement only after considerable experience reading scholarly work in that discipline (Day, 2008). Likewise, in some disciplines, such as the sciences, it is less important to know who discovered and wrote about information than it is in others, such as the social sciences and humanities (Jamieson, 2008) and when writing in certain civic contexts (Adler-Kassner et al., 2008).

So concerned (and confused) are students when learning to write, “They enter the disciplines like tourists clutching their dictionaries and phrase books, and a compulsive fear of ‘getting it wrong’ makes them miss the whole point of ‘it’” (Jamieson, 2008, p.
82). This argument holds that, rather than becoming paralyzed by the fear of how to write without plagiarizing, students should be focused on learning how to enter disciplinary conversations as writers, and instructors should allow their students the chance to fail at these attempts.

**Generational Challenges.** Some scholars (Blum, 2009; Young, 2001) have noticed that students of the current generation seem perplexed with the apparent mine-yours binary that underlies many academic conversations about plagiarism. Having grown up being told to share everything, this argument maintains, why can one not also share words and ideas? In her three-year ethnographic study of plagiarism at her university, Blum (2009) surmised that what we may be seeing today in the writing classroom is an entire generation that has grown up sharing information widely and freely, and is overburdened with the pressures from the media, parents, and peers to excel at virtually any cost. What might be occurring for some students, then, is a disconnect between the sharing that is permissible and encouraged outside of academics and the rigid rules of academic source acknowledgment.

When this disconnect occurs, students might downplay the cheating aspect of plagiarism having become “so accustomed to downloading music and reading articles free on the Internet that they see it as acceptable to incorporate passages into their papers without attribution as well” (Young, 2001, A26). In other words, sharing things—images, movies, music, quotes, and anecdotes—has become so commonplace and central to how students of this generation connect with one another and make meaning of their world that thinking about acknowledgment seems artificial and unnecessary. Similarly, as the number of people using social media has doubled since 2008, and nearly three-quarters of
them are spending time watching and sharing videos with each other (Pew Research Center Publications, 2011), it may not be surprising that some students do not “get” what is meant by acknowledging sources (Blum, 2009).

Using social media, students commonly forward, link to, attach, and copy-paste copyrighted materials without much thought. This extensive exchange of information illustrates the unique, participatory culture of the generation, which is evidenced by their emphasis on civic engagement and sharing (Jenkins, Clinton, Purushotma, Robison, & Weigel, 2007). Thus, students’ social media lives, in which ownership is rarely a concern, might seriously clash with the very explicit academic rules about ownership of information, which faculty must enforce in their classrooms (Blum, 2009).

**The Impact of Culture.** Williams (2007) characterized well the dilemma students face in the writing classroom and how instructors often overlook that struggle:

> When we ask students to take ideas and words from others, but only in a certain way and not too much, we are asking them to learn a nuanced set of cultural attitudes that are not unlike knowing how and when to speak, eat, and use a napkin at a formal restaurant. Unfortunately, what students are often taught about using other sources begins with a lecture about plagiarism that emphasizes the penalties and punishments they face should they transgress. It is as if, on the way into the formal restaurant, students were stopped at the door and told that if they made an error of etiquette they will be thrown out before they are taught the cultural customs they need to follow. (p. 351)

The punitive, culturally-laden language with which plagiarism is typically addressed in the writing classroom often connotes some kind of moral lapse on the part of students.
who plagiarize. Yet, Anson (2008) argued that insofar as plagiarism is not clearly
defined, “it does not fall neatly into an ethical duality” (p. 154), and “teaching students
that complex, negotiated, and situated uses of text can be divided into ‘right and wrong’
or ‘ethical and unethical’ misrepresents the way that language works and equates
discursive practice with moral behavior” (p. 155).

To explain why students plagiarize, some scholars (Blum, 2009; DeVoss &
Rosati, 2002) have pointed an accusing finger outside academics to a culture that
perpetuates that kind of binary thinking. Here, the thinking goes, students use others’
words and ideas without citation because they so often see it done in popular culture with
very few, if any, consequences. Ethical transgressions involving plagiarism in, for
example, music, art, journalism, publishing, and film (Armstrong, 1991; Kulish, 2010;
Lethem 2007; McKinley, 2011; Rieder, 2003; Vega, 2011) as well as in business and
politics (Dionne, 1987; Karasz, 2012; Sauer, 2011) are commonly reported by the press
and social media with relatively few lasting consequences. These incidents might lead
students to believe that certain types of dishonest behavior are more permissible because
they have become commonplace.

Similarly, the everyone’s-doing-it attitude may also play a role in why students
plagiarize. Scholars have suggested that some students cheat when they bow to social
pressures, assuming their peers are cheating and getting away with it (Engler et al., 2008;
Scanlon & Neumann, 2002). In a fascinating study that lends much credence to this
argument, Scanlon and Newman (2002) found that students consistently believed others
were plagiarizing more than they were. Their survey research of 698 undergraduates at
nine colleges and universities found that 8% of students reported plagiarizing from the
Internet often or very frequently, whereas just over 50% of them believed that their peers plagiarized (Scanlon & Newman, 2002). The researchers concluded, “if students perceive that a majority of their peers are going online to plagiarize, they may be more apt to plagiarize themselves” (Scanlon & Newman, 2002, p. 383).

A quantitative study by Martin et al. (2009) of 158 graduate and undergraduate students in business administration and criminal justice at a mid-sized Western university used an online survey to assess students’ perspectives on plagiarism and those who plagiarize. They found that students who rated themselves high on integrity and responsibility “were significantly more likely to plagiarize than those who did not” (Martin et al., 2009, p. 46). These findings, the researchers maintained, suggest that students who plagiarize actually perceive themselves to be “more stable, responsible, and as having more self-control and integrity than those participants who did not plagiarize” (Martin et al., 2009, p. 47). These results reflect an attitude that perhaps plagiarism has become so commonplace in students’ culture that they see nothing wrong with it (Martin et al., 2009).

**International Students and Plagiarism.** If American culture influences students’ and instructors’ views on plagiarism, consider the challenges international students face when struggling to incorporate source material correctly in their writing. Scholars have explored the variety of cultural attitudes that exist about plagiarism and source acknowledgment (Pennycook, 1996; Shei, 2005; Thompson & Williams, 1995), as the number of international students in U.S. colleges and universities has surged to a record high of 764,495 in the 2011-12 academic year (Institute of International Education, 2012). In the last decade, the number of international students has risen 31% (Institute of
International Education, 2012), and composition instructors have been challenged to adapt their pedagogy in response to their students’ diverse backgrounds and knowledge of plagiarism. While most students who grew up attending schools in the United States have been lectured to about plagiarism for many years, the entire concept of plagiarism (and of the need to acknowledge sources) may be highly counterintuitive to international students (Pennycook, 1996; Shei, 2005; Thompson & Williams, 1995).

In some countries, for example, students are taught that when one appropriates the words of others one does not acknowledge that use (Thompson & Williams, 1995). In some Asian cultures, in particular, students are taught to memorize authorities’ words and cultural sayings and to use the identical language in their own writing without citation (Thompson & Williams, 1995), and particularly in Chinese culture, imitation is central to the entire learning process (Shei, 2005). Thus, “For many ESL students, learning not to cheat is more than a difficult task; it is a cultural hurdle” (Thompson & Williams, 1995, Looking at the Problem section, para. 2).

This situation presents an entirely different way of thinking about writing research-based arguments that rely on source material for support, and an entirely different and exceedingly large challenge for composition instructors who have international students in their classrooms. Scholars have suggested that instructors must go far beyond simply teaching the rules of academic citation. Instructors must work closely with students on the process of writing and using sources, and should focus on nurturing a trusting relationship with them (Thompson & Williams, 1995; Shei, 2005). Few would doubt that the changing demographics of the nation’s classrooms are creating exciting opportunities for intercultural understanding. Yet for composition instructors,
who already may be struggling to deal with plagiarism from their native-speaking
students, an influx of non-native students presents yet another layer of complexity in an
already difficult dynamic.

**What are Emotions?**

Insight into the meaning of emotion can be found in its entomology. The word
“emotion” comes from the Latin *emovere*, which means to move, remove, or agitate.
Thus, emotions inform behavior and often result in movement. As such, emotional words
are commonly linked with verbs that symbolize this movement: We say we are *trembling*
with excitement, *moved to tears*, *jumping for joy*, and sometimes we are even *frozen* in
fear (Hargreaves, 1998).

The link between emotions and movement or action is pervasive in scholarship
today with the idea that the emotions we experience, sense, or feel are expressed in our
behavior (Solomon, 2008). Frijda (2008) noted that many early scholars of philosophy
and psychology believed that emotions just happened to passive individuals, basically
“coming over” (p. 68) them in surges that caused movement. In other words, emotions
were unwanted intruders interfering with our rational thoughts (Frijda, 2008). Indeed, in
his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle (Aristotle, trans. 1941) spoke of emotions as if they were the
opposite of reason—a threat to cognition—and that emotion could be used as a tool to
manipulate others.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Darwin (1872/1965), Freud (1915/1935), and
James (1890/1965) began questioning those long-held beliefs. Although each expanded
the notion that emotions are complex and an integral part of what makes us human, these
scholars continued to view emotions as far inferior to reason. To them, emotions were
merely autonomic, biological responses to external stimuli. Particularly for these men and other scholars who adhered to the reason-emotion binary, the movement caused by emotion needed to be suppressed. As philosopher Solomon (2008) explained it, the poor stepchild emotion was “more primitive, less intelligent, more bestial, less dependable, and more dangerous than reason, and thus needs to be controlled by reason” (p. 3). Indeed, a now long-standing concept in Western culture suggests that we must control our emotions and suppress certain feelings particularly as we age from childhood to adult (Boler, 1999; Gilbert, 2001; Hochschild, 1979).

Over the years, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists, neuroscientists, and others have greatly expanded our understanding of emotions and, in more recent times, have begun to view emotions as culturally and socially embedded, shaping how we think and react to stimuli (Fischer & Manstead 2008, Frijda, 2008; Hochschild, 1979; Solomon, 2008). Anthropologist Middleton (1989) characterized the view of many contemporary scholars of emotion when he wrote that, although past scholarship was preoccupied with the distinction between reason and emotion, current scholarship elevated the importance of feelings by “demonstrating the processual and interactive relationship between cognition and affect” (p. 188).

Many modern psychologists look to emotion for cues to better understand interpersonal behavior, explain why people act and express ideas in certain ways, and reveal why people respond differently to similar situations (Frijda, 2008). So, rather than seeing emotions as separate from and a threat to reason or as the brain’s autonomic response to external stimuli, emotions have become more commonly viewed as inextricably linked to reason and, as such, significantly contribute to how we make
meaning and form judgments about the world around us (Micciche, 2007).

The Work of Managing Emotions

In the last three decades, neuroscientists have learned much about the brain and the link between emotions and movement. Emotions produce chemical impulses that lead to changes in the body (Damasio, 1999). We experience emotions when some stimulus event occurs, such as when information is processed from the senses or a memory is recalled, and this triggers a response (Damasio, 1999; M. Lewis, 2008). Feelings happen when we become aware of our emotions (Damasio, 1999).

Similarly, from a physiological and neurological perspective, our autonomic nervous system enables our emotions to control our involuntary actions. The amygdala, a structure in the brain, regulates emotion and helps us respond to stressful situations with what is commonly known as the flight or fight response. During stress-laden situations, “adrenaline is released, heart rate increases, blood pressure goes up, senses are more alert, muscles tense, palms become sweaty, blood-clotting elements increase in the bloodstream, and all centers for movement are mobilized” (Wolfe, 2006, p. 39). These neurological triggers can help us avoid harm. For example, suppose you suspect a burglar has entered your home in the middle of the night. The fear that arises causes you to become tense and your heart rate speeds up, making your senses sharper and more alert to sounds in the house. Likewise, your pupils dilate, letting in as much light as possible so you can see more clearly in the dim light. These reactions—the firing of nerves and chemical processes that occur—illustrate the remarkable (sometimes life-saving) control emotions have when they serve as cues to alter our bodies and behavior.
Some scholars, though, have noted that when we intentionally try to control emotions, attempting to change our behavior in spite of those feelings, the results can be problematic. Sociologist Hochschild’s (1979) research began the scholarly conversation on why and how people try to control their emotions. She believed that we are aware of our emotions when they occur, whether we sense them from seeing something, thinking about something, or remembering something. From Hochschild’s (1979) perspective, people use “emotional management” (p. 552) to suppress or encourage feelings based on whether they believe the emotion is appropriate for the particular social situation. Her research, which focused on the role of emotions in the workplace, set the stage for the acknowledgement of the complex social, contextual factors influencing emotions, a notion that contrasted sharply with conceptual models arguing that emotions were instinctively triggered responses. So, rather than seeing emotional management akin to controlling “a knee-jerk or a sneeze” (Hochschild, 1979, p. 554), Hochschild’s (1979) psychosocial perspective saw emotions as adaptive, actively interpreting and managing our feelings and behavior. In this interactive model, we might keep our emotions in check or give in to our feelings depending on the social situation. Hochschild (1979) referred to attempts to suppress and control emotions as “emotional work” (p. 561) and “emotional labor” (Hochschild, 1983, p. 7).

In *The Managed Heart*, Hochschild (1983) detailed her empirical research that began with a questionnaire to 261 students at the University of California, Berkeley. The questions asked participants to describe situations in which they experienced deep emotion and to describe situations in which they changed the situation or their feelings to fit the situation. For this same project, Hochschild (1983) studied flight attendants at
Delta Airlines, observing training classes and interviewing students, who were experienced flight attendants, Delta officials and executives, and employees of Delta’s billing department. She also conducted observations of flight attendant recruiting practices at Pan American Airways and held extensive interviews with 30 of their flight attendants.

Hochschild (1983) maintained that when workers tried to control their emotions, they were, in a sense, acting, either to disguise their true emotions by pretending to feel other emotions or by effectively altering their emotions to adhere to a particular social context. This might occur, for example, when a worker controlled her emotions to conform to her organization’s expectations. Hochschild (1983) argued that the emotional labor involved in situations such as these is performed in two ways: surface acting and deep acting (Hochschild, 1983). Surface acting involves pretending to feel certain emotions, such as pleasure when providing service to a customer, even when one is actually feeling bored, discouraged, or resentful. With surface acting, one uses facial expressions, gestures, and voice to create the appearance of a certain emotion. In contrast, when someone uses deep acting, he or she attempts to conjure the actual emotion by summoning internal feelings (Hochschild, 1983). Much like what has become known as the Stanislavski Method of acting (from Russian director Constantin Stanislavski), one tries to remember emotions, invoking them down deep, as a way to conjure a state in which one truly feels, or at least convincingly acts like, how someone else should feel.

Both surface and deep acting involve a type of pretending (Hochschild, 1983), and, while organizational behavior theorists and others have disagreed about the
definitions of and distinctions between emotional work and emotional labor (Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983; Oplatka, 2009), most agree that managing emotions can take its toll on individuals and can even lead to job burnout (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983). Hochschild (1983) argued that, in particular, service workers are expected to feel and act a certain way in front of their customers, and conforming to those expectations can be exhausting.

Grandey (2000), whose research like Hochschild’s focused on service employees’ behavior, noted that often a worker’s goal is to express and induce positive emotions (such as when a plumber hopes to produce positive feelings in a customer about the quality of his or her work). If an event occurs that interferes with this goal, the event will create negative feelings and stress, requiring the worker to expend energy regulating his or her emotions. This mismatch between the emotions one genuinely feels and the emotions we are expected to show to others, particularly in the workplace, results in “emotional dissonance” (Middleton, 1989, p. 199), a state that can lead to feeling “false and hypocritical” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, p. 96).

**Emotional Display Rules and Feeling Rules**

If emotional labor or emotional work involves managing emotions so they are appropriate for a given situation or context, how does one know what emotions are socially desirable? Some scholars have suggested that we learn about emotional rules in social contexts. For instance, when working in a particular profession or workplace, we sense certain emotional display rules (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987), the norms about what kinds of emotions can be expressed, when we can express them, and in what manner they can be expressed (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Morris &
Feldman, 1997).

Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) believed that employees’ actions were determined by what workers perceived to be the emotional display rules of the organization and their jobs. They expanded on the notion of display rules, arguing that employees conform to “expression norms” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, p. 89) when they come to internalize the ways someone in their profession or position should feel, act, and behave. The work involved in bringing one’s behavior in line with these expectations can become “a form of impression management” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, p. 90) that is used to foster a particular perception of oneself by others.

These expressive norms and the emotional labor that accompanies them can be viewed positively in some instances. For example, if a worker is well attuned to expression norms in his or her workplace, the worker can use these norms to regulate interactions with a customer (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). From this perspective, interactions are made more predictable and, therefore, can be easier to control.

Nevertheless, over time emotional dissonance can become negative and cumulative (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), creating a situation that can lead to job burnout. Job burnout occurs when an employee expends emotional energy without many opportunities or means to replenish it (Grandey, 2000). Morris and Feldman (1997) sought to define the characteristics that could predict if emotional labor would occur. Their quantitative study used a questionnaire assessment of emotions from 562 respondents from three groups: employees at seven debt collection agencies, military recruiters, and members of a nursing organization. They reported that emotional dissonance was linked to higher levels of emotional exhaustion and lower levels of job
satisfaction. Their findings suggested that employees who had more autonomy on the job were less likely to express emotions that were different from the emotions they truly felt (Morris & Feldman, 1997). So, for example, the more freedom or autonomy an instructor feels on the job, the less likely he or she may be to experience emotional dissonance from conforming to the organization’s display rules.

Similarly, Hochschild (1979) argued that we manage our emotional expectations by certain “feeling rules” (p. 551). She believed feeling rules are at work, for example, when we talk about feelings as if those feelings were owed to us:

. . . we often speak of “having the right” to feel angry at someone. Or we say we “should feel more grateful” to a benefactor. We chide ourselves that a friend’s misfortune, a relative’s death, “should have hit us harder,” or that another’s good luck, or our own, should have inspired more joy. (Hochschild, 1979, p. 564)

Feeling rules are also used in social exchanges, giving others cues about how they should respond to us (Hochschild, 1979). For example, an instructor might feel she has the right to feel frustrated when students do not participate in group work or engage in class discussions. Feeling rules are akin to the social conventions that exist about emotions, and the rules can change depending on the social context and convention (Hochschild, 1979). In a sense, feeling rules are similar to the rules of etiquette (which change depending on the social situation), as they tell us if we have “permission to be free of worry, guilt, or shame with regard to the situated feeling” (Hochschild, 1979, p. 565). Likewise, Hochschild (1979) noted how feeling rules “reflect patterns of social membership” that suggest, for example, that certain feelings are “unique to particular social groups and can be used to distinguish among them as alternative governments or
colonizers of individual internal events” (p. 566). Thus, people can form bonds with others by fulfilling and adhering to the emotional expectations of a particular situation or group (Hochschild, 1979, p. 572).

**Gender and Emotions**

Considerable literature has explored whether gender differences exist in how people experience, manage, and express emotions; however, there is much inconsistency in the findings due in large part to the many variables involved, such as biological differences between males and females and, more significantly, the way in which individuals are raised and socialized (Brody, 1993, Brody & Hall, 2008). Although research linking emotions and gender should not be widely generalized, scholars have argued that men and women manage and express their emotions to fulfill certain prescribed gender roles and power structures (Brody, 1993; Brody & Hall, 2008; Hess et al., 2000; Plant et al., 2000) and that particular emotions are more commonly experienced by men or by women (Brody, 1993; Brody & Hall, 2008; Diener & Lucas, 2004; Ferguson & Eyre, 2000; Hess et al., 2000; Kring, 2000; Plant et al., 2000; Simon & Nath, 2004; Toussaint & Webb, 2005).

**Stereotypes of Gender Emotion.** In the literature on emotions and gender, gender roles refer to the stereotypes about emotions that reflect a culture’s shared beliefs regarding “the prevalence of certain feelings and behaviours experienced and expressed by men and women” (Hess et al., 2000, p. 610). In particular, social and cultural variables can communicate and prescribe the role of women as caretaker and men as provider (Brody, 1993; Brody & Hall, 2008) and, therefore, can affect how someone experiences as well as expresses emotion.
Much research in the past three decades has sought to determine what kinds of
gender stereotypes of emotion exist, to measure the strength of those beliefs, and to
determine whether and in what ways stereotypes influence behavior. Many scholars
agree that stereotypes “both mirror and construct the reality of gender differences in
emotion” (Brody, 1997, p. 370). For example, a study by Timmers, Fischer, and
Manstead (2003) identified the stereotypical beliefs that exist about gender and emotion
using a quantitative study of college psychology students at the University of
Amsterdam. The research, which involved a series of three questionnaires, found that
respondents rated women as more emotional than men, a finding that has been replicated
consistently in the research and that has become a widely held belief in many cultures,
Their findings about gender stereotypes indicated that men expressed more powerful
emotions while women expressed more powerless emotions (Timmers, Fischer, &
Manstead, 2003). Likewise, respondents believed women share emotions with others
more often than men and, in the workplace, women are “more dysfunctional when
displaying their emotions” (Timmers et al., 2003, pp. 50-51).

Additional research has offered further clues about the specific types of emotions
that are stereotypically linked to gender. In a study by Hess et al. (2000), respondents
were given questionnaires that described a series of vignettes designed to likely elicit
emotional reactions. The questions asked respondents how they believed men and
women would respond emotionally to each situation as well as whether the respondents
themselves would have responded emotionally in a similar fashion. Their findings
showed that women were expected to react more often with sadness, fear, shame, and
guilt, whereas men were expected to react more with anger. Further, women’s emotional reactions were characterized more often as withdrawing and sad, while men’s emotional reactions were characterized more often as active and aggressive (Hess et al., 2000). Participants’ self-perceptions of how they would emotionally react to the same scenarios were remarkably parallel. In fact, there were “substantial similarities between the emotional reactions expected for oneself and those expected for men and women in general” (Hess et al., 2000, p. 626).

To test their conclusions in a separate study, Hess et al. (2000) investigated if, when asked to talk about a time when they experienced an emotion, participants would describe the gender emotions the researchers had noted in their prior study. For this study, Hess et al. (2000) asked 171 participants to describe on a questionnaire an event related to a family interaction in which they experienced an emotion. What they found closely paralleled the findings in their earlier research: Female respondents described more sad events, and male respondents described more anger events. The researchers reasoned that gender emotion stereotypes may have influenced participants’ recounting of emotional events, and “that reconstructions of emotional events in line with emotion stereotypes may eventually lead individuals to conform more closely to these stereotypes as they become more and more part of their emotional history and eventually of their emotional self” (Hess et al., 2000, p. 641).

Other scholars have come to similar conclusions regarding the impact of stereotypes involving gender emotions. For example, Plant, Hyde, Keltner, and Devine’s (2000) research investigated the cultural stereotypes and beliefs about how often men and women express certain emotions. For this study, they surveyed 117 undergraduates in
two ways. First, they surveyed participants about the cultural attitudes that exist in the United States regarding the frequency with which men and women experience 19 different emotions. Respondents believed that men more often feel anger and pride than women, and women more often feel fear, love, sadness, and sympathy. Second, they asked participants for their personal beliefs about how often men and women experience the same 19 emotions. The findings of the two surveys were significantly correlated. The researchers argued that their study provides “compelling evidence that people are both aware of the cultural gender stereotypes of emotion and by and large endorse these stereotypes” (Plant et al., 2000, p. 85).

In addition, a study by Diener and Lucas (2004) confirmed earlier research that showed patterns of emotion differences exist based on gender. They examined the extent to which people desired their children to experience particular emotions. A questionnaire was sent to 10,175 people from 48 nations, asking them to rate the extent to which they would desire their child to be happy, to be fearless, and to not express anger based on whether the child was a son or a daughter. The study attempted to assess the appropriateness of a particular emotion based on a child’s gender. Their findings showed little variance existed between respondents’ desire for their sons and daughters to experience certain emotions (such as happiness); however, respondents expressed a greater desire for their sons than their daughters to be fearless and to suppress anger (Diener & Lucas, 2004).

Diener and Lucas (2004) concluded that the difference could have resulted from “a general tendency for emotional expression to be seen as more appropriate among girls than among boys, or it could be because of the fact that boys may be thought to have
more anger to suppress” (p. 544). Interestingly, when they asked participants to indicate whether they had personally experienced particular emotions in the previous week, similar patterns were found regarding emotional suppression, the largest difference being anger suppression: Male respondents had a greater desire for anger suppression than female respondents.

This notion that anger is a stereotypically male emotion is widely discussed in the literature (Hess et al., 2000; Kring, 2000; Plant et al., 2000); however, there have been some equally interesting findings related to how women experience anger. For example, research suggests that women’s experiences of anger last longer than men’s (Simon & Nath, 2004), and that women feel significantly more shame (an emotion that can lead to feelings of incompetence and worthlessness) and that their shame more often results in inwardly-directed anger (Lutwak, Panish, Ferrari, & Razzino, 2001). Similarly, Brody’s (1993) work focused on the self-ratings of “110 wives and 92 of their husbands” (p. 94), who rated, on a six-point scale, the intensity of 18 emotions they believed they would feel in response to 48 scenarios. She found that “men and women tended to be equally angry at women, but women tended to be more angry at men than men were” (Brody, 1993, p. 96).

Emotions that are more often attributed to females include empathy and forgiveness. Toussaint and Webb’s (2005) quantitative research characterized empathy as an “ability to understand others, to relate to others, and to treat others as one would like to be treated” (p. 674), an ability that would enable someone to be forgiving. Their research involved questionnaires to assess and clarify long-held stereotypes that women are more empathetic and forgiving than men. The study of 127 participants (a
convenience sample of individuals recruited from beaches and parks in California) found that women experienced more empathy than men but that there was no significant difference by gender in forgiveness. They believed their findings suggest that women may have higher levels of empathy but “this does not seem to help them forgive” (Toussaint & Webb, 2005, p. 682).

Another gender stereotype supported by research characterizes women as often experiencing feelings of guilt (Plant et al., 2000). Researchers have noted that guilt may be a particularly complex and problematic emotion for women due to the gender role stereotype of the female as nurturing caregiver (Ferguson & Eyre, 2000). This type of loving, sensitive mindset “essentially makes it easier for them to see the self as unnecessarilly disadvantaging another” (Ferguson & Eyre, 2000, p. 255), thus, creating guilt. In contrast, other scholars have suggested that males may believe it is more socially justified to disadvantage others or wield power (Block, 1983; M. B. Lewis, 1978).

Studies such as these support the notion that gender emotion differences exist and that they reflect stereotyped gender roles. Brody and Hall (2008) argued that although gender stereotypes are supported by considerable research, stereotypes can over generalize because they may discount the “situational and cultural context within which emotional expression occurs” (p. 396). Nevertheless, nearly all researchers who have studied emotions and gender in the last several decades note that gender emotions can be influenced by culture and context, and as such, gender emotions may play a role in this dissertation research.
Complications for Researchers

If there are clear cultural and social stereotypes of gender emotions, then do these notions impact whether and how men and women regulate their emotions so as to adhere to perceived social norms? Some have argued that because stereotypes are powerfully prescriptive, shaping people’s expectations of how men and women should feel, they can become display rules, regulating the type and extent of emotions men and women feel they should express (Brody & Hall, 2008; Diener & Lucas, 2004). Not feeling or expressing stereotypical gender emotions can have “negative social consequences, such as social rejection and discrimination” (Brody & Hall, 2008, p. 396). Timmers et al. (2003) summarized much prior research when they wrote,

Women are not only believed to be more emotional, but they are also expected to express their positive emotions, and they are allowed to express negative emotions as long as these expressions do not hurt others. Men, on the other hand, are considered less emotional, and are less permitted to display negative, powerless emotions, although they are allowed to display powerful emotions. (p. 43)

As such, display rules, prescribed by gender stereotypes, can complicate research on emotions because they can lead to a type of “impression management” (Brody, 1993, p. 90) as respondents adapt and regulate their emotional expression to adhere to cultural gender expectations. For example, a woman might hesitate saying she feels angry or might downplay the extent of her anger because doing otherwise might violate an existing gender emotion stereotype. In contrast, men might claim to have fewer emotions (or respond to interview questions with less emotional language) because this is a
prescribed male stereotype (Brody, 1993). In their review of gender emotions, Lennon and Eisenberg (1987) wrote that much prior research suggesting women are more empathetic and sympathetic than men might be biased because of self-reports. In other words, women may be responding to researchers in ways they feel they are expected to respond (i.e., more emotionally concerned for others’ wellbeing).

Equally troublesome for researchers is the suggestion that men and women may differ in their ability to recall emotions (Robinson, Johnson, & Shields, 1998). Men and women have been shown to rely more on gender stereotypes in self-reports when the event they are recalling is in the past versus a more recent event (Robinson et al., 1998). Likewise, gender differences have been found to exist between the specific emotions that men and women recall (Seidlitz & Diener, 1998). Others have argued that self-reports may be complicated by findings that suggest women ruminate more over past events, and this may trigger clearer memories of lived experiences (Brody & Hall, 2008). Finally, women report a higher likelihood of “catching” the emotions of those around them (Doherty, 1997). If emotions are indeed contagious, particularly for women, self-reports may be complicated by the environment in which the data were collected.

**Labeling and Accessing Emotions**

The English language is a rich storehouse of words and metaphors to describe how we feel. For example, the metaphor of the heart is commonly used to explain emotion’s control over behavior during a romantic relationship. Our hearts “flutter” when in love, “break” when a relationship ends, and “swell” when we feel pride. Importantly, scholars have noted a remarkable consistency with how humans use language to express emotions. Psychologist Russell (1980), who studied self-reported
data of affective experiences, believed that as we grow, we learn how to conceptualize emotion and identify each emotion’s name and characteristics.

In one study, Russell (1980) tested subjects’ self-reports of how they conceptualized their current emotional states. In a series of tests, 28 adjectives that described emotions were shown to male and female undergraduate volunteers at the University of British Columbia, who were instructed to place each emotion term into one of eight categories: arousal, contentment, depression, distress, excitement, misery, pleasure, and sleepiness. Although there was some variance in the categories in which some terms were placed, overall participants categorized the emotions consistently, indicating that they shared what Russell (1980) called a remarkable “mental map of affective life” (p. 1170). Russell (1980) argued that as we grow, we learn to organize emotions and categorize them. This knowledge is then used to interpret the emotions we see others express (both from verbal and nonverbal cues) and is accessed when expressing our own emotions (Russell, 1980).

In education, Wolfe’s (2006) analysis of what factors impact student learning found that emotions play a critical role in whether the brain retains information, and biological factors are involved in making this happen. When our brain causes adrenaline to be released during certain situations, such as when we must work hard to learn something new or when we experience something stressful, our memory is better able to retrieve that information. Although Wolfe (2006) uses this point to argue for engaging students’ emotional interest in subjects to boost their learning and knowledge retention, it supports the notion that instructors may be better able to access memories of stressful or intense teaching experiences because those memories may be emotionally charged.
Psychologists have also widely documented the prevalence of people recalling more emotional events than neutral events (Kensinger & Schacter, 2008). Similarly, of interest here is research suggesting that when an event has negative content (or negative emotions involved) it is more readily accessed than an event with positive content (Kensinger & Schacter, 2008).

**Emotions and Teaching**

The plethora of research on emotions aside, scholars have noted that surprisingly little research has addressed how emotions impact faculty lives and the role of emotions in shaping pedagogy (Hargreaves, 1998, 2005; Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991; Nias, 1996; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009; Sutton and Wheatley, 2003; van Veen & Laskey, 2005; Zembylas, 2005a, 2005b). In the preface to their edited collection of literature on teaching and emotions, Schutz and Zembylas (2009) wrote, “Researchers are only beginning to examine various manifestations of the transactions among teaching and emotions, which suggests that additional research and theorization on teachers’ emotions is urgently needed as it will help the educational researcher garner a better understanding of how emotions influence teaching, learning, and teachers’ lives” (p. 4).

One reason for the limited scholarly attention to teaching and emotions may be the longstanding attitude that emotions are “out of control, destructive, primitive, and childish, rather than thoughtful, civilized, and adult” (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, p. 328). In his article about the centrality of emotions to the understanding of teaching, Hargreaves (1998) lamented the lack of concern shown in studies on school reform to addressing emotion and its impact on teaching and learning. He wrote, “it is as if educators only ever think, manage and plan in coldly calculative (and stereotypically
masculine) ways. It is as if teachers (and indeed students) think and act but never really feel” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 837).

Some (Noddings, 1996; Neumann, 2006; Palmer, 2007) have suggested there might be fears in education that emotions somehow impair one’s professional judgment and, therefore, instructors need to keep their professional distance from their students. Educational researcher Neumann (2006) wrote, “The stature of higher education in modern society is bolstered by conceptions of intellectual work that largely exclude emotion. To add emotion to public academic talk is to threaten the academic enterprise” (p. 382). She suggested that this attitude might arise from organization leaders who want to create the image of good scholarship as “emotion free” (Neumann, 2006, p. 382). Palmer (2007) characterized the paradox that occurs from ignoring the role of emotions in education when he warned of the consequences of separating the head from the heart, a situation that results in “minds that do not know how to feel and hearts that do not know how to think” (p. 68). He argued that when we separate facts from feelings, we get “bloodless facts that make the world distant” and “ignorant emotions that reduce truth to how one feels today” (p. 68).

When education scholars have focused a lens on emotion, they have most often examined students’ emotions and how they play a role in the learning process. For example, feminist scholars have looked to feelings as foundational to how knowledge is constructed (Boler, 1999). Chickering and Reisser (1993) identified seven vectors of student development, one of which focused on developing an ability to manage emotions. In addition, some scholarship has explored students’ emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996) and how it can inform teaching (Demetriou, Wilson, & Winterbottom, 2009; Nias
But, as Hargreaves and Tucker (1991) argued, studies typically neglect the importance of instructors’ feelings (Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991). In particular, “the power of emotions when teaching and the difficulty teachers have in regulating their own emotions, especially negative emotions, are rarely discussed” (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003, p. 336).

By discounting the importance of emotion in teaching, as Palmer (2007) has suggested, educators give in to institutional power and the “hidden curriculum” (p. 207), such as when we caution people not to “wear their heart on their sleeve” (p. 207). He wrote, “The message is simple: if you want to stay safe, hide your feelings from public view” (Palmer, 2007, p. 207). Faculty, like many other professionals, may get the unmistakable message that emotions are the enemy of reason. Instructors are taught to be in charge and in control of their emotions at all times lest they risk not being thoughtful and objective (Palmer, 2007). Palmer (2007) argued throughout his seminal work *The Courage to Teach* that emotions are what drive social change and that educators must pay attention to “the complex interplay of the inner and the outer” (p. 207). If, as has been argued, emotions are integral to teaching (Hargreaves, 1998), their impact on teaching deserves closer examination (Caswell, 2011; Chinn, 2012; Cowie, 2003; Hargreaves, 1998, Neumann, 2006; Nias, 1996; Saunders, 2013; Schutz et al., 2006; Stephens, 2004; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003).

What is known about how emotions impact teaching has gradually evolved from a wide range of disciplines, including education, psychology, and sociology. It is important to note that though considerable research on emotions in the workplace has focused on traditional service industry jobs, Hargreaves (1998) and others have suggested

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that education reform and educational change are turning education into a service-like industry—a consumer-driven model—in which students are viewed as customers and instructors as service providers. Using this business-like ideology, findings on workplace emotional behavior can be seen as informing the higher education workplace.

In addition, the majority of scholarship on teacher emotions has focused on K-12 teachers (e.g., Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Cross & Hong, 2009; Darby, 2008; Day & Qing, 2009; Demetriou & Wilson, 2009; Demetriou et al., 2009; Dorney, 2010; dos Santos & Mortimer, 2003; Frenzel, Goetz, Stephens, & Jacob, 2009; Golby, 1996; Hargreaves, 1998, 2005; Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991; Kelchtermans, Ballet, & Piot, 2009; Lasky, 2000, 2005; Nias, 1996; Noddings, 1996; O’Connor, 2008; Reio, 2005; Reyna & Weiner, 2001; Saunders, 2013; Schutz, Aultman, & Williams-Johnson, 2009; Schutz, et al., 2006; Shapiro, 2010; Steinberg, 2008; Sutton, 2004; Sutton, Mudrey-Camino, & Knight, 2009; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003; Tsang, 2011; Winograd, 2003; Zembylas, 2003, 2005b). Although there are clearly dissimilarities between teaching in K-12 and higher education (e.g., relationships with students and parents; time spent with students; academic freedom, autonomy, scholarly demands, and decision making), similarities can be drawn between the professional lives, challenges, and goals of all instructors.

In his work on emotions and teaching, education researcher and sociologist Hargreaves (1998) argued that teaching is infused with emotion. “Good teachers,” he wrote, “are not just well-oiled machines. They are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 835). In his qualitative research, Hargreaves
(1998) sought to discover, through interviews with instructors, what things shaped their emotional lives, arguing that this discourse is missing from many of our educational reform discussions. Although many of his efforts focused on K-12 reform and its impact on education, his research on the emotional relationships teachers form with their students was groundbreaking. He argued that teaching “activates, colors, and expresses teachers’ own feelings” (p. 838) as well as “activates, colors and otherwise affects the feelings and actions of others” (p. 838). Likewise, Nias (1996) noted that that “as an occupation teaching is highly charged with feeling, aroused by and directed towards not just people but also values and ideals” (Introduction section, para. 1).

As noted in Chapter I, “caring” is the emotion most commonly discussed in relation to teaching (L.S. Goldstein, 1999; Noddings, 1995). However, as Hargreaves (1998) has suggested, “this caring orientation is not simply a cause for romantic celebration, but can also turn against teachers as they sacrifice themselves emotionally to the needs of those around them” (p. 836). Poor performing students can produce negative emotions for instructors that can influence their motivation and pedagogical goals (Sutton & Wheatley, 2003).

Qualitative research has examined the negative emotions commonly associated with teaching, including, in particular, anger, frustration (Sutton 2004; Sutton & Wheatley, 2003) and guilt (Hargreaves, 1998; Hargreaves & Tucker, 1991). When students perform poorly in class, instructors are likely to become angry if they believe controllable causes, such as laziness, are involved (Reyna & Weiner, 2001). Interestingly, while research often mentions the teacher emotions of pride and commitment, Hargreaves and Tucker’s (1991) analysis of the research on emotion
showed that when asked about their teaching, “teachers talk [emphasis added] about emotions such as anxiety, frustration, and guilt” (p. 494). Thus, a host of emotions, both positive and negative, color the professional lives of teachers.

**The Emotional Labor of Teaching**

Like any job, university teaching undoubtedly involves emotions, as instructors manage their feelings in a wide variety of social settings and contexts, such as when interacting with students, colleagues, administration, and staff. In each of these contexts, instructors might be expressing or suppressing emotions based on emotional display rules or feeling rules, and that process may involve emotional labor. Research in the last several decades has begun focusing on how instructors regulate their emotions and what types of emotion are considered appropriate or inappropriate in different contexts (Hargreaves, 1998; Hargreaves & Tucker, 199; Nias, 1996; Lasky, 2000; Morris & Feldman, 1996, 1997; Oplatka, 2009; Winograd, 2003, Zembylas, 2002). Emotional labor can become exhausting when, for example, one is unable to invoke the appropriate emotions of the workplace (Morris & Feldman, 1996). When this occurs, surface acting is required, which threatens to separate someone’s true self from his or her work self (Hochschild, 1983).

In his work on teacher emotions in primary and secondary schools, Zembylas (2002) studied how instructors’ emotional experiences influenced their teaching. From his analysis, which involved an overview of the theoretical research on feeling and the role of emotion in teaching, he concluded that emotions were tightly linked to how instructors dealt with and overcame their organizations’ “emotional rules,” the emotional marching orders that “delineate a zone within which certain emotions are permitted and
others are not permitted” (Zembylas, 2002, p. 200). He contended that instructors must police their feelings daily to control negative emotions such as “anger, anxiety, vulnerability, and express empathy, calmness, and kindness” (Zembylas, 2002, p. 201). The level of policing involved in teaching does not simply make someone’s workday more challenging: The “impression management” (Winograd, 2003, p. 1648) required to control one’s emotions is dysfunctional, threatening to lead an instructor to “work-related maladjustment, such as depression, poor self-concept, anxiety, despair, and alienation” (p. 1648).

Researchers have noted that certain emotions are professionally permitted in teaching, but the emotional rules of teaching do not permit anger (Cowie, 2003; Winograd, 2003), so, in addition to creating emotional labor, these rules can, in effect, marginalize and silence instructors (Cowie, 2003). Sutton’s (2004) qualitative research on emotional regulation used semi-structured interviews with 30 middle school teachers from 17 school districts in Ohio. She discovered that teachers used a variety of strategies to silence and regulate their anger, believing that this would make them better teachers. For example, she noted that “Teachers spontaneously talked about holding in anger, gritting their teeth, lowering their anger back down, stepping back and breathing, keeping themselves in check, looking at their own tone, and not letting their frustrations affect their teaching” (Sutton, 2004, p. 384).

Sutton (2004) also found that teachers feared losing control of their emotions, believing that this could seriously harm their teaching. Interviewees who recalled incidents in the classroom where they had lost control expressed regret (Sutton, 2004), a self-conscious emotion (like guilt), which serves “to show and acknowledge that one has
acted stupidly, transgressed a rule, hurt another person, or made a mistake” (Fischer & Manstead, 2008, p. 459).

Further complicating the emotional labor of teaching is the concept that controlling emotions to keep them in line with an organization’s or profession’s expectations “is incompatible with the ethical and moral aspects of teaching and may result in negative effects” (Oplatka, 2009, p. 56). From this perspective, if an instructor hides what she really feels, she is effectively trading in a part of herself (Oplatka, 2009). Relinquishing control in this manner can create dissonance for the teacher as well as a sense of depersonalization (Hochschild, 1983). Inevitably, “faking it” goes against what many believe is the heart of the teaching profession: integrity, honesty, and connectedness (Oplatka, 2009; Palmer, 2007).

Conversely, some scholars have suggested that emotional labor in the teaching profession is a good thing. In particular, Hargreaves (1998) disagreed with Hochschild’s (1983) assessment of emotional labor as being primarily negative. He argued that emotional labor infuses the classroom with life and emphasizes the caring profession of teaching (Hargreaves, 1998). In other words, the emotional labor required of an instructor sets a caring profession like teaching apart from many other professions, and the work to keep one’s emotions in check is considered a necessary part of the job. Nevertheless, most scholars would agree that managing negatively-charged emotions in the classroom can place considerable demands upon teachers at all academic levels (O’Connor, 2008).
Impact of Emotions on Professional Identity

The emotions an instructor experiences during his or her interactions with students, colleagues, and organization are an integral part of forming and sustaining the instructor’s professional identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Cowie, 2003; Nias, 1996; van Veen & Lasky, 2005; Zembylas, 2003; 2005b), and, as such, the instructor’s sense of self is “socially grounded” (Nias, 1996, Introduction section, para. 5). Identity is defined as “how teachers define themselves to themselves and to others” (Laskey, 2005, p. 901). Indeed, Shapiro (2010), whose work involved an analysis of personal experience as well as existing research on emotions and teaching from multiple disciplines, argued that emotions may be the single most influential factor in a teacher’s sense of professional identity. Not surprisingly, instructors who feel they have taught their students well feel satisfaction from their work (Hargreaves, 1998) and a sense of professional pride (Darby, 2008; Lasky, 2005).

In her discussion of multi-disciplinary research on emotional identity, Shapiro (2010) concluded that teachers’ notions of identity come from the shared experience of being teachers: “We share collective memories of educational triumphs, classroom tensions, and--perhaps most significantly--a secret dread of what we’re not doing ‘right’” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 617). This “secret dread” of which she writes has evolved from the model teacher myth, which characterizes instructors as both nurturing, “caring pals” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 618) and emotionally-distant professionals. “As teachers,” she wrote, we are not often encouraged to display imperfection; we pride ourselves on exuding characteristics that are more its antitheses: strength, capability, and authority. In doing so, however, we create two mutually exclusive identities: one
as human and the other as teacher. (Shapiro, 2010, p. 619)

Thus, what often results, from this teacher-human dichotomy, is internal tension in the form of emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983) or emotional dissonance (Middleton, 1989), as instructors expend energy denying or repressing emotions in order to adhere to their sense of professional identity (Shapiro, 2010). Put another way, when one is angry with a student’s academic work but feels the need to appear supportive, the dissonance created can “impair one’s sense of authentic self” (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, p. 89).

The teaching profession is replete with examples of instructors who have deeply invested themselves in their students and their work, finding professional efficacy by balancing their personal and professional lives. Yet, what may not often be considered is that the complex interplay of emotions involved in an educator’s sense of professional identity can leave many instructors feeling vulnerable (Nias, 1996; Shapiro, 2010; Zembylas, 2003; 2005b).

**Gender Emotions and Teaching**

As with the literature on gender and emotions, a growing body of research is examining how gender impacts instructors’ emotions. The “feminization” of the teaching profession has long been discussed in the historical literature on education in the United States. Beginning in the late 19th century, women increasingly began taking on primary and secondary teaching jobs, working for far less money than men. In his self-study of a year teaching elementary school, Winograd (2003) noted that although men have typically held the more patriarchal, administrative positions in primary and secondary schools, women were thought to better embody the traits of the virtuous teacher, being “more self-restrained, patient, nonaggressive, caring, nurturing and passive” (p. 1646).
Stereotypes of this nature persist today, particularly at the elementary school level, where female teachers far outnumber male teachers. In 2011, the percentage of female public school teachers rose to 85% (Feistritzer, 2012). In contrast to the K-12 arena, the number of female instructors in higher education remains just slightly below that of males, increasing from 36% in 1991 to 48% in 2011 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013), although men continue to enjoy higher ranking positions, such as full professor, as well as higher salaries.

Hargreaves (1998) admitted that much sociological and feminist research has found gender differences in emotions, and in particular the “caring orientation” (p. 836) of female educators. However, his qualitative study of 32 seventh- and eighth-grade teachers found no differences between male and female teachers’ emotions. In contrast, the stereotype of the nurturing female instructor has been supported by considerable literature on gender and teaching. In their qualitative study that examined the emotions of female educators and the cultural perceptions of appropriate emotions at work, Acker and Feuerverger (1996) interviewed 28 high-ranking female professors in the fields of education, social work, pharmacy, and dentistry at a Canadian university. Using semi-structured interviews, the researchers found that a “caring script” existed in the women’s lives whereby they were “expected, in a quasi-maternal manner, to care for, and to care about, others” (Acker & Feuerverger, 1996, Introduction section, para. 2).

Acker and Feuerverger (1996) concluded that not only did female faculty members take on more service work than their male counterparts, but they also took on more responsibility for the caring and well-being of students than the male faculty. “Even when denied reciprocal caring,” they wrote, “the academic women in our study
could not stop caring for the students, or even doing 'women's work' in their departments, partly because it formed their sense of self, but also because the social expectations were so strong” (Acker & Feuerverger, 1996, Conclusion section, para. 1). One interviewee remarked,

I tend to hear all the students' personal hassles and they often are talking to me because they're scared to go to their male supervisors or whatever. So I've got boxes of kleenex, I'm the one that hears about this stuff first I think as a female you tend to be the shoulder to cry on. (Acker & Feuerverger, 1996, Caring for Others section, para. 6)

If a female instructor is expected to display stereotypical female behavior, that is, to display “self-restraint, patience, non-aggressiveness, caring, and nurturing” (Oplatka, 2009, p. 62), and she experiences emotions that conflict with these qualities, then she might experience emotional labor.

In contrast to the caring stereotype of the female instructor as “intellectually inspiring yet endlessly nurturing” (Acker & Feuerverger, 1996, Introduction section, para. 4), Dorney’s (2010) qualitative study explored how anger influenced three women’s teaching in public schools in New York. She noted that psychologists often view anger as an attempt to address an imbalance of power and that feminist scholars have identified the repression of female anger as an effort to silence women’s voices (Dorney, 2010). Through her interviews, Dorney (2010) concluded that school culture worked “against the women’s expression of anger, urging them to remain silent and thus not to cause trouble” (p. 154). The consequences of expressing anger, she found, included denial of tenure, isolation, and loss of self-esteem repressing the anger. Thus, to silence one’s
anger, to repress feelings and exhibit more socially-appropriate emotions takes emotional labor.

Displaying these kinds of culturally appropriate, stereotypical emotional behaviors in education, such as caring and repression of anger, has been seen as “reinforcing the hegemony of certain rules or norms” (Zembylas, 2003, p. 112), and like any type of emotional labor, requires one to expend considerable emotional energy. Indeed, male teachers also have been thought to experience emotional labor in an effort to conform to the gender expectations of their organizations (Winograd, 2003).

Winograd (2003), a male education professor, took a sabbatical to conduct a self-study of the emotions he experienced while working as an elementary teacher. He wrote that although he and his colleagues felt anger, particularly toward administrators, it was “restrained and guarded” (Winograd, 2003, p. 1669). What he observed of his female colleagues, however, lends credence to research suggesting that women’s anger must be silenced. He saw that “there perhaps is still a fear that those in superordinate positions will dismiss them [female teachers] as incompetent or as incapable of self-control” (Winograd, 2003, p. 1669) if they became overly emotional.

In addition to the literature on gender stereotypes and emotional labor in teaching, considerable research has examined the differences between male and female teaching styles and the ways in which they build relationships with students, much of which can be linked to what is known about gender emotions. A major study by Statham, Richardson, and Cook (1991) examined how instructor gender played a role in how instructors approached their teaching and formed relationships with students. Their research, which was conducted at a large Midwestern state university, laid the groundwork for much of
the scholarship that followed and has come to characterize the key differences between how men and women instructors communicate in higher education.

Using a mixed-methods approach that included semi-structured, open-ended interviews with 15 male and 15 female professors, observations of 167 professors, and student evaluations of teaching, they found that both male and female instructors cared about their students’ learning, but that men and women brought “different skills to the learning enterprise which allow them to articulate their caring in different ways” (Statham, Richardson, & Cook, 1991, p. 146). In particular, female instructors formed personal relationships with their students as a way to connect each student’s experiences to the course content. In contrast, “Men more often saw personalizing as ‘a duty’ or a ‘presentation of credentials’”(Statham et al., 1991, p. 129).

In order to provide an explanation for the gendered behavior of their participants, the researchers used a “role conflict/status inconsistency perspective” (Statham et al., 1991, pp. 131-133). This perspective contrasts the expectations of what a university professor should be like (i.e., directive, assertive, and knowledgeable) with female role expectations. They believed these two idealized notions can sharply conflict for female professors, leading to the prediction that women will assert their authority indirectly, avoiding harsh and aggressive stances, or will attempt to personalize their teaching situation by incorporating their personal experiences and those of their students into classroom interaction. These strategies permit a woman to adhere more closely to traditional female role expectations while enacting the highly prestigious role of university professor. (Statham et al., 1991, p. 133)
The researchers noted that male professors did not have to manage their roles in such a manner because expectations for men more closely match the role/status expectations of the learned professor.

Opting for a more indirect approach to authority, then, may be safer for female instructors, helping them to balance strongly conflicting expectations of their roles of female and of instructor. In order to accomplish this “balancing act” (Statham et al., 1991, p. 133), the researchers found that the pedagogy of female professors was more student-centered: “They were more deeply concerned with the emotional atmosphere in the classroom, with students as total persons, and with involving students extensively in the learning process” (Statham et al., 1991, p. 137).

Their conclusions are reminiscent of the theory proposed by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986) in their classic text Women’s Ways of Knowing. Belenky et al. (1986) proposed common themes, or epistemologies, of how women (and some men) learn, develop self-concepts, and build relationships. Their work was in part a response to social and cultural constructions that devalued women’s knowledge and ways of knowing on the basis that it was “emotional, intuitive, and personalized” (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986, p. 6) and that women struggle to be acknowledged in academia because of a “masculine bias” (p. 6) at its heart that served to discourage (and sometimes even silence) a woman’s voice. Their scholarship both responded and added to earlier work by Gilligan (1982) and Perry (1970) about how people build knowledge.

In particular, Belenky et al. (1986) introduced the concept of “connected knowing” (p. 101), which they characterized as learning through relationship building.
Although not exclusively a female approach, connected knowers build knowledge through personal experience with others through empathy. So, for example, female instructors who value connected knowing are interested in learning more about their students’ points of view, perhaps because this desire is “founded upon genuine care and because it promises to reveal the kind of truth they value” (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 113).

Belenky et al.’s (1986) connected knowers naturally take an “attitude of trust” and a “nonjudgmental stance” (p. 116). This attitude, they argued, “builds on the subjectivist notion that because all opinions come from experience and you cannot call anyone’s experience wrong, you cannot call opinion wrong” (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 116). Although Belenky et al. (1986) were primarily focused on the differences in how male and female students participate in class, one can infer that female instructors (and male instructors who are connected learners) may face considerable emotional labor when dealing with negative conflicts in the classroom if their epistemological perspective is centered on empathy and trust building.

Similarly, Statham et al. (1991) noted that when students challenge an instructor’s authority in the classroom, female instructors either personalized their interactions with students or deflected the aggressive behavior far more than the male instructors. Statham et al. (1991) assessed the impact of gender in the classroom and, in particular, looked at how female professors handled challenges to their authority. They concluded that female professors “more often ignored the student, talked to him or her privately, or attempted to respond humorously or in an offhand manner” (Statham et al., 1991, p. 128), thus reducing their outward appearance of power and authority in the classroom. They theorized that by using a more personalized, indirect strategy, the women were...
attempting to avoid negative student confrontations and resentment by “‘feminizing’ their teaching style” (Statham et al., 1991, p. 134).

Other research has found similar role/status expectations that support the findings of Belenky et al. (1986) and Statham et al. (1991). In particular, Lou, Grady, and Bellows’ (2001) quantitative research, which involved questionnaires to 304 graduate teaching assistants (TAs) in 45 academic disciplines, found notable gender differences in teaching style and communication strategies. Significantly more female TAs focused on “developing a real interest in students” to enhance communication (Lou, Grady, & Bellows, 2001, p. 220).

Similarly, Demetrio et al. (2009) used a mixed-methods study (involving questionnaires and interviews) to examine whether differences existed in how early career male and female secondary school teachers approached teaching, and in particular, whether female teachers were better equipped to create stronger relationships with their students. They maintained that men and women used different strategies to overcome challenging situations in the classroom.

Like Statham et al.’s (1991) findings, Demetrio et al. (2009) discovered that female teachers used more emotion, rapport building, and emotional connections with their students than male teachers (who were more focused on communicating the subject matter as a way to connect with their students). They discovered that female teachers paid more attention to “who” their students were, while male teachers paid more attention to “what” they were teaching (Demetriou et al., 2009, p. 461). Interestingly, the male teachers in their study had difficulty asking for help from colleagues and were less patient with students who challenged them. The researchers concluded that “Such negative
internalisation of emotion from male teachers . . . could arguably adversely affect the teacher–student relationship as well as negatively influence the teacher’s and the students’ cognitions of learning and ultimately their motivation and behaviour” (Demetriou et al., 2009, pp. 461-462).

**The Emotional Work of Teaching Writing**

Those who teach composition may experience a distinct role expectancy that has, in part, been cultivated by the large percentage of females teaching composition. Micciche (2002) noted that “Feminist scholars in composition have offered compelling arguments that detail the feminization of the field and the low-status of composition in general” (p. 439). She argued, “The process of feminization refers to both the overrepresentation of women in the field and to the exploitation and devaluation of a field whose work is aligned with ‘women’s work’” (Micciche, 2002, p. 439).

In her national study of writing instructors, Enos (1996) noted that, as most entry-level composition courses are taught by women, there is a pervasive attitude in higher education that composition is “women’s work” (p. 63). One reason she offers for this, and for why women stay in composition, often working for lower pay and fewer benefits than men, is due to a perceived “caretaking orientation” (Enos, 1996, p. 63) and an attitude that women more than men “feel a strong commitment to students” (p. 63).

Perhaps in reaction to the stereotyped feminization of composition, emotions have historically been overlooked in composition scholarship in favor of a more rational discourse of critical thinking, and thus a disciplinary desire to be taken seriously (McLeod, 1987; Richmond, 2002). Yet, as McLeod (1987) has noted, “One does not have to watch freshmen at work to know that writing is an emotional as well as cognitive
activity--we feel as well as we think when we write” (p. 426). The move to examine emotions in the writing classroom and to legitimize the role of emotions in teaching writing, has slowly gained momentum in recent years as it fits well within composition discourses centered on social construction and critical thinking (Richmond, 2002).

**Liberation and Emancipation in the Composition Classroom**

In recent decades, the discipline of composition has been closely associated with emancipatory goals of critical pedagogy (Yoon, 2005). This idea has at its heart the notion that composition instructors are teaching their students how to find their voice and, thus, to empower themselves through writing. Micciche (2002) argued that when we ask students to write, their work is “a training ground for emotional dispositions that coincide with gender, race, class, and other locations in the social structure” (p. 438). Her argument centers on why emotion has not played a more central role in writing studies scholarship, particularly given the “liberatory agenda” (Micciche, 2002, p. 439) of the composition classroom.

In her discussion of emotion in composition and how it can be used to engage students in a deeper understanding of class relations and differences, Lindquist (2004) wrote, “Teachers act as institutional agents of emotional management, while students are asked to render successful affective performances to create viable personae as middle-class critics and producers of discourse” (p. 197). Thus, one might conclude that a key goal of composition instruction is to prepare students to participate as democratic citizens in their communities. Students are taught to question authority, examine sides, play the “doubting game” (Elbow, 1973), and to use other strategies in an attempt to think critically about their beliefs (Yoon, 2005). As such, writing instructors’ classroom
strategies are often focused on engaging students in a form of liberatory pedagogy with a purpose of transforming, and thus liberating, students’ thinking and writing.

Worsham (1998) argued that in the writing classroom, instructors are schooled to effect social change, and thus, “our most urgent political and pedagogical task remains the fundamental reeducation of emotion” (p. 216). Likewise, Robillard (2007), in her discussion of the disciplinary conversations that have emerged in recent years in composition studies, argued that writing instructors “have our students’ best interests in mind as we work to help them experience the power of writing and thus help them to realize critical consciousness” (p. 19). A composition instructor’s very identity, she argued, is “defined in large part by the care with which we approach the project of ‘liberating’ students” (Robillard, 2007, p. 18).

Some scholarship in writing studies also examines the emotional pressures (such as stress and anxiety) that students experience when we ask them to think critically, employ theoretical strategies, and shift identity and positions in their writing in the composition classroom (Chandler, 2007; McLeod, 1987). Micciche (2002) wrote, efforts to produce critical thinkers, cultural workers, or enfranchised citizens—all of which are by now commonplace goals regularly articulated in composition scholarship—are efforts to construct an emotional culture in the classroom in which students are sensitive and responsive to inflammatory rhetoric about cultural differences, empathetic toward those whose experiences differ radically from their own, and—following the legacy of Paulo Freire—emotionally and intellectually invested in their own education. (p. 439).
Composition, therefore, is affect-laden, both for the instructor and for the student and, as such, is filled with emotional labor (Worsham, 1998; Yoon, 2005). Yoon (2005) argued that in the composition classroom, teaching critical literacy requires that teachers manage their own desires and emotions, valuing certain kinds of affects directed toward certain ends over other emotions and other possible ends. This model of pedagogy suggests that a certain sentimentality and weakness--attributes often identified with women and implied to be feminine--are to be corrected if one wishes to be a true transformative intellectual. (732)

The labor involved in correcting one’s emotions may involve both surface and deep acting as well as the associated consequences of managing one’s emotions. Yoon (2005) believed that the kind of critical pedagogies involved in teaching composition rely on both “internalization and performance of affects designed to achieve certain ends” (p. 742). So, simply creating the conditions that encourage students’ consideration of multiple perspectives and feelings can involve emotional management (Yoon, 2005) as well as the consequences that may result from this labor.

In particular, many researchers have suggested that empathy is a highly valued quality for composition instructors (McLeod, 1995; Richmond, 2002); that is, empathy not only for multiple critical and theoretical perspectives but also empathy for their students’ perspectives. In her examination of how writing instructors’ empathy impacted student achievement, McLeod (1995) wrote that

Teachers identified as high-empathic see their role--even with very young children--as that of facilitator rather than authority; they give a good deal of responsibility to the students; and they rely more on collaboration and cooperation
than on competition in day-to-day classroom activities. One of the most important ways such teachers behave in classroom and in conference settings is that they respond to students in an active listening mode. (p. 376)

If exhibiting high levels of empathy for students positively impacts student writing and achievement, consider how that caring inclination might be challenged when writing instructors experience strongly negative feelings toward their students (such as those that might arise when discovering plagiarized work). These emotions could be fueled by the growing body of literature decrying the Millennial generation and the decline of America’s youth (Bauerlein, 2009; Bourke & Mechler, 2012; Levine & Dean, 2012; Nathan, 2005; Singleton-Jackson, Jackson, & Reinhardt, 2010; Twenge, 2007). This literature notes that the values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of students today are dramatically changing for the worse. In a post on the listserv for the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education (POD), an instructor summarized many educators’ concerns:

. . . this literature tell [sic] us that generally today’s students, at least the younger ones, are not used to putting out effort to learn, are unaccustomed to being challenged academically, are not particularly reflective, resist criticism, do not value academics and the life of the mind, feel entitled to a college education and high grades for ‘showing up,’ expect top-quality customer service (as they define it), and attend college for mostly instrumental reasons—that is, to obtain the credential that will get them a job. (Nilson, 2013)

Undoubtedly these attitudes and behaviors are not exclusively noticed by writing instructors. Yet, how might this kind of professional and cultural thinking complicate the
emotions of writing instructors, who realize the value and academic results of being empathetic with their students? What might the consequences be of their surface or deep acting, performed so as to maintain the professional identity of a nurturing instructor? And is the emotional management required by challenges such as these different for male and female writing instructors? Better understanding the dynamics of composition pedagogy may reveal that writing faculty face a different kind and different level of emotional labor than do instructors in other disciplines.

**Writing Assessment and Emotions**

One challenge to any instructor’s sense of empathy can occur during assessment of student work, from the feelings that may emerge and complicate grading and commenting on students’ writing. However, in her study of how writing instructors comment on student texts, Sommers (1982) noted the paradox that exists about writing assessment in composition: Although responding to and commenting on student writing takes up the majority of a writing instructor’s time, the process involved is the least understood. Nevertheless, the limited scholarship that exists on emotions in the writing classroom centers on how emotions impact writing assessment and how teacher affect impacts pedagogical choices and student expectations.

In her overview of the research on emotions and writing assessment and her discussion of how emotions shape decisions about student writing, Caswell (2011) argued that commenting on student writing is a socially and, therefore, emotionally rich practice. Others have suggested the power of instructor emotions in shaping student writing, particularly when instructors choose to conceal their emotions (Richmond, 2002), as is often the case when they follow the emotional rules of the academy, which suggest they
should avoid negative emotions and maintain professional distance from students (Steinberg, 2008). Steinberg’s (2008) literature review of the research on emotions and writing assessment noted that the emotions writing instructors experienced were intense and negative, including “anxiety, irritation and even despair,” yet instructors’ emotions were “given expression only in the private sphere and remain confined to offices, corridors, telephones and homes” (p. 42). Likewise, instructors rarely talked about the emotions involved in assessment, yet “these emotions colour their planning for and practice of assessment” (Steinberg, 2008, p. 44).

Steinberg (2008) explained how her studies of emotion and assessment so intrigued her that she decided to pay closer attention to her own emotions when commenting on student writing. She described the emotions she experienced when reading a student’s masters proposal as follows:

Within three pages of reading I was confronted by difficult emotions. Reading the proposal was painful. It felt as if the proposal were deliberately hurting me. I hated it. I was angry at the level of confusion and irritated with the effort I had to make so as to make sense of it. I became anxious about how to tell the student that the work was not good enough, in a way that is truthful yet not devastating. I expressed my emotional turmoil by writing curt comments all over the margins. I then tried to calm down by laying it aside for a few days. When I picked the proposal up again, the irritation had softened into concern--what exactly was the context of the presentation? How high were the stakes? If I exposed the confusion, would it end the student’s career? And could I do that from my “high throne” of an outsider’s perspective? And wouldn’t I be insulting the supervisor
(my colleague) if I could find so little to redeem the student’s work? And what if my judgement [sic] were inaccurate? I ended up anxious and confused, having turned the process of judgement [sic] about the student’s abilities into a process of judgement [sic] about my assessor abilities. (p. 49)

Her writing reveals the intense, varied, and complex emotions that writing instructors can experience when reading students’ work. One can see her move from anger directed at the writer to anxiety about the feedback she is giving.

Research on giving verbal test feedback to students has found that similar emotions are involved, such as anxiety (Stough & Emmer, 1998). Although writing instructors typically employ traditional tests less often as a means of assessment, research by Stough and Emmer (1998) shed light on the complex emotions that might be involved when instructors give verbal feedback to students, such as what commonly occurs when composition instructors conference with students about their writing. Stough and Emmer’s (1998) grounded theory research used observations of and interviews with seven educational psychology doctoral students who each taught at least one introduction to educational psychology course to undergraduates. They discovered that feedback confrontations with undergraduate students overwhelmingly involved negative emotions for the instructors, including fear, anxiety, nervousness, defensiveness, and anger. Although most instructors expressed a belief that feedback was a learning tool, all reported fearing adverse reactions, some suggesting it would come from low-performing students, others fearing confrontations from argumentative high performing students who received lower than anticipated grades. Instructors also were concerned that “their own negative emotional states interfered with communication” (Stough & Emmer, 1998, p. 49).
One strategy instructors used to cope with their negative emotions involved “masking” (Stough & Emmer, 1998, p. 355), a strategy whereby the instructor retained “a calm, deliberative persona in the face of student complaints, objections, and negative emotions” (Stough & Emmer, 1998, p. 355). Instructors used surface acting (Hochschild, 1983) in an attempt to “avoid revealing their own frustration, irritation, anxiety, or unhappiness, and instead attempted to project a serious, interested, intellectual stance” (Stough & Emmer, 1998, p. 355). The researchers concluded that there was unmistakable belief among those interviewed that emotions in the classroom should be controlled (Stough & Emmer, 1998).

From research such as this, it stands to reason that when composition instructors read their students’ work and suspect it has been plagiarized, negative emotions will arise, and those feelings will likely shape how the student’s work is assessed, even though an instructor might expend energy performing emotional labor to control those feelings. Effectively accomplishing this can add to the instructor’s sense of professional identity as a nurturing and supportive writing instructor. McLeod (1995) argued that self-efficacy, or an instructor’s belief her work can have a positive effect on students’ writing, is an important trait for composition instructors to possess. However, of significance to this dissertation is the notion that self-efficacy can become problematic for writing instructors. McLeod (1995) wrote, “teachers who define themselves as guardians of standards may face a decline in self-esteem when dealing with basic writing students, while teachers who see themselves as facilitators of learning are less likely to have feelings of self-doubt” (p. 378). For example, if an instructor considers himself or
herself the supreme commander in charge of policing academic integrity rules and violations, this stance could clash with the instructor’s attitude toward and, thus, relationship with students.

**How Educators Respond to Plagiarism**

Despite the research on emotions in teaching and the emotions of writing assessment as well as the rich discourse on plagiarism, scant attention has been paid to instructors’ emotions when they discover plagiarism in student work. This is surprising as it stands to reason violations of academic integrity, such as plagiarism, will result in strong negative emotions for instructors.

As much as plagiarism might perplex students, Pennycook (1994) suggested that it “may be more a teachers’ problem than a students’ problem” (p. 282). In other words, when writing instructors discover plagiarism in students’ work, instructors will likely be facing a host of complex and competing thoughts and feelings. For example, they might be considering the many challenges students face as beginning writers struggling to learn the discourse of academic writing, to achieve the right academic voice, and to apply the appropriate disciplinary conventions. Writing faculty might be grappling with issues of intent, wondering if students are deliberately cheating or are simply confused or overwhelmed. The tension writing instructors experience could be further exacerbated by how their institution expects them to respond to plagiarism in light of strict academic integrity policies.

The impressive amount of scholarship addressing why students plagiarize is nearly matched by that which suggests how writing faculty should respond to it. In particular, much has been discussed about the teaching strategies that can be employed to
prevent students from plagiarizing (DeVoss & Rosati, 2002; Elander et al., 2010; Liddell, 2003; McCabe, 2005; McCabe & Pavela, 2000; Thornton & Jaeger, 2007; White, 2007; Wilhoit, 1994). The Council of Writing Program Administrators (2013) recommends designing writing assignments to discourage recycling ideas. Some have suggested instructors can avoid plagiarism in student work by focusing more on teaching students how to summarize (The Citation Project, n.d.; Howard et al., 2010), by creating assignments that engage students’ “lives, interests, and individual intellectual questions” (Williams, 2007, p. 353), and by teaching students to understand and embrace academic integrity (McCabe, 2005; McCabe & Pavela, 2000; McCabe & Trevino, 2002). Others have argued that plagiarism can be avoided by having students investigate it as a research assignment (Robillard, 2008), by having students write their own course plagiarism policies (Price, 2002), by teaching students how to better respond to deadlines and pressures by using drafts (Williams, 2007), and by working to improve students’ sense of “authorial identity” (Elander et al., 2010, p. 159). In addition, considerable scholarship exists suggesting that university honor codes can reduce the incidence of cheating and plagiarism (McCabe & Bowers, 1994; McCabe & Trevino, 2002; McCabe, Trevino, & Butterfield, 2001).

Despite this plethora of what might be called “rational” suggestions from the scholarly literature, Anson (2008) argued, “our response is often defensive; we wonder how we can protect the walls of the academy from the plunderers of text, and we enjoin our administrations to impose ever-more severe punishments on offenders” (p. 141). Some scholars and administrators believe that plagiarism detection is the answer to the plagiarism problem (Posner, 2007), and in recent years “a whole gotcha industry has
sprung up” (Howard, 2001, p. B24) to help educators detect plagiarism in student texts.

The most well-known of these services, Turnitin.com, digitizes student papers uploaded by their instructors and compares those papers to its huge database of previously uploaded student papers and an enormous number of database sources of information on the Internet. Within virtually minutes of uploading a student paper, an instructor receives an “originality report” that identifies matches in the student’s paper to other sources. When last reported, Turnitin users include more than 26 million students and instructors and 500 million database submissions (Turnitin.com, 2015, “About Us”). Howard (2001) explained the reasoning for the success of services like this:

No longer do [instructors] need to spend arduous days in the library, searching for the sources of a suspect paper. In faculty lounges, professors brag to each other about the speed and ease with which they located downloaded papers. (p. B24)

However, many scholars, including Howard, have questioned the integrity of using detection services such as these (Adler-Kassner et al., 2008, Anson, 2008; Purdy, 2009; Williams, 2007, Zwagerman, 2008). Some have expressed concern that the use of a detection service “reduces the objective of instruction to preventing, detecting, and punishing plagiarism instead of helping students analyze and participate in the practices of writing for the various contexts in which they write” (Adler-Kassner et al., 2008, p. 243). Others see detection services like Turnitin as a form of “surveillance technology” (Zwagerman, 2008, p. 693) that reinforces power differences in the classroom and inhibits critical thinking (Zwagerman, 2008). Nevertheless, many faculty members rely on these services, believing that simply the threat of their use makes students avoid the temptation to cheat. Zwagerman (2008) argued
there is no way to honestly call it anything other than forcing students, most of whom we have no reason to suspect, to prove their innocence. Requiring students to submit their writing to an outside vendor for analysis, before teachers even see it, tells students that the first thing we look for in their work is evidence of cheating. I cannot imagine an argument that would convince me this is acceptable. (p. 694)

Many believe this pursue-and-punish dynamic threatens to turn our classrooms into inhospitable environments where rows of naive students take on the demeanor of cheats who blatantly disregard the rules of copyright, ownership, and individual authorship. Lacking the moral fiber of previous generations, students are to blame. The guardians of text, we demand honesty and integrity, and our students flout them. Our duty then requires us to search and seize, to discipline and punish, and we begin to develop a posture of mistrust and a disposition of control in our instruction. (Anson, 2008, pp. 141-142)

This mistrust and the power differential it threatens to create in the writing classroom can have serious consequences not only for students. Writing instructors may be forced to alter their identity as professional, nurturing individuals, a notion that implies significant emotional stress. Anson (2008) summarized the conflict services like Turnitin can create for writing instructors when he wrote, “Our preoccupation with plagiarism detection and its accompanying legalistic and punitive apparatus runs against many educational principles. It subtly begins to wear away at our collective personae as coaches, guides, and mentors, yielding a hardened attitude, detective-like and oppositional” (Anson, 2008,
It is likewise troubling to consider the changes in pedagogy that this oppositional climate in the classroom might evoke (Anson, 2008).

Plagiarism and Writing Instructors’ Emotions

One thing is clear: Composition instructors do not take plagiarism lightly. Other disciplines might share that opinion, but that is beyond the scope of this study. What kinds of emotions might composition instructors experience and express during this challenging paradigm in the classroom, from the multiple, confusing, and contradictory definitions of plagiarism, and from the many reasons why students might be struggling to ethically and appropriately incorporate sources in their writing?

The vast majority of the scholarship related to emotions and plagiarism focuses on student emotion, such as fear (Chandler, 2007; DeVoss & Rosati, 2002; Power, 2009; Thompson & Pennycook, 2008a, 2008b) and confusion (Blum, 2009; DeVoss & Rosati, 2002; Howard, 1999; Lunsford & West, 1996; McGowan & Lightbody, 2008; Power, 2009; Rife et al., 2011). In contrast, the literature on instructors’ emotional reactions to plagiarism is overwhelmingly anecdotal. For example, some researchers have briefly mentioned teacher affect when discussing their analysis of plagiarism’s causes and prevention (Bowden, 1996a; Dames, 2007; DeVoss & Rosati, 2002; Gourlay & Deane, 2012; Howard, 1995; 2000; McCabe, 2005; Murphy, 1990; Pennycook, 1996; Power, 2009; Price, 2002; Purdy, 2009; Thompson & Pennycook, 2008a; Wells, 1993; Wilhoit, 1994; Williams, 2007; Zwagerman, 2008).

Because an accusation of plagiarism can be considered “an academic death penalty” (Howard, 1995, p. 789), most composition scholars readily acknowledge the serious consequences that a “Scarlet P” (Zwagerman, 2008, p. 676), that dreaded mark of
plagiarism, can have on a student’s academic record. This can lead some, like one respondent in Day’s (2008) research on community college instructors’ views of plagiarism, to express fear that accusing a student of plagiarism will “mar the student for life” (Day, 2008, p. 49). Likewise, instructors have expressed empathy for young students and their lack of knowledge, recalling that they were quite a bit different now than they were at age 18 (Day, 2008, p. 49).

Yet, the seriousness with which academic integrity efforts encourage instructors’ pursuit and punishment of this “crime” provides little leniency, and the regulations that spell out how instructors should respond can leave “little space for pedagogical alternatives” (Howard, 1995, p. 789). The struggle instructors experience today has created what Robillard (2007) termed “plagiarism anxiety” (p. 13), feelings that may lead many to “choose punishment over pedagogy” (Eodice, 2006, para. 7). Instructors’ anxiety is likely fueled by the media’s “hyperbolic headlines that characterize plagiarism as a ‘mortal sin,’ ‘heinous crime,’ ‘terrible transgression,’ and ‘enormous stigma’” (Eodice, 2008, p. 9). The press and popular media’s attempts to create a cultural anxiety over cheaters (and thus plagiarizers) can further inflame a writing instructor’s anxiety about her students’ writing transgressions and, despite feelings of empathy for her students, can increase a desire to enact equally strong punishment.

This anxiety is reinforced by the heightened fears from reports that students may be tricking us (Adler-Kassner et al., 2008), a notion fostered by some commercial plagiarism detection sites (Fountain, 2006). The “plagiarism narrative” (Adler-Kassner, et al., 2008, p. 232) that has emerged sends a message to composition instructors that their work no longer involves “teaching, but ‘catching’ students” (Adler-Kassner, et al.,
2008, p. 233). Some scholars have noted that this creates an adversarial role for which educators are neither accustomed nor prepared (Anson, 2008; Howard, 1999; Pennycook, 1996). For instance, composition instructors may feel added pressure from administration as well as from disciplines beyond English to become “the plagiarism police” (Robillard, 2007, p. 14) in a college culture rife with fear about plagiarism.

Professional conversations over the years have explored the tremendous consequences of turning writing instructors into policy police, and in particular, how this “creates a poisonous atmosphere between teachers and students that makes them adversaries instead of collaborators” (Williams, 2007, p. 351). As a result, writing instructors may start reading their students’ work with an anxious, predatory eye looking for telltale signs of copied text. Pennycook (1996) wrote, “Our criteria are turned on their head: Suddenly we are looking either for language that is ‘too good’ in order to incriminate the student, or we are looking for evidence of errors in order to exonerate the student” (p. 203).

Consider the language scholars have used to describe their experiences with plagiarism in student work: Kolich (1983) wrote,

Over the years I have burned a fair number of plagiarists when I could catch them cheating, and I have ignored only those cases that I could not prove. Like an avenging god I have tracked plagiarists with eagerness and intensity, faced them with dry indignation when I could prove their deception, and failed them with contempt. I wanted the whole business to be as impersonal as possible, and therefore I said that it was not vindictiveness prompting my actions but an uncompromising belief in college as a place of real honor where only the
honorable could be tolerated. (p. 142)

The metaphorical language of the hunt Kolich (1983) uses has been echoed by others, such as Murphy (1990), who, although admitting he had little time for detective work, felt “exhilarated” and “thrilled by the chase” (Murphy, 1990, p. 900).

In narratives such as these, one can sense a complex mix of emotions at work, such as feelings of hostility, honor, scorn, betrayal, and excitement. Zwagerman (2008) mentioned his competing thoughts during his “little victory in the war against academic dishonesty” (p. 676). Despite the thrill of the chase and the eventual apprehension of the student, it ultimately became a pyrrhic victory: Though feeling “like a traffic cop on the moral high road” that “rush of righteousness soon wore off” (Zwagerman, 2008, p. 677) as he began to question why the plagiarism had happened. “Why was I so determined to prove that no first-year writing student was going to outsmart me?” he wrote, “and how could I have responded differently, so as to feel that I had honored rather than disregarded my role as a teacher?” (Zwagerman, 2008, p. 677).

From reading instructors’ descriptions of their efforts to staunch the plagiarism plague, one can sense they may be extremely conflicted: Their students have become the enemy and their jobs have morphed into defending the sanctity of academic discourse and integrity at all costs. When set against the characteristically caring profession of teaching, and teaching writing in particular, it is not surprising that this unwelcome adversarial role will be emotionally charged (Wilhoit, 1994). As noted earlier, composition classrooms are often known for being nurturing and supportive environments (Elbow, 1973; McLeod, 1995; Richmond, 2002; Robillard, 2007; Worsham, 1998; Yoon, 2005). The feminization of composition is often reflected in
maternal metaphors that depict the writing instructor’s job as nurturing students’
development of their written voices (Enos, 1996; Micciche, 2002; Robillard, 2007). This
dynamic requires relationship building not suspicion and detective work. Howard (2000)
described the struggle that can emerge, when she wrote,

this cultural regulation in which the discourse of plagiarism involves us is
hierarchical in the very ways that many of us abhor. To adjudicate plagiarism in
these circumstances is to work against the liberatory, democratic, civic, and
critical pedagogies that prevail in English Studies. (p. 475)

Nevertheless, as Kolich (1983) explained, “The mere hint that a student may have
cribbed an essay transforms us from caring, sympathetic teachers into single-minded
 guardians of honor and truth--roles that saints and presidents seem better suited to play”
(p. 142).

This upending of the student-teacher relationship and the consequences of such
change has been discussed in the literature. In particular, Murphy (1990) described the
“comic peculiarity” that came to characterize his work as a writing instructor committed
to student learning yet “sometimes spending large chunks of everyone's time trying to
corner them in a fraud” (p. 902). He noted how the remarkable relationship that typically
exists in the writing classroom between student and instructor can quickly dissolve into
an “unimagined distance between us” (Murphy, 1990, p. 902), even with the slightest
suspicion of plagiarism. In explaining his feelings during the pursuit of a student who
plagiarized and who then refused to admit wrongdoing, Murphy (1990) described how
the episode ultimately tarnished his relationship with all of his students:
When I went into class in the following days and watched their faces, I realized that I had lost some of my faith in them. For no more reason than my experience with him [the plagiarizing student], I found myself wondering what the rest of them had copied. (Murphy, 1990, p. 900)

Students are sensitive to the changing relationships such as those Murphy (1990) and others have described (Kolich, 1983). Detection services, such as Turnitin, likely feed into the notion that students are cheaters (Williams, 2007). Scholars have noted the irony of using a plagiarism detection service to catch students, a practice that clearly signals to students that there is no longer trust in the classroom (Howard, 2001; Williams, 2007). Rather than nurturing their growth as academic writers, the use of these services tells students that when it comes to writing with other sources, the emphasis is on avoiding plagiarism not drawing from and synthesizing the ideas of others. We tell students that their writing is not their own and that we will turn the judgment of their writing over to computer software. (Williams, 2007, p. 352)

As relatively new tools, detection services can help faculty quickly spot plagiarism; however, writing instructors may be caught off guard when they sense how services such as these further deteriorate the class climate of trust they have worked hard to establish.

**Specific Emotions of Writing Faculty.** When an instructor discovers that a student has plagiarized, his or her emotional reactions can be numerous and complex. Plagiarism can pose a challenge to a writing instructor’s identity, causing him or her to feel guilt for failing to teach source use effectively (Kolich, 1983; Robillard, 2007). Plagiarism can seriously impact the relationship an instructor has with his or her students.
(Anson, 2008; Howard, 1999, 2001; Murphy, 1990; Pennycook, 1996; Robillard, 2007; Williams, 2007). When instructors begin to distrust their students, they can be left feeling vulnerable (Zwagerman, 2008). Yet, plagiarism can also make an instructor feel betrayed (Zwagerman, 2008) and, as such, can turn that warm and caring person into a plagiarism vigilante, obsessively on “the scent of the dirty little cheater” (Kolich, 1983, p. 148).

The scholarship likewise suggests that plagiarism can make instructors fear a variety of things: For example, it can make an instructor fear falsely accusing a student and thereby ruining the student’s life (Blum, 2009). Similarly, they may fear the onerous consequences of accusing an international student of plagiarizing, particularly if the student’s visa status relies on passing the course. Fear can arise from instructors’ feelings that they will miss or have missed catching plagiarists (Adler-Kassner et al., 2008; Robillard, 2007). Consequently, plagiarism can leave teachers with “a visceral sense of disappointment” that “can leave teachers increasingly wary of their students--on guard against dishonest behavior and against another betrayal of trust. They look at their students and silently vow not to be fooled again” (Williams, 2007, p. 350). Their worries can quickly shift to a growing fear that their feelings will “morph into a generalized contempt for students” (Robillard, 2007, p. 27). Likewise, the fear can turn inward, causing some instructors to worry that a student will seek to revenge a plagiarism accusation by submitting a negative teaching evaluation (Zwagerman, 2008).

In addition to fear, anger is one of the most common emotional responses mentioned in the literature on plagiarism. Howard (1999) noted that anger emerges when a writing instructor feels he or she has been “personally affronted, his or her intelligence
insulted, his or her values degraded” (p. 165). Kolich (1983) recounts a conversation he had with an instructor who was enraged by plagiarism in her class. She believed the “vile,” “obscene” act of plagiarizing was far more than just cheating as it had “violated a code of honor that she believed must exist between teacher and student in the best learning environments. It was more than just cheating; the act of plagiarism had touched something prized and almost holy” (Kolich, 1983, p. 144).

Others have similarly argued that instructor anger over plagiarism stems from feelings of being violated (Howard, 2000; Robillard, 2007). Here, the sense is that the student “was trying to put something over on them, was playing them for a fool” (Wells, 1993, p. 59). Zwagerman (2008) described being surprised by the intensity of the anger expressed by his colleagues when talking about plagiarism, who felt the complex issues involved in plagiarism were of little interest. Their primary goal, he wrote, was “to apprehend and punish ‘plagiarists’” (Zwagerman, 2008, p. 679).

Robillard’s (2007) article “We Won’t Get Fooled Again: On the Absence of Angry Responses to Plagiarism in Composition Studies” may be the only published work that solely examines plagiarism and instructor emotion. In this article she argued that feelings of anger emerge because plagiarism threatens an instructor’s identity as a caring professional and expert at “distinguishing between ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ writing” (Robillard, 2007, p. 19). She wrote, “Anger is a legitimate and justifiable response to what one has been persuaded is an insult that violates one's sense of moral justice and the sacred values of one's community” (Robillard, 2007, p. 17). She noted that sometimes this anger can turn into revenge, resulting in part from “a desire to set an example for all those others that I might have caught or those who might think about plagiarizing in the
future” (Robillard, 2007, p. 18).

In her analysis comparing how instructors discuss anger about plagiarism in scholarship to how they discuss it in their publicly-accessible blog posts, Robillard (2007) discovered an interesting distinction. She wrote, “teachers who represent themselves as angry in the scholarship risk identifying themselves as ‘bad’ teachers, but teachers who represent themselves as angry on their blogs represent themselves as too smart to be fooled by dishonest students” (Robillard, 2007, p. 13). She maintained that this distinction could exist because so much research in composition has focused on how difficult plagiarism can be to define, prevent, and teach as well as the complications of unintentional plagiarism (Robillard, 2007). From her perspective, if one buys into the scholarly discourse yet still feels angry at student plagiarism, the instructor might believe he or she is “at least partly to blame” (Robillard, 2007, p. 21).

Robillard (2007) lamented the lack of research on emotion in plagiarism scholarship, noting that most of the focus has been on prevention, methods that “negate the need to acknowledge the affective effects of plagiarism on the individual teacher, on the institution, and on the discipline” (p. 15). From her perspective, emotional responses to plagiarism are not only a problem with student writers (as is evidenced by the majority of the scholarly literature). She feels that only by examining instructor anger more closely can those in composition studies begin to truly understand plagiarism in all its forms (Robillard, 2007).

**Gaps in the Research**

In summary, considerable scholarly work using both qualitative and quantitative methods has attempted to define emotions from various disciplinary perspectives and to
describe how emotions affect people in their daily lives and, in particular, in the workplace. Likewise, research has examined how men and women experience, manage, and express emotions and the stereotypes associated with gender emotions. Research on emotions and gender, much of which has utilized questionnaires, is complicated by the social stereotypes and cultural norms associated gender emotions—a situation that might influence respondents’ self-reports of their emotions.

Far less research has addressed the emotions of teaching, although this area of study has received more attention in recent years, particularly in K-12 scholarship, as educators begin to acknowledge the role emotions play in teaching and learning. Some scholarship also has examined the emotional labor of teaching and the impact of emotions on a teacher’s sense of professional identity, but again, the vast majority of this work has been focused on primary and secondary school teachers.

When researchers have explored emotions at the university level, most have used interviews and other qualitative methods to explore students’ emotions. Some researchers have examined the composition classroom climate itself, characterizing it as a nurturing, liberating space where students are encouraged to find their voices through writing. And a handful of researchers, most using interviews, have noted the complex emotions at work when grading student writing.

At the same time, the concept of plagiarism has garnered substantial attention from legal scholars, fueled by an increase in incidents of plagiarism in education as well as high-profile cases in the media and popular culture. The courts have weighed in on the complexities and nuances of its definition and the distinction between plagiarism and copyright. Although the amount of qualitative and quantitative scholarship produced on
plagiarism in the past 20 years is impressive, nearly all of it has focused on how much students are plagiarizing, why they are doing it, and what educators should be doing to stop it. Some researchers, in their work on the pedagogical strategies one can use to respond to plagiarism, have written about the emotions involved in plagiarism; however, emotions have only been anecdotally mentioned rather than the focus of empirical study.

Robillard (2007), in her article on plagiarism and instructor anger, described her own anger when discovering plagiarism in a doctoral student’s paper. She contrasted the angry public discourse on plagiarism with the far less emotional wording used in scholarship on plagiarism and in two writing teachers’ blogs, whose posts mentioned the writers’ feelings when their students plagiarized. Her article is intriguing and provides an excellent first step toward a better understanding of the plagiarism experience; however, it is limited to a single emotion (anger) and a single framework (textual analysis). Thus, there appears to have been no published research specifically addressing the various emotional experiences of writing instructors when they discover plagiarism in their students’ texts.

Despite this fact, many have argued there is a need for this kind of scholarship. As Robillard (2007) and others have noted, instructors’ emotions are rarely studied in scholarly literature even though emotions can powerfully influence pedagogy as well as the perceptions of students (Steinberg, 2008; Williams, 2007). When we downplay or ignore the import of an instructor’s emotions, such as guilt, fear, and anger, during the plagiarism experience, we communicate the message that their feelings are unimportant, insignificant, and should be suppressed (Robillard, 2007). And, if instructors think no one cares about their feelings, or if they sense that what they feel should be hidden from
others, the consequences could be exhausting and unhealthy (Ellis & Garvey, 2011; Sheffield, 2011).

It is clear from Hargreaves’ (1998) research on teaching and emotion that emotions help shape the decisions instructors make in pursuit of the purpose and goals of their teaching. Yet when one cannot “fix” things (such as this problem of plagiarism), negative emotions result (Hargreaves, 1998). Much scholarly literature notes how valuable faculty development efforts can be in allowing instructors a space to process and share difficult emotions as well as to discuss how emotions shape their sense of identity and pedagogy (Caswell, 2011; Demetriou et al., 2009; Nias, 1996; Shapiro, 2010). In particular, Caswell (2011) has argued this kind of professional development is crucial for those instructors who assess writing. She wrote,

Acknowledging the role of emotion within and surrounding writing assessment, from both the students’ and teachers’ perspective, can help teachers revamp their pedagogical assessment practices, strengthen their assessment proposals, understand their positive and negative emotions, and then use that understanding to empower themselves for change. (Caswell, 2011, p. 57)

Likewise, from the scholarly literature on emotions in the workplace, we know support like this can lower a worker’s stress that comes from emotional labor (Grandey, 2000), and that ignoring emotional labor can lead to “emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment” (Grandey, 2000, p. 104). So, for example, if a writing instructor focuses his or her energy on regulating negative emotions during a plagiarism experience, she may suffer the consequences, including a diminished sense of self-worth and accomplishment.
In her work on the feelings involved in being a writing program administrator, Micciche (2002) noted that teaching writing is a social practice and, as such, is embedded with emotions. She argued, “We need to address the ways in which our profession produces emotional dispositions for its workers. Such a recognition would show that a significant component of working conditions is tied up with the way economic, cultural, and political institutions nurture, stunt, and amplify certain emotional habits” (Micciche, 2002, pp. 452-453).

Likewise, in his afterword to the 10th anniversary edition of The Courage to Teach, Palmer (2007) asserted that today’s climate of education requires a “new professional” (p. 202), a teacher who “not only is competent in his or her discipline but also has the skill and the will to resist and help transform the institutional pathologies that threaten the profession’s highest standards” (p. 202). Part of this process, he wrote, needs to “name and claim feelings, neither denying nor being dominated by them; discern whether and how they reflect in reality; ask if they have consequences for action; and, if so, explore them for clues to strategies for social change” (Palmer, 2007, p. 210). In other words, “Good pedagogy requires attention to emotions” (Palmer, 2007, p. 208).

Reports on the number of students cheating remind us that plagiarism is not going away despite the extensive scholarly focus. Plagiarism is clearly not a simple problem, and as such, it should be addressed from multiple perspectives and frameworks (Howard & Robillard, 2008). Micciche (2002) argued, “When we develop a more sustained understanding of the emotional contexts of our work worlds, these responses will stimulate new insights and new visions of possibility, as well as different ways of seeing the work we do” (p. 453). Thus, far more can be explored about the emotional lives of
writing instructors during the plagiarism experience. This knowledge will greatly add to the scholarly conversation on plagiarism, provide a more informed understanding of the lived experiences of writing instructors, and, as a result, will initiate an alternative discourse on plagiarism that more closely addresses writing instructors’ professional challenges and needs. As such, this area of research is ripe for exploration, and it is hoped that this dissertation will address a significant void in our knowledge and become an important addition to that scholarship.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this dissertation is to understand how composition instructors emotionally react to incidents of plagiarism and how those reactions impact their teaching, their relationships with students, and their professional identity. This knowledge will add to the scholarly discourse on plagiarism and its impact in the writing classroom. Of equal value, this work aims to recognize and legitimize instructors’ emotional responses that occur during a plagiarism experience, a particularly challenging, emotionally-charged time. Finally, I designed this study with the belief that better understanding the lived experiences of composition instructors will more effectively direct and refine writing faculty development and teaching assistant (TA) training.

Using qualitative rather than quantitative methods to achieve these outcomes was appropriate for several reasons. First, most agree that human emotions are socially constructed, widely variable, and difficult to measure. (e.g., Brody, 2000; Brody & Hall, 2008; Gross, 2008; Hochschild, 1983; Smith & Mackie, 2008; Stets & Turner, 2008). Likewise, there can be multiple interpretations of emotional states that are both individualistic and context-dependent. As a researcher, I did not attempt to manipulate the setting or participants; rather, my intent was to understand a phenomenon in its
natural state and to inductively and holistically explore details and specifics about that phenomenon (Patton, 1990). In addition, like emotions, which are dynamic and changeable, the notion of plagiarism itself, which evades a universal definition, is a phenomenological concept (Power, 2009) that varies depending on the perspective of the individuals who experience it and the context in which it occurs.

Therefore, because I am attempting to understand emotion, a highly complex and subjective phenomenon, from participants’ perspectives and to discover the essence of the plagiarism experience for them, I used a phenomenological research design. Kvale (1983) explained that phenomenology involves “the transition from the description of separate phenomena to a search for the common essence of the phenomena” (p. 184). I believe that investigating the essence of the plagiarism experience through the lens of phenomenology will lead me to more fully understand how “complex meanings are built out of simple units of direct experience” (Merriam, 2002, p. 7).

Nelson (1989) argued that phenomenology brings to light that which exists but has been ignored or devalued over time. He explained that phenomenology calls us to a series of systematic reflections within which we describe, thematize, and interpret that which we intimately live but which has been “forgotten” through sedimentation of our awareness of ourselves in everyday life. The radical reflections of phenomenology attempt to dis-cover [sic] and re-animate the sedimented, taken-for-granted phenomena of existence. (Nelson, 1989, p. 224)

If viewed from a feminist perspective, phenomenology can be seen as a method for naming and, thus, giving voice to the silent, unexpressed (though deeply felt)
emotions that exist in individuals’ lived experiences. The importance of this kind of work was characterized by Chinn (2012) when she argued that researchers should pay closer attention to teacher emotions. She wrote,

the question “how do we feel” is not just diagnostic and experiential; it's also phenomenological. That is to say, it asks what creates and sustains our feelings about teaching and as teachers, and what it might mean to be conscious and analytical about feeling as a construct, a mechanism, or a framework. (Chinn, 2012, p. 16)

These viewpoints inform my epistemological position, which rests on the belief that data exist in the perspectives expressed by the language of participants. The aim of this phenomenological research was to learn what the plagiarism experience means for participants in their own words and in the context of their classrooms, relationships, and experiences. As I collected and analyzed the data, I attempted to uncover the shared experiences of participants in their own terms, learning, for example, what common emotional experiences they had when realizing a text was plagiarized, how they reacted and responded to it emotionally, and how those feelings influenced their personal and professional lives.

**Research Questions and Design**

As noted in Chapter I, the following five questions guided this research:

1. How do composition instructors emotionally react when faced with plagiarized texts?

2. In what ways do incidents of plagiarism potentially complicate and alter composition instructors’ relationships with their students and colleagues?
3. In what ways do composition instructors’ emotional responses to incidents of plagiarism potentially impact their pedagogy?

4. In what ways do composition instructors’ emotional responses to incidents of plagiarism potentially affect their sense of professional identity?

5. In what ways might gender play a role in composition instructors’ emotional responses to incidents of plagiarism?

With these questions in mind, my phenomenological research involved interviews with and written responses from 12 writing instructors who teach composition courses that are part of a general education program. The data for this research were gathered during the 2014-2015 academic year.

**Setting**

To help ensure confidentiality of the institution and research participants, this dissertation will use the pseudonym “Midwest State University” when referring to the setting of this research. This university was chosen because the characteristics of its student body and faculty, the makeup of English department faculty, and the department’s composition program make this site a particularly appropriate one for studying this phenomenon.

Midwest State University is a midsized, four-year public university in the Midwest. A majority of the students are full-time, and undergraduates make up more than 75% of the student body. There are a growing number of older and non-traditional students attending the university and a fairly even mix of male and female students. Like many U.S. institutions of higher education, the number of international students at Midwest State has risen in the last decade. Thus, instructors who participated in my
research have had experience teaching a relatively diverse range of students.

Midwest State University has upwards of a thousand full-time faculty, and, although the numbers in some faculty ranks fluctuate slightly from year to year based on enrollment, the English department is made up of tenured, tenure-track, non-tenure track, and adjunct instructors. More than 50% of the English department faculty members are female. I had hoped to involve an even number of participants from each faculty rank, as responses to plagiarism may be different depending on rank; however, as I was seeking participants for the study, I discovered that nearly all of the composition courses at Midwest State are taught by non-tenure track instructors, lecturers, and adjuncts. Nevertheless, I was able to include three tenured participants who taught composition.

Like many midsized public universities, the department’s general education writing program includes two composition courses that are designed to introduce students to academic writing. Midwest State’s required composition courses along with the characteristics of its student body and English department faculty, may serve to bolster my study’s transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the ability of readers to apply my findings to settings beyond the confines of this research setting.

**Sampling and Participants**

This research involved 12 participants from Midwest State University’s English department. I directly solicited participants for this research; therefore, this was a “purposeful sample” (Patton, 1990) of individuals who I believed would provide information about the subject at hand. To locate participants, I created a list of male instructors and a list of female instructors. I then called individual faculty members, described the research project, purpose, methods, and time commitment and asked if they
would be willing to participate (See Appendix A). If someone agreed to participate, I asked him or her to recommend others in the department who might also be interested in participating in this research. I continued adding participants in this manner, called snowball sampling (Merriam, 2002). Initially, only male faculty members volunteered to participate. After several weeks of follow-up contacts with female faculty members, particularly through recommendations made by male participants, I eventually obtained an even gender mix of six male and six female participants.

Obtaining a sample of this size helped ensure I achieved maximum variation (Patton, 1990); that is, gender heterogeneity of participants in my study. This variety enabled me “to understand the variations in experiences while also investigating core elements and shared outcomes” (Patton, p. 172).

The initial phone call enabled me to begin building a relationship with participants. For example, I shared with participants that I have been teaching writing for 18 years and am concerned about plagiarism. I explained how my study seeks to better understand how plagiarism impacts writing teachers emotionally and that I hoped my findings would inform faculty development and administrative decision making related to how incidents of plagiarism can be better addressed.

Immediately following phone calls in which individuals agreed to be interviewed, I sent an email thanking them for agreeing to participate in the research. This email included an explanation of the research methods, the general research purpose, and the approximate time commitment involved. It also noted that Institutional Review Board approvals had been obtained from the University of Dayton and Midwest State University. (See Appendix B for a sample of this email.) A second email was sent with
an attached list of pre-interview questions (see “Written Responses” below and Appendix C) and a copy of the informed consent form for their review. This form was signed and witnessed when I met with each participant for his or her interview.

**Data Collection Methods**

Phenomenological research is primarily concerned with how people describe their experiences (Patton, 1990). This phenomenological research obtained participant descriptions using two main data sources: interviews and written responses to open-ended questions. Merriam (2002) noted that interviews are one of the primary data collection methods for phenomenology, and using participants’ written responses as a secondary data source helped enhance the truth value (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the research; that is, the extent to which one can have confidence that the findings reflect reality. This also served to triangulate the data (Merriam, 2002), which, in this study, involved using multiple data methods to increase credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the confidence readers will have in the truth of the findings.

**Written Responses**

Merriam (2002) noted that a major source of data for qualitative inquiry is documents, including written documents, and that they can “often contain insights and clues into the phenomenon” (p. 13). The first data source used for this research was written responses to open-ended questions. I emailed participants a file with open-ended questions and asked that they return their responses prior to being interviewed. The pre-interview questions prompted participants to write about an instance when a student plagiarized in their composition course and to describe the emotions they experienced. In these written responses, participants could write about how they felt at any time during
the plagiarism experience. These written responses allowed participants time to thoughtfully reflect before our interview conversations on their plagiarism experiences and the emotions and behaviors that accompanied these experiences. (For a copy of these questions, please see Appendix C.) Participants were asked to write as little or as much as they wanted, and responses ranged from a few short paragraphs to five pages.

**Interviews**

A second data source was interviews. Neumann (2006), in her research on the emotions involved in scholarship, wrote that an interview, “strategically designed, is a powerful tool for charting the mental and emotional landscapes of human knowing” (p. 389). The purpose of the qualitative research interview is “to gather descriptions of the life-world of the interviewee with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale, 1983, p. 174). As such, I interviewed participants using the general interview guide approach for open-ended interviews (Patton, 1990). With this approach, I determined in advance the topics I wished participants to address; however, the order of questions was not scripted beforehand. (See Appendix D for a list of the topics covered in each interview.)

I shared with participants the general topics I wished to address, but the questions themselves were open-ended, and thus, semi-structured, permitting me to capture a wider variety of perspectives without predetermining those perspectives beforehand. The purpose of this method is not to “put things in someone’s mind . . . but to access the perspective of the person being interviewed” (Patton, 1990, p. 278). Interviews focused on main topics related to my research questions; however, other ideas emerged during the interviews, which I explored. This interview strategy also allowed for flexibility when,
for example, a participant made a statement that was ambiguous or contradicted something previously said. In cases such as these, I sought to clarify his or her meaning by asking the participant to explain his or her point in a different way.

I believe interviews of this kind fit well with the stance inherent in phenomenology, which recognizes the significance of building relationships between researcher and researched, a position that “approaches the researched not as objects to do research on, but as participants in dialogue” (Langellier & Hall, 1989, p. 201). Likewise, this strategy enabled me to be highly responsive to participants’ circumstances and described experiences, allowing me to explore, in a more in-depth manner, themes that emerged during our conversation.

Therefore, the aim of the interviews was to both collect data and generate data. The questions and the dialogue I had with participants were designed to elicit specific descriptions of their emotional experiences, feelings, and behaviors related to plagiarism experiences in their composition courses. (For an explanation of how I built relationships of trust during the interviews, please see “Building Relationships and Trust” later in this chapter.)

Unlike Research Questions 1 through 4, Research Question 5 (In what ways does gender play a role in composition instructors’ emotional responses to incidents of plagiarism?) was not addressed during the interviews or asked for in written responses. My understanding and analysis of this question was gleaned from participants’ interview responses and written responses, particularly in the language they used to describe their experiences, emotions, reactions, and responses.


Interview Plans and Environment. To reduce the chances that a participant would “catch” the emotions of another participant during an interview, as some have suggested occurs in group settings (Doherty, 1997), I interviewed participants individually and face-to-face. I asked participants to select the location of the interview. Most took place in participants’ offices; however, two were conducted in a coffee shop in the university library and another in the lobby of an on-campus building. Interviews lasted between 33 and 59 minutes.

I interviewed each participant once. I had told participants I would contact them by phone or email if I needed clarification of something they said during an interview and to possibly schedule a second interview if need be. However, because I was able to continue each interview until I was satisfied that I understood a participant’s experiences and emotions, this was not necessary.

I began each interview by asking participants to describe the emotions they felt during a particular plagiarism experience. By using follow-up questions, I probed participants’ feelings to explore their range of emotions throughout this time period. The objective was to discuss one or more plagiarism experiences, learn the details of what happened, how the instructor felt, how the instructor responded, and how the instructor felt the incident(s) impacted his or her pedagogy and relationships. I attempted to engage participants in a deep examination of their emotions during these experiences and to confirm my understanding of their emotions and behaviors by restating to them what I heard as our conversation unfolded.
Building Relationships and Trust

Langellier and Hall (1989) stressed the importance of creating a non-hierarchical atmosphere during interviews, particularly when interviewing women. They argued that “a hierarchical, superior-subordinate relationship mitigates against rapport and trust between interviewer and interviewee” (Langellier & Hall, 1989, p. 203). With this perspective in mind, I strived to create an atmosphere in which we became peers who were co-constructing knowledge. In doing so, this nonhierarchical relationship may be characterized by “reciprocal questions between the interviewer and interviewees, by interviewees’ taking the lead in the interview, and by interviewees’ taking the interviewer into their confidence and risking self-disclosure” (Langellier & Hall, 1989, p. 215).

Situating the researcher to the researched in this manner, I believe, led me to a fuller, more nuanced understanding of the plagiarism phenomenon.

One element of trust is the ability to empathize with one’s participants, an ability Patton (1990) argued has “profound implications for how one studies human beings” (p. 56). He believed the concept of empathy is found “in the phenomenological doctrine of verstehen, which . . . means ‘understanding’ and refers to the unique human capacity to make sense of the world” (Patton, 1990, p. 56). He argued that a capacity for empathy is what helps qualitative researchers understand the code of our culture and communicate those perspectives. Indeed, Gilbert (2001) suggested that it is not possible or even desirable in qualitative research to hold oneself as researcher apart from or emotionally distant from one’s participants.

In attempting to explore and understand another’s worldview, the process of qualitative research “is experienced both intellectually and emotionally” (Gilbert, 2001,
p. 9). “It is not the avoidance of emotion that necessarily provides for high quality research,” wrote education researcher Gilbert (2001, p. 11), “rather, it is an awareness and intelligent use of our emotions that benefits the research process” (p. 11). Thus, my own emotions as researcher were important to acknowledge and share with participants in an effort to build empathy, trust, and understanding.

As I shared with participants my background as a composition instructor and my current position as director of writing programs at the University of Dayton, I tried to situate myself as a member of their “club,” the discipline of English and writing studies. To help build my relationship with each participant, I also disclosed certain things about my own experiences with plagiarism as a way to emphasize the commonality of our shared experiences with the challenges of plagiarized student work. From the first phone call with participants and during the interviews, I shared with them that, over my many years of teaching, I have had students plagiarize, and these experiences have fueled my interest in the subject. And, as the director of writing programs at my university, I have talked with numerous writing teachers who struggle with how to best teach plagiarism avoidance and with how to respond to their students when they plagiarize. Sharing my experiences with participants helped build rapport with them as well as validate a sense of our shared experiences. For more details on the kinds of information I shared with participants about my experiences with plagiarism, see “This Researcher’s Positionality” later in this chapter.

Likewise, I shared that I am an alumna of Midwest State University and that I worked as a full-time instructor there from 2004 to 2008. At Midwest, I also had students plagiarize in my courses. My background and familiarity with the campus, its students,
and the department faculty, which I shared during the interviews, I believe helped further strengthen my relationship with participants.

Lastly, I built trust with participants by emphasizing the importance of confidentiality during this research process. For example, in my phone calls, correspondence, and during the interviews, I assured them of their confidentiality. (See “Ethical Considerations and Data Management” below for more details on confidentiality.)

**Research Journal**

Throughout the research process, I kept a research journal, which served as my field notes. This journal is a notebook with handwritten notes. Here, I recorded my experiences, plans, thoughts, emotions, discoveries, and other reflections. During the interviews, I took very brief handwritten notes, and following each interview, I transposed these as observational notes in the research journal, filling in details to more clearly describe what I learned from our conversation. In particular, I documented any thoughts I had about their comments during interviews. When reading and rereading participants’ written responses to my questions, I also made notes in this journal on my thoughts and any ideas that emerged, particularly those I wanted to explore in an interview.

Likewise, as soon as possible after an interview, I listened to the recording, taking notes in my journal to reflect on what I heard and the ideas and themes that emerged. If, at the time I was writing down these impressions, I was able to reflect on meaning, I also noted this. This journal was useful during data analysis, providing insight into my thoughts and decisions during the research process.
Ethical Considerations and Data Management

Merriam (2002) noted that “a ‘good’ qualitative study is one that has been conducted in an ethical manner” (p. 29). As such, the protection of participants in this study was critical. I first obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the University of Dayton. Then, I received IRB approval to collect the data at Midwest State University.

In addition, to protect participants’ confidentiality, each participant was given a pseudonym that was used on all written data, including transcripts and file labels. Only I, as the researcher, have access to participants’ real names and corresponding pseudonyms. Interviews were recorded on a digital audio recorder so I could obtain an accurate, verbatim record of participants’ wording. Each recording was downloaded to my computer as an audio file and labeled with the interviewee’s pseudonym and the date of the interview.

A professional transcription company was used to accurately transcribe each interview within one week of the interview session. The company employed for this transcription met the security and confidentiality standards’ requirements for medical transcription and court reporting, and transcribers signed a confidentiality agreement. Transcribed files were completed in Microsoft Word, and file names matched those of the corresponding audio file (with the exception of the file extension; e.g., doc). Any names or identifying features of students or others mentioned during the interviews or in the written responses were stricken from the transcripts and written records.

Audio files, transcription files, participants’ written responses, field notes, IRB forms, and other documents pertaining to this research were kept in a locked storage
environment, and electronic files were regularly backed up to a flash drive and to a non-university password-protected cloud data storage service.

**Data Analysis**

Groenewald (2004) described data analysis as “a way of transforming the data through interpretation” (p. 17). To begin this process, I listened to the interview recordings and read the transcripts to verify their accuracy as soon as possible after the recordings and transcriptions were completed. In addition to rereading the transcriptions numerous times, I listened repeatedly to the audio recordings, as I hoped to learn much from hearing participants’ voices—information that I would not otherwise obtain through just reading the written transcripts. Likewise, I closely reread participants’ written responses to my emailed questions. As Merriam (2002) noted, qualitative analysis is an ongoing process that occurs in conjunction with data collecting. Constant data analysis (or constant comparison (Merriam, 2002) as it is commonly known in grounded theory research) enabled me to make adjustments and “‘test’ emerging concepts, themes, and categories against subsequent data” (Merriam, 2002, p. 14).

Merriam (2002) recommends continuing to gather data until saturation is achieved, a strategy Lincoln and Guba (1985) call prolonged engagement. Saturation is reached when continuing to collect data results in no new information. This was accomplished by asking follow-up questions during the interview and, would have included conducting follow-up interviews or phone calls with participants, if needed. I concluded each interview and the interview stage of this research when I was confident that continuing the conversation would result in no new insights.
Once this was achieved, I employed several methods of interpretation and analysis that Merriam (2002) recommended as essential to phenomenological research: reduction, horizontalization, and imaginative variation. Reduction involves “continually returning to the essence of the experience to derive the inner structure or meaning in and of itself” (Merriam, 2002, p. 94). To accomplish this I reread, reconsidered, reflected, and wrote about the ideas I saw emerging in the data. As I read transcripts and written responses, I took notes in the margins of the documents. In particular, I looked for common themes and generated preliminary categories that emerged within the data. Moustakas (1994) argued reduction involves “describing in textural language just what one sees, not only in terms of the external object but also the internal act of consciousness, the experience as such, the rhythm and relationship between the phenomenon and itself” (p. 90). For him, this process is characterized by reflection that is “more exact and fuller with continuing attention and perception, with continued looking, with the adding of new perspectives” (p. 93).

Likewise, Kvale (1983) noted that “phenomenological reduction involves the suspension of judgment as to the existence or non-existence of the content of an experience” (p. 184), a concept similar to bracketing during analysis (Merriam, 2002), in which the researcher attempts “to place the common sense and scientific foreknowledge about the phenomena into parentheses in order to arrive at the essence of the phenomena” (p. 184). Merriam (2002) wrote that “Bracketing, or the process of epoche, allows the experience of the phenomenon to be explained in terms of its own intrinsic system of meaning, not one imposed on it from without” (p. 94) and is a strategy commonly used in phenomenological research.
In addition, I used horizontalization, which involved considering all the data equally; that is, no single piece of data was valued more highly than the next (Merriam, 2002). As I contemplated the data in this manner, I combined and clustered ideas into themes (Merriam, 2002) and labeled them accordingly. Working through this process, “vague ideas are refined, expanded, developed, or discarded” (Nelson, 1989, p. 234). Moustakas (1994) refers to this process as clustering and combining common categories or themes. Thus, creating themes from reduction and horizontalization was a systematic method for my data interpretation.

Lastly, I employed imaginative variation (Merriam, 2002; Moustakas, 1994). This involved considering the data, categories, and themes looking for meaning from multiple perspectives. Moustakas (1994) explained that during this process “there is a free play of fancy; any perspective is a possibility and is permitted to enter into consciousness” (p. 98). Here, my aim was to describe the phenomenon, the essential structures that were involved in the essences and meanings of the plagiarism experience. Through imaginative variation, I was able to entertain various meanings and let the evidence from participants’ experiences ultimately drive the patterns that emerged.

**Determining what Qualifies as Data**

Because this research required me to analyze and evaluate participants’ spoken and written words, it is important to describe the methods I used to determine what I would accept as data in this research. As part of the analysis process, I took note each time a participant described experiencing an emotion, a synonym for the emotion, or discussed experiencing behavior and responses associated with a particular emotion, a professional identity, and a relationship with others. For example, I noticed during my
analysis that participants sometimes described feeling sorry for students and expressed an understanding of the pressures facing many beginning college students. Sometimes participants used the word “empathy” or “empathize” when talking about this experience of emotion. In another instance, when a participant remarked, “I identified with her; she came from a working class, working poor background; she’s an African American student,” I concluded that her words showed empathy even though she did not use that word in her explanation.

Similarly, some instructors stated outright that they felt anger. For example, one participant told me that after discovering plagiarism in a student’s paper, “My initial emotion, as it always is, is anger.” I also categorized as “anger” the following statement by a participant who did not directly use the word: “I’m annoyed on several levels. There’s also the level of, ‘Oh, crap, this means I’ve gotta do more work.’ I’ve got to confront students and, you know, I hate to do that.”

Likewise, when analyzing how participants viewed their professional identities, I was careful to determine their true sense of identity rather than the positionality they sensed was imposed upon them by others, such as students or administrators. Sometimes, these conflicting identities were clearly stated. For example, one participant wrote in her pre-interview response,

my professional identity as an English faculty member includes a view of me as overly tough, perhaps even to the point of not caring about my students and their struggles. However, I take great pride in the fact that I hold all my students equally accountable for being honest and for presenting their own thoughts.
When describing their identity, some participants told me they felt adversarial toward students, several using the words “adversary,” “oppositional,” and “enemy.” Another described her identity as an adversary in this manner: “I’ve always felt a certain degree of policing and it’s not the grammar thing either. It’s policing with content. It’s policing with use of sources.” In contrast, some instructors strived to avoid feeling adversarial. This I saw evidenced in a number of ways, such as in the following statement a participant made during an interview:

Yes, we don’t want them to plagiarize. We want them to be skillful and honest and effective in using other people’s ideas. But it starts to shade over into being sort of the censorious, big brotherly, well ‘you’re doing this wrong.’ I don’t think people learn very well that way.

Thus, a good deal of my analysis involved interpreting the meaning in participants’ choices of words and phrases in an attempt to determine the essence of their feelings and lived experiences.

**Responding to Limitations**

As noted in Chapter I, limitations exist for this research, including participants potentially altering their responses to tell me what they think I want to hear or what I would expect a competent composition instructor to say. In addition, some participants might have wanted to avoid appearing overly emotional or might have been averse to admitting to certain feelings. The efforts I made at building rapport and trust with participants likely helped combat these limitations and minimized the chances that a participant would be concerned with appearing unprofessional or not in control of his or her emotions. Similarly, some participants might have “managed” their responses
because of concerns that I would be judgmental. This limitation might have been minimized by sharing my background as a composition instructor and the experiences I have had with students plagiarizing.

Likewise, when I sensed a participant was hesitant to admit that his or her students have cheated, I shared some of the quantitative findings on the numbers of students who cheat and plagiarize. Although many composition instructors are familiar with this research, I reminded one or two participants that plagiarism is, unfortunately, common in higher education.

**Qualitative Researcher Biases and Connections**

As researcher, my main task was to report and interpret from my perspective what I read and heard from participants during interviews. Qualitative researchers are “the primary instruments for data collection and analysis,” and “interpretations of reality are accessed directly through observations and interviews” (Merriam, 2002, p. 25). As Merriam (2002) wrote, the qualitative researcher is “‘closer’ to reality than if an instrument with predefined items had been interjected between the researcher and the phenomenon being studied” (p. 25). Groenewald (2004) argued that “The aim of the researcher is to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts” (p. 5). This closeness, then, of research to researched can be seen as an important advantage in the qualitative paradigm, one that can strengthen a study’s credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Much debate exists about whether true objectivity can be accomplished, particularly when “what is known and what is understood is accessible only through the researcher’s consciousness and in her relationship to the researched” (Langellier & Hall,
1989, p. 194). Groenewald (2004) warned that unlike in a positivist paradigm, the phenomenological researcher cannot be detached from “presuppositions” (p. 7) about the subject matter. Thus, if the researcher is the instrument, it is virtually impossible to remove all bias and to remain completely objective during data collection, interpretation, and analysis.

In phenomenological research, this issue is somewhat addressed during the *epoche* process (Merriam, 2002; Moustakas, 1994, Patton, 1990), whereby the researcher attempts to set aside preconceived notions, experiences, or judgments about the phenomenon under study and “to be completely open, receptive, and naive in listening to and hearing research participants describe their experience of the phenomenon being investigated” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 22). If this can be accomplished, argued Moustakas (1994), the researcher is able to look at a subject with a clear lens, “as if for the first time” (p. 85) without “being hampered by voices of the past that tell us the way things are or the voices of the present that direct our thinking” (p. 85). This requires one to genuinely and honestly perceive research data using an open, fresh, nonjudgmental and neutral stance.

Patton (1990) parsed the debate regarding qualitative researchers’ positionality, arguing that being neutral and being empathetic actually require two separate stances. He agreed that “Any credible research strategy requires that the investigator adopt a stance of neutrality with regard to the phenomenon under study” (p. 55) and that this meant the researcher should conduct the study in a value-free manner, without preconceived notions of what he or she will find and without a specific theory in mind to prove or disprove. However, for Patton (1990), neutrality is related to the stance a researcher takes toward
his or her findings, while empathy is related to the stance the researcher takes toward a study’s participants. When viewed from this perspective, neutrality is possible even if complete objectivity is not.

**This Researcher’s Positionality**

I believe my position as primary researcher inevitably played a role in the tenor of the interviews I conducted, influencing what I read, heard, and saw, and the decisions I made about what to focus on as well as how to guide data collection. In addition, I acknowledge that my positionality likely impacted data interpretation and analysis. Merriam (2002) believed that the relationship between researcher and subject matter is an important part of the qualitative paradigm and that it is incumbent on qualitative researchers to examine their own “prejudices, viewpoints, and assumptions” (p. 94) so they can be “set aside, so as not to influence the process” (p. 94).

In an effort to adhere to this advice, I offer the following reflection on my positionality regarding this research: I am currently the writing programs director in the Department of English at the University of Dayton. For the past eight years I have been a non-tenure track, full-time lecturer (on a year-to-year contract) for the English department at the University of Dayton. Prior to this, I worked for Midwest State University for four years as a writing instructor in their Communication department and was on a year-to-year contract. I also have taught composition for six years as an adjunct instructor at the University of Dayton before being hired full-time. As a lecturer at the University of Dayton and as an instructor at Midwest State University, renewal each year was dependent on staffing needs and the results of an annual review, which included a teaching observation and student evaluations.
In my many years as a writing instructor, I have had numerous students plagiarize. Some have intentionally plagiarized while others have done so apparently unintentionally. I have experienced many emotions during these experiences, including anger, anxiety, frustration, guilt, and fear.

Although I have discussed my suspicions of plagiarism with individual students if I felt it clearly existed in their writing, I have followed through on official reporting procedures (e.g., submitting paperwork to the student’s dean, filing an official student records report) only once in a composition course and once in an upper-level writing course (both in this current semester), preferring to handle the problem by either giving the student a lower grade on the assignment or by having him or her rewrite the assignment. I am sure that my fears that a student would take revenge by turning in low evaluations (and perhaps encourage his or her classmates to, as well) played a role in my decisions about how to handle these episodes.

My many experiences with student plagiarism and research I have done during graduate school that related to the rise in plagiarism and its many possible causes, have, over the years, caused me to alter my approach to the teaching of writing with sources. In fact, I created a theme-based second-year (and first-year honors) composition course based on the notion of authorship and ownership of texts, with a specific unit designed to address plagiarism. This background led to my interest in plagiarism, and the subject continues to intrigue me.

Throughout the research process, I reflected upon my positionality and the implications of allowing my perceptions of the phenomenon under study to foreground and thus affect the research. I was continually mindful of the need to maintain a focus on
participants’ perspectives rather than my own as I gathered and analyzed the data. For example, I did not discount a participant’s emotion, such as fear of student retaliation from an accusation of plagiarism, if I had not experienced the same emotional response. Likewise, I did not lead or direct a participant’s conversation to address emotions that I have commonly experienced when my students have plagiarized.

**Trustworthiness**

In qualitative research, the quality and authenticity of one’s work requires assurance from the researcher that the study “was conducted in a rigorous, systematic, and ethical manner, such that the results can be trusted” (Merriam, 2002, p. 24). Merriam (2002) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed strategies that have been employed here that will enable readers to have confidence in this research. I will first discuss efforts taken to strengthen the credibility of this research followed by an explanation of its transferability.

**Credibility**

Credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), or the confidence that the researcher is observing what he or she is intending to observe, is a particularly important aspect of trustworthiness. Unlike in a positivistic, quantitative paradigm, where reality is single and quantifiable, multiple realities exist in a naturalistic, qualitative paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002). As such, in qualitative research, “the understanding of reality is really the researcher’s interpretation of participants’ interpretations or understandings of the phenomenon of interest” (Merriam, 2002, p. 25).

Therefore, to help strengthen this work’s credibility, I used a number of strategies. In particular, I employed data triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002),
collecting data from two main sources: interviews and written responses. Using multiple data sources provided a wider pool of information from which to interpret and draw conclusions, as well as aided in cross-checking data, making comparisons, and looking for similarities and consistencies.

Second, I used member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002). Following the completion of the interviews and my analysis of the findings, I prepared a short report that described my preliminary findings. I shared this report with all participants via email, asking them to tell me if they saw themselves exemplified in my findings. I also asked if they had anything they would like to add to the discussion that they did not see evident in my preliminary report (See Appendix E, Invitation to Member Checking). All of the responses I received were positive and supported my interpretations of the data. Many respondents shared with me that they saw themselves clearly represented in the professional identity categories I had delineated. Had any participants not agreed with my findings and interpretations, I would have made changes; however, this did not occur. This strategy helped confirm that I interpreted the data accurately and that it reflected the meaning participants intended to convey.

Third, I used peer review (Merriam, 2002), what Lincoln and Guba (1985) call peer debriefing, to test ideas that emerged during the data gathering process and data analysis. I asked a colleague in the University of Dayton English department with a background in qualitative research and writing studies scholarship to review my purpose, research questions, methods, and preliminary findings. In particular, I asked him to comment on whether my interview questions, pre-interview questions, and discussion of findings were appropriate given my research questions and purpose. In addition, I asked
whether the categories I created accurately reflected the data or if any information should be added, revised, or reorganized. He confirmed that my research methods, discussion of findings, and criteria for analysis were appropriate and that the categories I created during coding logically reflected the data.

Throughout the research process, I also used reflexivity (Merriam, 2002), by being explicit about my positionality and possible biases (see “This Researcher’s Postionality”). As Merriam (2002) has noted, this strategy “allows the reader to better understand how the individual researcher might have arrived at the particular interpretation of the data” (p. 25). The research design adds to the truth value of this research, and the attempts I made to bracket (Merriam, 2002) myself and my experiences as a composition instructor helped me focus on participants’ experiences of this phenomenon and their unique perspectives.

Lastly, I used negative case analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and saturation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, Merriam, 2002). Negative case analysis involves purposefully looking for alternative ideas that may contradict prior data. Thus, during the research process, I continually revisited and revised my concepts and theories as the data emerged, as I considered alternative ideas. As mentioned earlier, to strengthen credibility, using prolonged engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) required me to gather data until such time as I believed the topic was exhausted (Groenewald, 2004) and collecting more data would cease to provide any new insights or perspectives.

**Transferability**

No attempt is made to imply that readers should generalize my findings to settings beyond this research, as this study is heavily context dependent (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
It is up to my readers to extend these research findings to other contexts if they believe those contexts are similar to those described here.

One way to enhance transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) is to use rich, thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002) of my research context, design, findings, and analysis. The researcher “can provide only the thick description necessary to enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). Kvale (1983) discussed this when he argued that if we legitimate the plurality of interpretations, it becomes meaningless to pose strict requirements of interpreter-reliability. What matters is then rather to formulate as explicitly as possible the evidence and arguments, which have been applied in an interpretation, in order that the interpretation should be testable by other readers. (p. 193)

It was my responsibility as researcher to provide the descriptive elements in the writing that will allow transferability to be attempted. This kind of description will help persuade readers of the trustworthiness of my findings (Merriam, 2002) and will hopefully “take the reader into the setting” (Patton, 1990, p. 31).

Similarly, a study’s dependability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) rests on the integrity of the research process and relates to whether the findings appear consistent. Strategies to enhance dependability include those used to enhance credibility as well as the use of an audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 2002). The audit trail “describes in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived, and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry” (p. 27). My research journal served as a place for me to record the details of this research process as well as my reflections, thoughts, ideas, and
decisions as this project unfolded.

A reader should thus be able to assess the steps and thought processes of my research to determine if appropriate and logical findings were arrived upon based on the field notes and data gathered. In other words, the reader should have the tools needed to make a judgment of whether I reached logical conclusions based on the methodological decisions, data, findings, and analysis. These strategies make explicit and clear the rigor with which I approached this research and are intended to help to enhance its trustworthiness.

Summary

This qualitative research used phenomenological methods to explore and illuminate the emotional, lived experiences of 12 composition instructors at Midwest State University. Participants responded in writing to open-ended questions and participated in one face-to-face interview session. Individual interviews were open-ended, using the general interview guide approach (Patton, 1990), and were recorded and transcribed. I followed the recommended steps to ensure confidentiality and human subject precautions during every phase of this research. In addition, during data analysis, I used phenomenological methods, including reduction, horizontalization, and imaginative variation, to interpret the data. Finally, throughout this process, I took steps to enhance the trustworthiness of this research.
CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS

This chapter will highlight my research findings, which are based on pre-interview responses from and interviews with 12 composition instructors at Midwest State University in 2014. First, I will describe the participants and the emotions they recalled experiencing when their students plagiarized. Next, I will discuss the professional identities they described as well as their relationships with students, administrators, and colleagues. This chapter concludes with a discussion of my findings based on participant gender.

Description of Participants

As noted in Chapter III, I interviewed six male faculty members and six female faculty members. I received pre-interview question responses from all but one female participant. Participants had between 4 and 36 years of experience teaching writing and held a variety of department ranks. Non-tenure track participants included one adjunct, two instructors, one lecturer, and four senior lecturers. At Midwest State, instructors are full-time faculty on a one-year contract. Lecturers are full-time faculty on a three-year contract. After serving as a lecturer, a faculty member can apply to become a senior lecturer, which offers a continuing contract with expectation of renewal each year. In
addition, three participants were tenured: one assistant professor, one full professor, and one retired full professor.

**Emotions Experienced in Response to Plagiarism**

A central aspect of this research involved identifying the specific emotions participants recalled experiencing during episodes of student plagiarism in their composition courses. It is important to note that in interviews and written responses, participants often described feeling several emotions at once. Likewise, many told me their emotions changed during the plagiarism experience (one participant described this as “the usual Rolodex of emotions that you go through” when plagiarism happens).

Often, participants described feeling one emotion and then shifting to another as time passed and they were able to think more deeply about the situation.

As discussed in Chapter III, in interviews and pre-interview responses, I noted when participants described experiencing a particular emotion, a synonym for the emotion, and behavior and responses associated with a particular emotion. In all, participants described feeling 13 emotions during plagiarism experiences: anger, resentment, disappointment, frustration, empathy, sadness, hurt, betrayal, cynicism, guilt, failure, anxiety, and stress. With one exception (empathy), all of the emotions they recalled were negative; that is, the emotions were undesirable, stress-inducing, and had an adverse impact on the individual experiencing those emotions.

To explore these further, I grouped the 13 emotions into two main categories based on to whom those feelings were directed--either externally toward students or internally toward the instructor. In the following subsections I discuss these emotion categories in detail and provide examples of the language participants used to describe
their feelings in interviews and prewriting responses.

**Emotions Directed at Students**

Participants told me they had felt many emotions that were directed at their students who plagiarized. These emotions included anger, resentment, disappointment, frustration, empathy, and sadness. I further subdivided these emotions into two categories: unsympathetic emotions and compassionate emotions.

**Unsympathetic Emotions: Anger, Resentment, Disappointment, and Frustration.** All of the participants described feeling anger, resentment, disappointment, or frustration during an episode of plagiarism. These four negative emotions were externally-focused; that is, they were directed outwardly toward students. Anger and resentment were commonly experienced early in the plagiarism experience, while disappointment and frustration more often emerged later after the initial discovery of the plagiarism.

Anger was one of the most commonly mentioned emotions in the study, discussed by nearly all of the participants. Most told me they had initially felt angry with a student when first suspecting the plagiarism. Some participants, like Ricki, a lecturer, were angry because the student had violated basic values of her classroom, such as respect and honesty. Others expressed anger because they felt the student was intentionally trying to trick them, thinking he or she was easily fooled. For example, Robert, who had a considerable number of years’ experience as a writing teacher, spoke of being angry when two students in one of his courses turned in identical papers. He described feeling “the sense that there’s a personal affront . . . ‘Do you really think I’m that stupid that I wouldn’t notice that you had turned in a paper identical to somebody else in the same
class?” he said. Likewise, Jenn remarked,

At first I felt angry because it was so obvious, and it was so, she had changed punctuation and changed a few words here and there in so many places that I was angry because I felt like she put a lot more time into [plagiarizing] than actually continuing to write her own words.

To Laura, anger emerged after contemplating why the student would resort to cheating. She said,

I’m always stunned that students will think that anything they can get and substitute will be better than their own. I’m stunned at first and then, of course, I start getting a little angry. It makes me angry after all the help, the structure and the support that’s built into the course that [the student] would resort to [plagiarism].

In addition, a number of participants described feeling angry because of the time that would be involved in pursuing the student and reporting the academic integrity offense. For example, Robert echoed several participants’ feelings when he said,

Her refusal to confess, I think, probably made me angry that she wasn’t willing to admit that “Okay, I’ve done something wrong here.” I think that offended my sense of how things are supposed to work, not just in terms of bureaucracy and the rules and whatnot, but that was a point when it started offending my moral sensibility.

Similarly, Julie, described the specific trigger of her anger when she said, “the anger isn’t about that ‘You did this you horrible person.’ The anger is, ‘Don’t you understand how much time this takes?’ and I don’t have that time to waste.”
I noticed that the participants’ anger sometimes shifted to feelings of resentment toward the student, particularly when the anger was related to increasing the instructor’s workload. Sometimes these two feelings were expressed in the same breath, as if the anger and resentment had boiled up simultaneously because of the student’s actions. Julie’s words reflected a common response I heard when participants spoke and wrote about students who had intentionally plagiarized:

I resent the time that it takes to chase things down, the discomfort that’s going to arise when you have to confront them with your suspicions. And, it just, you think about in terms of the time you put in with each student and how much more it takes when this happens; that it’s taking you away from students that are working hard and not cutting corners and not trying to get ahead by some unfair method . . . . I resent them taking my time from those interested in educating themselves.

Likewise, many participants spoke of feeling disappointed with their students, after the initial anger wore off. This emotion was described, for example, as feeling “let down” by a student who plagiarized, especially when he or she was clearly a capable writer. Laura recalled the shock of plagiarism and the deep disappointment she felt when a student she’d been working closely with “deliberately chose to break the rules and risk everything.” She said, “I don’t feel it’s personal to me. I just feel so disappointed because I see the potential.”

In participants’ descriptions, I noted that their feelings of anger, resentment, disappointment, and frustration were felt but rarely shared with or shown to students, with one exception: Ricki, who had developed a strong mentoring relationship with a
student who later admitted plagiarizing a paper, said that in an effort to reduce her anger “at” her student, she purposely told the student how disappointed she was in the student’s behavior and made her emotional reaction—the disappointment—the focus of their conversation.

Just as anger was sometimes linked with feeling resentful and disappointed, many participants described feeling angry and frustrated either simultaneously or anger first followed by frustration. These emotions were directed mostly at the students but sometimes also at the situation in which the plagiarism had placed them. For instance, Anna spoke of these emotions emerging concurrently when a student plagiarized: She said,

I get frustrated and angry with that person just because . . . I love helping people, that’s why I’m doing what I do, but when they’re just doing something to beat the system it angers me. So, yeah, I was frustrated and I was fully confident in the fact that I knew he had done it. The frustration was in putting him under my thumb so he couldn’t get out, like pinning you down and making sure that it could be proven because of all of his excuses.

In addition, Hector described feeling frustrated with a student whose actions negatively impacted the class climate and threatened to impact the work of his other students:

I remember being frustrated that, “Why did he make this happen in front of everybody?” because, you know, we worked really hard to get this nice environment going on, and I don’t know if it’s going to put a ding in it or not, but even the chance that it would seems unfair to those other 19 students.
In contrast, Victoria’s frustration was not accompanied by anger; however, she wrote, "I do often feel frustrated that previous instruction (whether from me or others) hasn’t worked.”

**Compassionate Emotions: Empathy and Sadness.** In addition to anger, resentment, disappointment, and frustration, participants sometimes described feeling two other externally-focused emotions directed toward students: empathy and sadness. These two emotions, however, appeared to be evidence of far more compassionate feelings. Of the 13 emotions participants described, empathy was by far the most often discussed.

When talking about students who’d plagiarized in their courses, many participants said they related to the struggles students face in their beginning years of college. In particular, one participant shared what it was like to return to college and get her degree as an older student. She recalled, “just being completely overwhelmed trying to do all my courses.” She told me this perspective makes her empathize most with her students who come from non-traditional backgrounds like hers and that these empathetic feelings make it particularly hard for her when a student plagiarizes.

One participant, who often discussed his experiences with international students, spoke more than anyone else about feeling empathy. He seemed particularly sensitive to their struggle to succeed while trying to learn English in an educational system vastly different from the one they were used to. He readily acknowledged how difficult writing from sources can be for international students, who, he explained, are often from a culture that has strikingly different views of source use and ownership of words. Because he had taught English in another country for many years, he said he knew what it was like “to be a fish out of water.” This personal experience, like the instructor who had been a
non-traditional student, appeared to give him a particularly compassionate view of students.

Likewise, Robert, who recalled initially feeling angry when two students in the same class turned in identical papers, spoke of experiencing a variety of emotions, all of which came to a head when the plagiarizing student refused to admit she had copied her classmate’s paper. Although other participants recalled feeling anger or other negative emotions when students obstinately refused to admit wrongdoing, Robert wrote in his pre-interview response, “At that point, my primary emotion became sadness that she felt she couldn’t back down, couldn’t lose face by admitting her mistake.” Likewise, Charlie spoke of his complex range of emotions, including empathy and sadness, when confronting a student with her plagiarized work. “I already felt sorry for her that she had done this,” he explained.

These students, you know this, are under a lot of pressure, a lot of pressure. It’s really hard; first-year students. So, I was really feeling sorry for her that she, um, sunk to this level, and I was curious and a little bit anxious about how she was going to react because I’ve had students fight me psychologically, verbally, you know, some even blustering as if they’re going to hit me. So I was bracing for her to be really upset and angry. When she immediately collapsed into weeping and sorrow I was really surprised. I was relieved because she did it, it was really clear that we caught her, and so there’s no doubt it was plagiarism, and I wanted to help her. She needed help, to just talk about what she had done, um, and what are the writing skill or reading skill problems that got her into this mess in the first place, you know. So, it was, it was interesting. I was surprised at how complicated my
feelings were.

Charlie told me that after this incident, the student never again returned to class and eventually dropped the course. This surprised him, he said, “and I felt sorry for her again; I was ready to work with her.”

**Emotions Directed at Self**

In addition to emotions that were directed toward students, participants described experiencing many emotions that were internally focused; that is, they were directed at themselves rather than at their students. These emotions included hurt, betrayal, cynicism, guilt, failure, anxiety, and stress. I further clustered these emotions into three subcategories based on what triggered the emotion: student behavior, the instructor’s own actions, or negative physical sensations.

**Emotions Triggered by Student Behavior: Hurt, Betrayal, and Cynicism.** Although they may have initially felt one emotion, such as anger or frustration, several participants described ultimately feeling deeply hurt by their students’ plagiarism. For example, Ben characterized one experience as “uniquely hurtful since it’s a violation of other students’ rights, it’s a violation of the author’s rights, it’s a violation of the instructor’s rights, and it’s a violation of the institution.” Similarly, Charlie described an instance when a student of his copied a friend’s essay nearly verbatim. “It was very dismaying,” he said. “I felt hurt, wounded by this student’s dishonesty.”

One participant spoke far more than the others about the hurt she experiences when students plagiarize. In one situation, her feeling began as frustration but evolved into hurt. She explained, “every time I’ve ever had a student inadvertently or purposefully plagiarize they’ve admitted it right away and we move on.” However, in
this instance, even though the instructor had found clear evidence of a matching source text, the student adamantly denied having plagiarized. “And that’s where it turned from anger to hurt,” she explained. “It wasn’t so much that she plagiarized,” she said. “It was the fact that she decided to fight it and deny it” all the way to the university’s Office of Community Standards and Student Conduct. “It was profoundly hurtful when she refused to acknowledge her plagiarism,” she wrote in her pre-interview response, “even after I said she would be given the opportunity to redo the essay if she admitted her plagiarism.”

Robert summed up many participants’ feelings when he said, “I think there is a sense, whether it’s rational or not, that, um, we’re being dissed. The student thinks they can get away with something.” This situation caused some participants to feel angry, but for others, the anger was accompanied by feelings of betrayal. For example, Ben lamented how some of his students’ plagiarism had become “very methodical,” and that the excessive efforts they put into cheating ultimately became for him “a personal betrayal.” Likewise, Ricki described a situation when a student, whom she had spent considerable energy working with, plagiarized. She said the extra time devoted to working with this student and the empathy she felt toward her,

added a different element to the anger, you know, a sense of betrayal because this was somebody that I did have a good relationship with, who I had been working with, and who I thought to be, you know, a good student . . . and I had gone out of my way in some cases to get to know her . . . and help her.

Likewise, several participants described at length how their frequent experiences with plagiarism over the years had made them feel cynical about teaching writing and
about higher education in general. One participant told me that she had instances of plagiarism in her composition courses almost every semester of her many years of teaching, and in recent years, she had begun to feel that students have little sense of remorse about the plagiarism. “When they don’t feel bad about plagiarizing, only about getting caught,” she explained,

it makes me feel very cynical . . . . Just what are we doing here at universities in general, quite honestly? Like what are we about here? If I have students who are able to sit through my classes and have been in all these other classes, and to me it’s like, what have they taken away from this? If they don’t understand something as basic as when you steal other people’s ideas and words, that’s a bad thing. Like if they don’t even get that then it just makes me feel very cynical about the value of what we’re doing.

In particular, Ben mentioned feeling cynical more than any other participant. He spoke of feeling extremely depressed by what he felt was a current culture of “shallow cynicism.” He seemed to recognize this emotion as characterizing both his own attitude toward teaching writing and his students’ attitude about the values of higher education. Ben told me in the last several semesters, he had several instances of plagiarism but chose to ignore them: “I was sick of it by then because it had been so pervasive,” he explained.

So, to me, [plagiarism] chips away at the very most fundamental aspect of what we’re doing, which is trying to advance human learning and [being] curious about things. The vast quantity of students are just going through the motions. They want a degree and a job and that’s it.
This cynicism, he readily admitted, had seriously tainted the last few years of his teaching.

**Emotions Triggered by One’s Own Actions: Guilt and Failure.** Several participants described feeling other inwardly-directed emotions, namely guilt and failure. Rather than associating the cause of these emotions on the student or the plagiarism itself, instructors directed these feelings toward themselves. In situations like this, instructors felt they had not adequately defended academic integrity, had been ineffective in the classroom, or had been too lenient with students. One participant lamented that earlier in his career he had too easily let a student off the hook who’d plagiarized, allowing him to rewrite the paper. When the student was later convicted of a serious crime, he blamed himself, saying, “I really helped to enable this student’s dishonesty.”

Some questioned their efficacy as instructors, wondering if poor teaching had somehow led their students to plagiarize. For example, Victoria told me that an important part of her job was teaching students how to avoid plagiarizing, so when students plagiarized,

> a part of me also felt like, you know, have I failed in some way that [the student] would think that [plagiarism] was okay to do. Did I miss a step or did I not explain well? You know, it’s odd to turn the blame onto yourself . . . . I must have messed up in some way for this to have happened.

Later, when describing another incident of plagiarism, she admitted feeling that both her syllabus and her assignments had led to plagiarism because she felt they weren’t creative or interesting enough for today’s students.
Similarly, Hector recalled how in his early years, he often felt he had failed to sufficiently teach students about plagiarism. “I’m supposed to be teaching them not to [plagiarize],” he recalled during his interview.

I thought, if these students are coming to class, and they’re showing up, and they’re doing the work and they’re trying to do the right thing, and they have got an intentional plagiarism, then I’m not teaching them enough and not providing enough materials and resources. Because, if they’re trying and not getting it, it’s because I haven’t taken them through, right? We need more activities, we need more practice, we need more examples, they need more resources. They need another chance.

While many participants recalled feeling they were somehow at fault when their students plagiarized, not all did. In sharp contrast to those who experienced self-blaming emotions, Ricki, told me she never assumes the blame when her students plagiarize:

I make sure the [plagiarism] policy is very clearly explained, that we go over what it is, we have lessons on it, they have lots of materials and resources. I’m very much about encouraging students to claim their education and that education is not this thing, you know, like a PEZ dispenser, you know, click my head open and here’s my education. So, no, I’ve never for a moment felt like it was my fault that they chose to plagiarize.

**Emotions Triggered by Negative Physical Sensations: Anxiety and Stress.**

The final category of emotions participants recalled experiencing includes negative emotions that were trigged by or accompanied by unpleasant physical sensations. Participants described feeling anxiety and stress, particularly in anticipation of having to
confront a student with an accusation of plagiarism. Because these emotions were tied to internal sensations, I categorized them as internally-focused.

Robert characterized these emotions in a way that mirrored many participants’ feelings in the days and hours leading up to “the confrontation”:

Anytime I have a meeting like that where I have to confront a student with something like this, I’m anxious and nervous ahead of time because I don’t know how it’s going to go. I don’t want to do it. I guess as the meeting goes on, I calm down, but it’s still not easy for me.

Some participants noted that anxiety and stress were particularly memorable emotions from their first few plagiarism experiences as writing teachers. For example, both Anna and Vincent recalled their anxiety as new instructors having to accuse a student of plagiarizing. Anna remembered how naïve she felt when dealing with plagiarism during her first year of teaching and the incredible stress she was under to handle the process correctly when meeting with the student. Even after a decade of teaching, Laura and Victoria both described feeling extremely stressed and anxious after discovering plagiarism. Knowing that a confrontation with the student was inevitable, they both talked of feeling physically sick. For example, Laura explained, “In the pit of my stomach, I just get nauseated. I hate it, I hate it, because I know what this is going to mean.” Indeed, in her written explanation of her feelings during one particularly lengthy plagiarism experience, a participant wrote, “At all points of the process, I felt literally sick.”
The Impact of Plagiarism on Identity and Relationships

In addition to identifying the particular emotions participants experienced, I also was interested in exploring how plagiarism and the emotions it evoked altered participants’ sense of professional identity and their relationships on the job. Not surprisingly, the wide range of emotions participants recalled having felt when students plagiarized and the changing nature of those feelings impacted how participants interacted with and responded to their students both in and out of the classroom. In addition, participants wrote and spoke at length about how episodes of plagiarism altered their relationships with administrators as well as with colleagues. I noticed that the changing relationships and interactions with students, administrators, and colleagues were strongly connected to what participants saw as their professional identity as writing instructors.

I identified and categorized three professional identities described by participants in interviews and their pre-interview responses. I labeled these identities nurturer, adversary, and diplomat. Although I will define each in the following subsections, it is important to first note that most instructors had qualities reflecting two or three of these identities at different times while a few had characteristics favoring just one. Thus, some participants fluctuated between identities during and after the plagiarism experience while others appeared to maintain a single professional identity regardless of student plagiarism.

Relationships with Students: The Nurturer

The identity participants described far more often than either of the other two was that of the nurturer. In fact, all but one participant made a point of describing their
writing classes as supportive and their role in the classroom as nurturing students’ development as writers. For some, the nurturer identity was something they made a point of explaining to students when talking to them about plagiarism. For example, Jenn said she assures students that she’s not the plagiarism police:

I always have to tell them right away, “I’m not out to get you,” you know. It’s more of a mentorship than teacher, but you have to work a whole term to get them to understand that and to trust you because every little thing you say, they are defensive.

Similarly, Laura described how she positions herself to her students: “I’m not here to play gotcha,” she explained. “That’s not my goal. My goal is to say, ‘Here’s your safety net. I’m going to try to get you through this.’”

For others, the nurturer identity seemed to emerge from a strong, almost parental, connection with students. For instance, Charlie described the deeply held feelings he has for his students when he said,

I go into the classroom and I look at my 18-year-olds, 19-year-olds, 20-year-olds. They’re little miracles. They are really amazing, and most of them have not been told that. Most of them have not had adults or teachers, priests, or ministers or rabbis tell them that. And, I get tremendous reward from being the one to do that.

In addition, a few participants described having more than one identity. For example, Anna told me she assumes two distinct roles in her classroom, the primary one as nurturer. When talking with students, she said,

I always tell them, “Until you give me your final draft, I’m your helper, I’m not your grader. I’m your helper that knows what your grader’s going to do, so I will
do everything I can to make you feel confident that your grader is going to be happy with the work you’re doing.”

When plagiarism occurred in this nurturing environment, participants reacted in one of two ways: They became more nurturing or they saw the plagiarism as a betrayal and became far less nurturing. The following subsections will describe these reactions and their consequences.

**Positive Reactions from the Nurturer Identity.** Sometimes when plagiarism occurred in the classrooms of those who saw themselves as nurturers, the act caused instructors to become even more nurturing and supportive of students. For example, Jenn remarked that if students plagiarized in her course, they needed to know that they were in a safe environment and that “we all make mistakes.” Likewise, Julie described the need to reassure students that she would never officially report them or involve judiciary services, noting how important it was for students to feel they could confide in her.

This heightened nurturing identity, despite a student’s plagiarism, seemed to emerge with instructors who had a strong understanding of why students plagiarize. Robert, for example, noted that plagiarism was “not an act of evil. It’s an act of ‘I don’t know what else to do.’” He explained that students feel cornered, and that’s also, to a degree, a form of ignorance . . . . They don’t know what their options are, or they’re afraid that if they admit to ignorance or admit that they don’t have a paper that they’ll just flunk.

Others explained that their students plagiarized simply because they were young and that the cheating was an act of desperation. This sympathetic perspective was evident when Julie described what she sometimes tells her colleagues who are strongly
suspicious of their students:

I have often suggested to people that they, if they can, go back and find something they wrote when they were 19 and see whether it meets their standards now or whether they don’t see things in it that say, “Oh, my goodness, I didn’t think I [plagiarized].” It’s surprising.

Likewise, Vincent said he struggles with the notion some writing instructors have that plagiarism is somehow a “moral wrong” and should have strict academic penalties. Blatant cheating is one thing, he explained, but unintentional plagiarism is quite different. “In those cases,” he said, “I don’t think it warrants the moral response, and I think that’s more where nurturing and guidance is warranted. I mean, what else should we be doing? We’re teachers, right?” he said.

In contrast, some of the instructors who described their professional identity as a nurturer felt they played a role in their students’ plagiarism because they were not supportive enough of their students. This caused these instructors to feel even more nurturing toward their students. For example, Vincent told me plagiarism in his class might really be a reflection of his own inability to properly teach source use. Thus, an act of plagiarism was something that meant he needed to step up his support for students. “If someone has plagiarized in my classes,” he said, “it is nearly always going to be a, ‘You didn’t get this did you? Let’s think about this again. Let’s work through this again. Let me help you avoid this.’” His words reflected that same desire I heard from others who believed they had a duty to nurture students’ growth as writers even when the students faltered.
Nevertheless, in some interviews and written responses, it was clear that participants who had a nurturer identity emotionally struggled to remain supportive when a student plagiarized. The plagiarism, in a sense, had truly tested their professional identity because it threatened their nurturing relationship with students. For instance, Ben told me how his empathetic feelings toward students conflicted with his desire to do what he knew was the right thing as their instructor:

There will be three or four students who were working truly at a second and third grade level--an inability to recognize sentence completeness, you know, you name it . . . . I think it’s very painful, and by the time your [meeting about plagiarism] arrives, I’d like to let them off the hook, and I have to kick myself in the butt and say, “No!”

Like Ben, many others described how difficult, sometimes heart-wrenching, were those one-on-one meetings to confront students with plagiarism, a conversation that commonly ended with the student in tears.

**Negative Reactions from the Nurturer Identity.** On the other hand, for some participants who saw themselves as nurturers, the act of plagiarism occurring in such a supportive environment was a shocking betrayal of trust that significantly altered their professional identity as well as their relationships with students. When participants described, for example, feeling betrayed, angry, or hurt, their language reflected the emotional shift that accompanied this changing professional identity. For instance, Laura described the shock of plagiarism when it was done by a student with whom she’d worked closely: “I’ve been helping [her], and then bam, it’s like, ‘You deliberately chose to break the rules and risk everything.’” Similarly, Jenn characterized the sense of
disloyalty she felt after developing a close working relationship with a student who later plagiarized. She wrote in her pre-interview response, “Ultimately [the student] mistook kindness for weakness and tried to take advantage of me.” Clearly, for these instructors, plagiarism tarnished something they honored and had cultivated: a trusting and nurturing climate.

In addition, several participants who saw their identity as nurturer spoke of feeling hurt when students plagiarized, an emotion that reflected their altered relationship with students. Jenn, for example, told me how hurt she was when a student adamantly denied having committed plagiarism: “Because I work so hard with students to develop a working relationship with them. I was hurt because in my class, I think I’m approachable and she may not have.” Like Jenn, others said they felt hurt not so much by the plagiarism, but by the fact that students hadn’t felt comfortable coming to them for help with their writing or to ask for an extension of the due date.

Ironically, one instructor, Vincent, spoke of feeling guilty about being “overly” supportive of a pair of students who’d plagiarized on an assignment. Rather than give the students a zero, he allowed them to revise the parts of the assignment that they had plagiarized and resubmit the work for a grade. In his interview, Vincent described this act as “making a deal that I’m not necessarily proud of, but I think it was in their best interest.” Now that years have passed since the incident, he still recalled it with misgivings. “I know it was the right thing to do as a person,” he explained, “but the wrong thing to do as a teacher . . . . I think I compromised for myself because [of] my concern for them and their future . . . . I stopped being a teacher, and I enabled something. So, I felt like a bad parent.” As he recalled how ashamed and distant the two
students became after the event, Vincent told me he’d come to believe that even though he’d allowed the students to revise their work, the bond he had created and nurtured with the two students was forever altered.

**Relationships with Students: The Adversary**

In contrast to what many described as a nurturing identity, a good number of participants spoke of how plagiarism had ultimately altered the climate of their classroom, making their role and relationships with students adversarial. One described how repeated plagiarism over the years had made her adversarial “in a lot of ways,” and that students rightly viewed her as their opponent. In addition, some said plagiarism over the years had made them more suspicious about students in general and more cautious about personally investing in their students’ success.

Although acknowledging that students often struggle to write with sources and have many challenges as college students, some participants admitted that plagiarism had hardened their belief that, in the end, many students are dishonest and cheat. Several instructors used the word “police” (both as a noun and a verb) when describing their relationships with students. For example, Jenn said,

> I think I’m sort of a plagiarism police deep down inside . . . . Undercover, yes, I’m suspicious. I have to get a baseline of their writing style, and if they’re writing too well for what I think, you know, I’m suspicious because there are a gazillion ways to cheat.

Others, like Laura, spoke of having a strong dislike for the adversarial identity but came to see this as their inescapable role in the writing classroom. “I don’t play gotcha with students,” she wrote in her pre-interview response, “but sometimes I feel like the
plagiarism police. If I find plagiarism in final papers, I usually consider it deliberate.”

During her interview, Victoria characterized how many participants felt about this unwelcome adversarial position:

> It puts me in a role I’m very uncomfortable with. I don’t like being the heavy or the big authority figure and it doesn’t seem to fit well with the shift in pedagogy more towards, you know, a guide-by-the-side . . . . Yes, we don’t want them to plagiarize, we want them to be skillful and honest and effective in using other people’s ideas, but, really, it starts to shade over into being sort of the censorious, big brotherly . . . . Why am I looking at the whole set of [papers] through this mindset of “You’re all potentially wrong-doers in this room”? They hate this; this is awful!

Likewise, Charlie was strongly emphatic about his dislike of the adversarial role, which he felt pressured to assume in his writing classes. He remarked, “I think the policing, the push to catch people from plagiarizing . . . and it’s all disguised in this morality of integrity. ‘We’re trying to help our students grow morally.’ Hey, it’s bullshit.”

**Relationships with Students: The Diplomat**

After repeatedly recognizing the nurturer and the adversary professional identities in participants’ comments, a third identity emerged, which I labeled “diplomat.” Although they occasionally talked about relationships using language associated with the nurturer (e.g., empathy) and the adversary (e.g., anger), diplomats approached plagiarism by intellectualizing the experience, approaching it in a less emotional way. In other words, those who evinced the diplomat identity took a no-nonsense, practical approach to
their relationships with students when plagiarism occurred. To them, plagiarism was simply a part of the job and did not change how they interacted or related with students. For example, Robert explained,

I can’t think of a time when it wasn’t part of the package, you know. You teach and there’s always that possibility out there, but how much are you going to let it rule or ruin your relationships with your students? I believe life is too short for such nonsense.

Like Robert, several participants were quite conscious of not letting plagiarism “rule or ruin” the relationships they had with students or impact their overall trust in them. Thus, because plagiarism was an anticipated part of a writing teacher’s work, diplomats’ reactions seemed far less entangled with emotions. In some cases, diplomats seemed to be less emotional because they had rationalized plagiarism as part of their students’ natural development and growth as writers. For example, Robert noted,

I see it more as they’re students. By definition they’re learning. By definition they don’t know a lot. So I feel like it’s my job to assume that until they prove otherwise, that they mean well, they’re trying their best. And if they screw up, it’s usually because they don’t know what the rules are.

Importantly, the turmoil that accompanied the student confrontation and academic integrity process, which was significant for nurturers and adversaries, was nearly non-existent for the diplomats. In other words, there was little to no wavering or emotional struggle involved in deciding what steps to take and how to respond when plagiarism was suspected. For example, Ricki told me that “in every case of plagiarism I’ve had, I’ve never made an exception for any student. I always immediately start the process, the
paperwork process, to where they get reported to the office of community standards.”

Thus, diplomats appeared to have no qualms about their position of power in the student-instructor relationship.

From this positionality, diplomats viewed themselves as representatives of the academy and its policies on academic integrity; however, unlike adversaries, they were bridge-builders: They saw their role as teaching students the rules of the academic world in a calm and understanding way. Diplomats’ words suggested that this world was unfamiliar to students, and reacting emotionally would only make relations between those involved worse. Thus, their feelings and actions were characterized by diplomacy: They were loyal and trustworthy to the academy while being even, thoughtful, and fair with students. Vincent characterized this best when he said,

Basically, my identity and the way I represent myself is that I, I make the rules really clear. I make sure that they know they’re not my rules, and they’re not the rules, but this is the institutional policies and procedures of the university.

Participants who had diplomatic characteristics clearly abhorred plagiarism, and, in fact, many initially experienced anger and frustration when discovering it in their students’ writing. However, these instructors were able to quickly neutralize those feelings and become focused on the episode as a practical matter that simply needed to be addressed. For instance, Ricki told me that being tough on students and strictly following the university’s academic integrity process were very much key aspects of her identity. She said it is because she cares so much that she takes a “no excuses” approach when plagiarism occurs. “I’ve spent a lot, just a lot of time thinking about who I want to be as a teacher and who I am,” she said,
and so I think that’s why in [plagiarism] situations, I don’t get flustered, you know, because I’ve thought it through, and the reason why I always follow through is not because I’m detached from it. It’s because I believe, particularly for our students who there hasn’t been that much expected of them in the past, that the best thing that I can do for them is expect the most out of them.

To her, letting a student slide by on plagiarism would be holding him or her to a lower standard, something she eschews.

I noticed as well that several participants who exhibited diplomatic behavior had studied student source use and, thus, were well versed in the complexities of plagiarism and how collaborative writing, peer review, and intertextuality, the inherent connectedness of language and ideas, complicate perceptions of ownership of words and ideas. Roger told me his ideas about source use had evolved over many years and had considerably impacted how he reacts when students plagiarize today. He said,

I came to the conclusion that all language is in conversation. You’re always dealing with sources, even if those sources are not verbal. They may be visual, they may be experiential, but it always comes out of a dissonance, out of a gap.

From his perspective, “if writing exists within the context of ongoing conversations that take place within discourse communities, unintentional plagiarism is always a possibility.” Vincent echoed this sentiment when he wrote in his pre-interview response, “I really have come to have more understanding of the intentions behind plagiarism and the circumstances that cause it. To be honest, we all do it on some level. We are just trained to cover our tracks.” Thus, most of the diplomats had an understanding of how easy it is to plagiarize because of intertextuality. This understanding appeared to allow
them to react in a far more logical than emotional manner.

Hector told me that graduate teaching assistants “get angry and stay angry [about plagiarism], and they lose sleep. And I’m like, ‘That’s not about you, it’s about the student.’” In his words I noticed how some were able to downplay the emotionality attached to incidents of plagiarism by deflecting the focus of attention away from themselves. Thus, plagiarism for diplomats was not about them as teachers but rather just something students sometimes do. Vincent had read and thought deeply about his students’ use of sources. This experience seemed to have cultivated in him a grounded perspective, which helped him approach instances of plagiarism less emotionally: “Every semester I usually encounter two or three instances of plagiarism,” he told me. “The more times it happens the more I’m aware that there are reasons why students plagiarize and it’s quite vain of me, you know, to think that it’s a personal statement about my capacity as a teacher.” Well aware of the tendency for writing teachers to become the “plagiarism police,” Vincent told me he had taken “the coward’s approach” to his role in the classroom. “I am not the police,” he said with a laugh. “I am an informant to the police.”

Roger summarized what I came to identify as an important characteristic of the diplomat identity. To him, a writing teacher’s professional identity exists somewhere between nurturer and adversary: “We have to balance our role as coach,” he explained, that is, our desire to help students, to help them to improve their writing and succeed. We have to balance that with our other role, which is a very real one, which is as the person who is upholding standards.

In his words and those of several other participants, I sensed a measured, emotionally-balanced professional identity. Several spoke of having the qualities of this
identity at certain times in their careers. For example, some described themselves as being quite nurturing or adversarial as beginning writing teachers but had become more diplomatic as they learned more about plagiarism and student behavior.

**Relationships with Administrators**

In addition to altering their sense of professional identity and relationships with students, incidents of plagiarism also altered participants’ relationships with their administrators. A few expressed gratitude to administrators for their support during a plagiarism experience, one for respecting what he called the “sanctity of [the instructor-student] relationship and of the classroom.” However, for the vast majority of participants, plagiarism in their classrooms had generated a strongly negative relationship with administration.

Most expressed a dislike of the academic integrity process, which, like many universities’ procedures, involved multiple forms and many hours of work, particularly if a student chooses to contest the plagiarism accusation. Several spoke of having colleagues who had been “demoralized” and “put on trial themselves” by the judiciary panels and their administrators when they followed the proper channels. One participant, who had taught writing for decades, described a particularly painful experience she had when a student fought a plagiarism accusation all the way through an extensive judicial process. The instructor described how administration tried to pick apart anything that I could have possibly done wrong . . . . They tried to turn it around, and I could see what was happening. [They thought,] “Maybe the instructor didn’t try to work with [the student] enough.” It made me feel terrible because I had worked here a long time when this happened . . . and I felt like my
credibility was being undermined . . . They were practically saying, “Did you abuse [the student] in any way?”

Similarly, another participant recalled in her pre-interview questions a painful experience involving a judicial process that involved what she felt were adversarial administrators. She wrote,

I still remember leaving a room in tears . . . I feel embarrassed by that . . . I do feel my chair at the time felt I was treated badly but also considered that I didn’t do a good job of presenting my case in the hearing.

Experiences like these have taken on near-legendary status with some participants and have had a chilling effect on how they reacted and responded to plagiarism. Some said they are more guarded now about what goes on in their classrooms. One participant told me she would never again “go to the mat over it” and, in fact, would never let others know about any instance of plagiarism in her class. Said one participant, “Part of me didn’t want to take [plagiarism] further up the chain for fear of [others saying], ‘Well, how could you let a student do that?’ Yeah, it can leave you very vulnerable.”

There appeared to be a climate in the department that may have prevented some from reaching out for help if students plagiarize. One participant told me there was an unspoken rule, particularly for part-time and non-tenure-track instructors, not to “rock the boat” or “cause trouble.” “That’s the nature of this game here,” said another. “My colleagues are wonderful, but you want to fly below the radar at all times.” One participant lamented this climate because it impacted her sense of community in the department. She told me she only deals with plagiarism one-on-one with students and never reports it. “I try to maintain distance and work independently because I want to avoid confrontation and
further interaction,” she wrote in her pre-interview response, “which makes me feel less a part of the team.”

**Encouraging Policing and Nurturing.** Nearly all participants expressed frustration with administrators and academic integrity procedures that required them to document and report suspected cases of plagiarism. This process, they explained, involves spending a lengthy amount of time filling out forms, meeting with students and administrators, and sometimes appearing at judicial hearings. Most felt policies clearly encouraged them to be vigilant in spotting plagiarism as well as adversarial in their relationships with students. This dynamic put some at odds with administrators. “We have so much energy,” one participant explained,

and being good in the classroom takes a lot of energy. If I spend some of that energy mistrusting and testing and laying traps for my students, the energy I would have to really get to know them, to really care for them individually, is stolen, and I’m not willing to make that trade, and my experience with my students tells me that I’m making the right choice.

Much more common in the interviews, however, was discussion of how administrators had recently asked composition instructors at the university to provide additional, personal support to students in their courses who might be having trouble with the coursework. In particular, participants described a recent call-to-action from the administration encouraging them to be more nurturing with their students who had plagiarized, despite the existence of a clear academic integrity and plagiarism reporting process. They told me the move was connected to the university’s funding, which was tied to student retention and success. The desire to improve student persistence became
focused on the university’s composition courses, and particular scrutiny was given to those instructors who had failed students, often because of plagiarism.

One participant told me the situation began in a positive way with a good discussion about how everyone can help students succeed, but then the conversation morphed into directions for how composition instructors should be more compassionate with their students. The bottom line, several explained, was that instructors were asked to be more nurturing and accommodating when students struggled with writing and plagiarism. Among other suggestions, instructors were asked to reach out to students with phone calls and texts to remind them of assignments and to give due date extensions, second chances, and other accommodations (as a way to prevent last-minute plagiarism by desperation). For the first time, instructors who failed students in a composition course were required to write a report explaining why they had failed the student and detailing what they as the instructor could have done differently to avoid that outcome.

The encouraged nurturing was a bitter pill for some. Those who spoke with me about this directive were sharply critical. “Ultimately they wanted us to do back handstands, flips, cartwheels to accommodate,” said one. Another summed up the experience this way:

Some of us took a pretty hard line, saying these students are supposed to be adults and part of what we’re doing here is supposed to be teaching them how to be successful adults in the world. And, so, it got pretty contentious, and those of us who took a harder line in not giving the students repeated second chances and things like that, were . . . indirectly accused of not caring about our students.
Another participant agreed, telling me that “It wasn’t directly said but the implication was certainly there that we just didn’t care enough.” Several instructors who had vocally opposed this new initiative said they felt their relationship with administration had been tarnished. Said one,

I’m certainly willing to, and I constantly am critiquing what I’m doing and how I can do it better. But I did not buy into the idea that those changes would make me a better teacher or be helpful for my students.

**Relationships with Colleagues**

Plagiarism not only impacted participants’ relationships with administrators; it also played a role in changing how they felt about and interacted with their department colleagues. By far the majority of participants described plagiarism having negatively impacted these relationships, and the reason most often cited was that their colleagues weren’t vigilant enough in pursuing plagiarism. Some clearly suspected that their colleagues were being “soft” on plagiarism or looking the other way when spotting plagiarized work. For example, Ricki noted that plagiarism in her courses had negatively affected her relationships with colleagues because many did not take plagiarism seriously for a variety of reasons. “I understand we’re overwhelmed,” she explained,

particularly those of us who are teaching multiple freshmen classes with all these students, and so I understand why we’re not looking as hard as we could. But I do think in some cases it’s, it’s willful ignorance that we don’t want to see it, so we don’t. Because if you do see it then you’ve got to do something about it, and it’s a lot more work.
She explained how her irritation with colleagues rises when students tell her that they’ve been writing this way for years, and instructors have never made an issue of it. “So that makes me angry with my colleagues,” she said, “because they’re actively condoning this type of dishonesty.”

Likewise, Laura summed up many participants’ feelings in response to their peers’ actions when she wrote in her pre-interview response,

Sometimes I can’t help feeling that I’m working harder than some of them do to prevent plagiarism from occurring in the first place, and I’m more likely to hold students’ feet to the fire when I see even traces of plagiarism than some of them do.

Most agreed that appearing soft on plagiarism was a consequence of their heavy workload as writing teachers. For example, Ben said, “Unless you want to work 80 hours a week, you better be ready to be cheated against. Uh, if you want to maintain standards, it’s going to take a lot of time and a lot of work.” He believes, though, that many instructors act like they don’t know plagiarism is happening in their courses because of this dynamic. “My colleagues’ ability to take the time to check sources has, I suspect, reverted to the inadequate range,” he wrote.

On the other hand, Julie expressed frustration with colleagues because they seemed to be finding so much plagiarism in their students’ writing. “I don’t know if I’m just missing things,” she said,

but it always seems to me that colleagues of mine run into it more than I do . . . .

They also don’t seem to be as burdened by quite as much grading. And so it seems to me, they may not be looking at as many drafts.
She also told me that some writing instructors don’t change their assignments as often as they should and that this was likely the cause of so much student plagiarism.

In contrast, several participants said they were disappointed with some colleagues because, although they respected their peers’ decisions, plagiarism had made these individuals unreasonably adversarial. From this perspective, participants felt they were being nurturing and supportive of students, but their peers were “out to get them.” Some spoke negatively of how their colleagues will advise others to “just drop them” when students plagiarize, or will rally the department with a call of “let’s be hard asses about it.”

**The Impact of Plagiarism on Teaching**

Participants told me that plagiarism not only impacted their professional identity and relationships with others, but it also had changed their pedagogy. In particular, they spoke of how plagiarism and the emotional work it involved had altered how they spend class time, the instruction they provide about source use and plagiarism avoidance, their classroom management policies, their assignments, and their grading. It was difficult, however, to determine when changes to pedagogy were the result of the emotions of plagiarism and when changes were the result of disciplinary advances in pedagogy and an improved understanding of the causes and complexity of plagiarism. Nevertheless, the existence of plagiarism had clearly had an impact on the choices these participants made about what they did in their composition classrooms and how they felt about those choices.
Impact on Classroom Management

In his prewriting form, Hector explained how his students’ unintentional plagiarism impacted his pedagogy. He wrote,

If one of my students who is engaged in the course (has been attending, turning in work, trying to perform well) plagiarizes unintentionally, I generally take that as possibly [a] fault in my instruction. Why would a student who has been trying unintentionally plagiarize? – because I haven’t provided enough instructions, materials, or practice for them to have gained strategies and skills not to . . . . If a student really doesn’t understand why they have plagiarized, I need to give them more help, practice, guidance, and outside resources.

Nearly all participants shared this perspective, describing instances of how plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, had caused them to revise the kinds of information and resources they provided to students throughout the course as well as the time they spent talking about plagiarism and how to avoid it. Anna told me she does this “because I know that if I don’t help them now somebody else will penalize them for it later.”

Several spoke of how incidents of plagiarism had altered their classroom management strategies, beginning with the language used in the syllabus. For example, Laura laughed when describing how her once single-page syllabus has now grown to 11-pages, due in part to additional paragraphs on academic integrity policies and plagiarism. She, like several others, mentioned the importance of the syllabus as a tool now used to set the “ground rules” regarding plagiarism and its consequences.

Laura told me she begins talking about plagiarism on the first day of class and spends time on it early in the course by having students work as a class to summarize a
short passage without plagiarizing. “I once had a class that nearly mutinied when I did that,” she said with a laugh. “They were absolutely outraged that I would not let them use words and phrases [from the original passage].” The activity allowed her to work through what seemed, at least to students, an insurmountable challenge. Participants described other class activities they put in place to teach about plagiarism, such as quizzes, online exercises, and group work. For example, one participant told me she has students work in groups to analyze and evaluate scenarios that might involve plagiarism.

I got the sense from what participants described that they believed an effective instructor could not simply tell students not to plagiarize--it required a good deal of discussion and classwork. These efforts, explained Victoria, take the pressure off of students to cheat because what she really tries to stress is how to build a skill (e.g., effective use of sources) before being evaluated on that skill. Similarly, Roger told me how his pedagogy has evolved over the years so that he now focuses far more on getting students engaged in active, critical reading, note taking, summary skills, and synthesis. “These are hard, really tough [skills],” he explained, “but once you’re teaching that way then you’re teaching plagiarism avoidance.”

Likewise, many instructors told me that because of student plagiarism in their courses, they had shifted some of the writing that students do to in-class writing. This way, explained one participant, you can be sure the writing produced is by the student who is in your class. “If you had everything done out of class,” she explained, “mom could be writing all your papers.” Julie recalled meeting a former student many years after she had been enrolled in Julie’s online writing course. The student admitted that her husband had done all of the coursework including writing all of the papers. Although she
was surprised and saddened by the confession, Julie told me there was probably no way of completely avoiding this kind of plagiarism; however, she and several other participants said that student plagiarism has greatly increased the need to get to know their students’ written “voices.” For many, this had become essential because any quick change in voice was a red flag that the student might be plagiarizing. Participants explained that in addition to in-class writing, they’d adopted several new strategies to learn their students’ voices, such as writing on a Facebook page and in journals, blogs, and forums.

In addition, nearly all participants said they now scaffold their writing assignments, requiring students to turn in work at multiple stages of a writing process. This was done not only because it has become a best practice in writing pedagogy but also because they felt it reduces plagiarism. For example, Jenn wrote, “To me the idea is to hook students early in the process so they don’t try to put something together at the last minute or give in to the temptation of plagiarism via the internet.” Robert agreed, saying,

I guess ultimately, if you’re teaching writing the way we teach writing, where you are butting into students’ process, helping them along and doing a lot of work in class and everything like that, it’s really hard to suddenly have a paper drop out of the sky.

In addition, only a few participants mentioned using plagiarism detection technology, like Turnitin.com. Some said they now required students to submit their drafts to Turnitin.com as a way to check for plagiarism before the final draft was turned in. One said it was only used on final drafts as a way to help quickly spot matches in students’ work. No one expressed feeling negative or positive about Turnitin. In fact,
most just mentioned that they used it because it was there as an automatic setting in their online learning management system and not because it was a pedagogical choice.

**Impact on Assignments and Grading**

Several participants described making sure to create assignments that were too difficult to plagiarize and too hard to find papers written in response to them online. Laura said that she now tries to tie her assignments to a current event or something in the student’s own experience to cut down on the temptation to cheat. Similarly, Victoria told me that plagiarism in her courses has been sort of a good sort of shake-up for me. I don’t have to do this in this old-school way, the way I was taught. I can take advantage more of the different sort of, uh, pedagogies out there as well as technology out there. So I’ve moved to a whole lot more multimedia projects . . . . More of a menu of projects that they could pick from.

Victoria told me she is now quite deliberate about what she assigns, but doesn’t approach this by revising existing assignments to make them “plagiarism proof.” Rather, she explained, she sometimes asks herself, “‘If I were a student, would I actually want to write this assignment?’ and I was like, ‘Actually, no. I’d find this a stupid class. I’d be frustrated and annoyed.’” This self-reflection caused her to reevaluate the topics as well as the modes and genres of assignments she requires in all of her writing courses.

Because of widespread plagiarism in her past courses, Laura now requires students to turn in copies of all of their sources along with their final drafts. The practice has benefits, as it allows her to carefully check students’ writing for plagiarism against their sources; however, the drawbacks for her as an instructor are many. “I am a stickler
now…I read every one of their sources . . . but it is a terrible burden. I mean, I spend hours of my own time” reading sources and checking drafts, she said. Likewise, several participants told me that plagiarism had caused them to reevaluate the points given on research-based writing projects. For example, Ricki now puts far less weight on the final draft. Much more of the student’s grade is based on how much he or she has taken part in prewriting, scaffolded activities, and drafts.

**Gender and Responses to Plagiarism**

Lastly, I was interested in discovering what ways, if any, gender played a role in participants’ emotional responses to plagiarism. Only one participant specifically called attention to her gender in her interview. This occurred when Anna recalled an incident of plagiarism in her first course as a graduate teaching assistant (TA). She was very young, and the male student who plagiarized was considerably older than she. Anna told me she tried to talk with the student about what he had done in a tactful manner. However, she said,

I do recall feeling intimidated at some point because of either his anger or his, I don’t know that he threatened me at all, but I do recall that he kind of pulled out a different personality on me at some point.

When I asked if she had been frightened by the student’s behavior, she said yes, so scared, in fact, that she asked her supervising professor to sit in on her next meeting with the student. Normally we just handle [instances of plagiarism] ourselves because if it can be handled, it can be handled with us,” she explained. “But then that’s why I just said, ‘Okay, I need somebody male and more in charge than I am to deal with this.’” Anna’s discussion of her feelings of vulnerability as a young female instructor confronting an
older male student with plagiarism was the only direct mention of gender in the data.

**Gender and Emotions**

To determine whether there was a difference between male and female instructors’ emotions during a plagiarism experience, I looked closely at the emotional language male and female participants used in our conversations and their written responses. One point of interest is how often an emotion was never or rarely mentioned in the written responses but was frequently discussed in the interviews, even though the general questions posed in both contexts were the same. For example, although male participants frequently told me about feeling angry when a student plagiarized, none expressed this in their writing. Likewise, female participants mentioned anger just a few times in writing but quite often during the interviews. In addition, empathy was only mentioned once by a female participant in her written response; however, in the interviews, empathy was mentioned far more often than any other emotion by female participants.

In fact, empathy was the most commonly described emotion by both genders. In addition to empathy, females more often spoke of feeling anger and hurt whereas male participants more often spoke of feeling anger and frustration. Interestingly, females spent time talking about their emotions far more than male participants. Females often talked at length about feeling anger, resentment, disappointment, frustration, and betrayal whereas, with the exception of anger, these were rarely mentioned by male participants.

Sometimes it was difficult to get my male participants to describe their feelings, even when this was specifically asked for in interview and in pre-interview questions. For example, when asked near the beginning of the interview to describe the emotions
they experienced when a student plagiarized, several male instructors simply continued to describe what their student had done when he or she had plagiarized. To encourage male participants to respond to this question, I often had to ask about their emotions several times in several different ways, and it was often later in the interview that male participants began to name the emotions they had experienced. In contrast, female participants did not hesitate to describe their emotions when I asked these questions in interviews and in their written responses.

**Gender and Professional Identity**

Once the categories of nurturer, adversary, and diplomat emerged, I revisited the transcripts and pre-interview responses, noting when and in what ways male and female participants described their feelings and behavior using language that characterized one of the professional identities. Females frequently described possessing nurturing qualities when talking and writing about their feelings. Although males also described being nurturing, they did so far less than females. Likewise, females often spoke of feeling adversarial with students whereas males rarely mentioned this. The only identity that males spoke of more than females was that of the diplomat. In fact, the majority of male participants described having characteristics of the diplomat either always or at certain times during their careers.

**Summary**

In this chapter, I described the findings from pre-interview responses from and interviews with 12 composition instructors at one university. The chapter began with a description of participants. Next I shared the 13 emotions they discussed (anger, resentment, disappointment, frustration, empathy, sadness, hurt, betrayal, cynicism, guilt,
failure, anxiety, and stress). The most commonly mentioned emotions in interviews and pre-interview questions were empathy, anger, and frustration. These emotions were grouped into two main categories based on to whom the emotion was directed, either to students or to the instructors themselves. With the exception of empathy, all of the emotions participants recalled were negative, or undesirable and stress-inducing.

Next, I discussed the impact of plagiarism on participants’ sense of professional identity as well as their relationships with students, administrators, and colleagues. In this section, I identified three distinct professional identities in the language of participants: nurturer, adversary, and diplomat. Some participants shifted between two or three identities at different times while others described themselves as maintaining a single identity. By far the most often discussed identity was that of the nurturer. When plagiarism occurred in nurturers’ classes, the experience caused some to become more nurturing while others blamed themselves and their teaching for the plagiarism.

Some participants also described having an adversarial professional identity characterized by an oppositional relationship with students. For these instructors, students were seen as suspects while the instructors saw themselves as the police. Most participants who were adversarial expressed a strong dislike of this positionality.

In contrast, participants with diplomat characteristics approached plagiarism as an inevitable part of their job as writing teachers. Perhaps because of this, they approached the situation less emotionally, managing the plagiarism and its consequences as practical matters needing attention. Diplomats also seemed to rationalize plagiarism as part of students’ growth as writers. Participants with these qualities appeared loyal and trustworthy to the academy, seeing themselves as its representatives who were tasked
with teaching students the rules of academic integrity.

In addition, this chapter described how the emotions of plagiarism impacted participants’ relationships with administrators. Nearly all said they felt plagiarism had negatively impacted these relationships. Some thought administrators had not been supportive of them when students plagiarized while others described getting mixed messages from administrators that were unsettling. In these cases, administrators had encouraged nurturing behavior from instructors while simultaneously demanding that they take an adversarial stance regarding plagiarism and the academic integrity process.

Plagiarism also negatively impacted participants’ relationships with colleagues. Some felt that their colleagues were not being tough enough on plagiarists and had avoided accusing students of cheating for fear this would add to an already overstressed workload. Others were uncomfortable with their colleagues, seeing them as overly adversarial and distrusting of students.

This chapter also detailed the changes participants had made in their classrooms because of plagiarism. These changes varied widely, from lengthening syllabi to revising assignments and grading schemes, to adding different types of writing, to increasing how assignments were sequenced and scaffolded.

Chapter IV concluded with a discussion of how gender played a role in participants’ responses to plagiarism. Females discussed emotions far more than males. In addition, female participants described having the qualities of the nurturer and adversary far more often than males. In contrast, male participants described possessing qualities of the diplomat far more frequently than females.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Introduction

For this study, my purpose was to understand the kinds of emotions composition instructors experience when their students plagiarize and how those responses impact their teaching, their relationships with others, and their professional identity. In addition, I was curious to learn if emotional responses were different for male and female instructors. My data sources included written pre-interview responses and one-on-one interviews with 12 composition instructors. In the previous chapter, I detailed the findings of my research, including what types of emotions participants experienced, how those feelings altered their sense of professional identity and relationships with students, administrators, and colleagues, as well as how plagiarism affected their pedagogy. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the findings related to participant gender.

In this chapter, I discuss my conclusions and their implications and make recommendations in light of this research. My discussion of findings is context dependent. That is, it will be up to my readers to decide if my conclusions are potentially transferable to other contexts. I base my discussion in this chapter on the findings described in Chapter IV, which include the specific emotions participants recalled experiencing and how those emotions impacted their relationships, identity, and
pedagogy. This chapter concludes with suggestions for future research on the topic of instructor emotion and plagiarism.

**Conclusions and Implications**

Although the only published study I found on plagiarism and instructor emotion (Robillard, 2007) focuses solely on anger, my findings suggest that composition instructors experienced and expressed a wide range of emotions when plagiarism happens, those emotions were changeable, and instructors consciously worked to manage those emotions. For many instructors, this involved significant stress (both mental and physical) and emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983), impacting their relationships with others, their pedagogy, and their sense of professional identity as writing teachers.

My findings suggest that several factors complicated a composition instructor’s emotional responses to plagiarism. First, instructors genuinely believe it is their responsibility to help students become better academic writers and that a significant part of their job involves teaching students how to ethically and effectively incorporate source material into their writing. The composition instructors I spoke with sensed that professionals across the disciplines were relying on them to teach beginning college students the concepts of plagiarism and academic integrity, and this was a responsibility most take quite seriously. Many instructors had considerably altered their pedagogy in light of the perceived plagiarism epidemic in higher education, adding lessons and activities, changing assessments, scaffolding projects, and generally spending more time in class talking about plagiarism, how to avoid it, and what the punishments for plagiarism involve. All of these changes have added to instructors’ workload as well as their investment in the course material and their students. As such, when plagiarism
happened, composition instructors often reacted emotionally and with great concern. Second, composition instructors received conflicting messages from students, administrators, colleagues, and the writing studies discipline about what their role should be in the writing classroom. Working to adhere to these competing role expectations added to the instructor’s emotional stress when plagiarism occurred. Third, some writing instructors were aware of the scholarship on source use and the many complex, multilayered concepts of plagiarism, and this knowledge conflicted with institutional requirements that they treat plagiarism as if it were a single, fixed entity. Thus, when plagiarism occurred in the composition classroom, many instructors were well aware there could be multiple reasons, and therefore, being required to respond to all plagiarism offenses equally was, for some, emotionally problematic. These conditions and others that will be discussed in this chapter vastly exacerbated composition instructors’ emotional responses to plagiarism. Equally troublesome, my findings show that all but one emotion experienced during this time were negatively charged; thus, having a student plagiarize, though commonly anticipated, was an unwanted--often dreaded--episode in a writing teacher’s professional life.

**The Emotions of Plagiarism are Numerous and Changeable**

The most common and lasting emotion for instructors in this study was empathy, the only emotion that is not a negative one. According to participants, empathy toward students often emerged when a composition instructor developed a deep understanding of the struggles of today’s college students as well as how complicated writing with sources can be. Some instructors had a solid, almost unwavering feeling of compassion for and understanding of their students, and these feelings were not shaken despite an occurrence
of plagiarism. For others, their sense of empathy was tested when students plagiarized, and some struggled emotionally to remain supportive.

As the etymology of the word implies, emotion is rarely static. My findings suggest that instructors’ emotions typically shifted from their initial feeling when suspecting plagiarism in a student’s text, changing sometimes multiple times over the course of the plagiarism experience. This shifting of feeling reflected the concept of emotions as being fluid and adaptive (Hochschild, 1979, 1983). Most instructors in my study initially reacted with feelings directed externally toward the student. When realizing a student had plagiarized, they felt anger, resentment, disappointment, or frustration. Many participants were angry and resentful for various reasons but particularly from the sense that the student violated the instructor’s trust or that the act was a personal affront, adding to an already overstressed workload. Some felt disappointed in their students and with what they saw as a great loss of students’ potential, or they felt frustrated that their teaching wasn’t effective or that the act of plagiarism ruined the class climate of trust.

But rarely did participants who told me they were, for example, initially angry at their students remain angry. Rather, the initial emotion changed to other feelings, such as empathy and sadness for the student and the predicament he or she was in. Some instructors were saddened when students refused to back down and admit they had plagiarized despite indisputable evidence, knowing full well the lengthy judicial process that would result. Others shifted to internally-focused emotions, including hurt, betrayal, and cynicism. In these situations, instructors felt wounded by a student’s plagiarism, sensing that the trusting relationship they had built was seriously harmed by the student’s
actions. Some instructors who had experienced considerable student plagiarism reacted by questioning the overall purpose of higher education as well as the value of their work as writing teachers.

Many instructors shifted from their initial emotions to other internally-focused emotions, including guilt and failure, which arose when they felt they had not performed effectively as teachers or had been too soft or too hard on their students. A few internally-focused emotions were so strongly felt that they resulted in negative physical sensations. In these cases, instructors experienced stress from worrying about what the plagiarism would mean for their work life, or they felt anxiety, particularly in anticipation of the conference in which they needed to accuse their student of plagiarizing.

**Emotions are Managed**

From the interviews and participants’ written responses, I found that the emotional shifts that occur during a plagiarism experience are not automatic but rather occurred when instructors consciously attempted to adhere to feeling rules (Hochschild, 1979) or the emotional display rules (Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987) of the workplace. These rules involve the social conventions and norms that exist about which emotions are acceptable in particular contexts. Thus, emotional shifts indicated that the instructor was working to suppress emotions he or she felt were unacceptable in the context of the writing classroom (e.g., anger, guilt) and evoke emotions believed to be more in keeping with how a writing teacher should feel. The work involved in this emotional management process was emotional labor (Hochschild, 1983), which can take its toll on an employee over time (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Grandey, 2000; Hochschild, 1983; Morris & Feldman, 1996). So, just like participants in Hochschild’s (1983) study of
Delta employees who worked to manage their emotions with customers, the composition instructors in my study expended energy deliberately controlling what emotions were felt, how deeply they were felt, to whom they were revealed, and in what context their existence was appropriate.

One of the main emotional display rules of the composition classroom suggests that writing teachers have empathy for their students (McLeod, 1995; Richmond, 2002). This emotion, which was recalled by nearly all participants during interviews, may have reflected their attempt to adhere to the emotional expectations of a writing teacher. When plagiarism occurred in an empathetic environment and an instructor felt, for example, anger or resentment, there could be substantial emotional dissonance (Middleton, 1989). Some instructors successfully maintained and evoked empathetic emotions during this time, which they displayed to others, even though they may have felt resentful inside.

However, remaining empathetic when one’s students have plagiarized was challenging for some instructors, especially for those who had taught writing for many years or who had experienced considerable plagiarism from their students. Some participants spoke of being weary of having to deal with plagiarism. This was occasionally evidenced by a shift from feeling empathy for students to feeling cynical or disappointed about students in general and the work writing instructors must do. This finding confirms earlier research that showed the cumulative effect of emotional dissonance over time can lead to job burnout (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993; Morris & Feldman, 1987).

In contrast, there is an equally strong display rule in education that anger is an inappropriate emotion for teachers (Cowie, 2003; Winograd, 2003), and in fact, anger
was rarely mentioned in any participants’ written responses. However, during interviews, a majority told me they felt angry when their students plagiarized, and it was one of the emotions that was the most often recalled in our conversations. The display rule that anger is inappropriate and should be suppressed in the classroom might have made an instructor hesitant to admit in writing to experiencing this emotion in certain contexts, as Robillard (2007) has shown. From the participants’ perspective, written responses are a more permanent record of their words, and some may not have wanted to commit in writing to feeling angry, particularly at students.

Second, at the time they wrote their responses, the participants did not know me well, and, therefore, I had not yet developed a trusting relationship with them. This trust was built during the interviews, as I shared my own experiences and background. Because I was able to foster a trusting relationship at that time, many spoke openly of their anger toward students who plagiarized. Thus, instructors were managing what emotions they felt were justified and correct based on the context (in writing or verbally during an interview) and the audience (their level of trust in this researcher).

**Emotions Determine Relationships and Professional Identity**

The findings of this study indicate that participants were well aware of the paradox in the writing classroom that encouraged them to be both nurturing and adversarial with their students. Ironically, given the emotional rule against anger in the classroom, the standard institutional response to plagiarism, emboldened by the growing business of plagiarism detection technology, tells instructors that anger and aggressive pursuit are the correct responses when students plagiarize. And, there often exists an equally strong pursue-and-punish plagiarism culture advocated among department
colleagues. In stark contrast to this is the persistent myth of the writing teacher as a midwife liberating students’ voices. These two professional identities, one as supporter, the other as opponent, appeared to complicate participants’ responses to plagiarism, and an incident of plagiarism often served as a catalyst to expose the contradiction of these two positionalities. Because plagiarism has such immense power in the writing classroom to both expose and upset existing power relations between instructor and student, its existence significantly altered how writing teachers felt about their work as professionals.

My research supports work by composition scholars that suggests nurturing is a key aspect of a writing teacher’s identity (McLeod, 1995; Richmond, 2002). Indeed, many participants in my study possessed a nurturer identity, seeing themselves as mentors, coaches, or guides working side-by-side with their students. These instructors believed in the honesty of their students and that although students may try hard, they needed the instructor’s support to achieve success. Nurturers recognized that students are grappling with learning the conventions of academic writing and, as Shaughnessy (1977) first suggested decades ago, needed to be permitted to experiment with writing and commit errors. Likewise, students were attempting to sound scholarly, and sometimes these challenges resulted in plagiarism. Instructors in my study with nurturer characteristics understood the significant job they have explaining to students the distinction between their social mediated lives, which involve a substantial amount of copying and sharing, and the unfamiliar, nuanced rules of academic citation. Anson (2008) warned about the conflict that a pursue-and punish-climate can create for a nurturing instructor. Because their work involved supporting students’ development as
writers, nurturers I spoke with experienced emotional stress when plagiarism occurred. Some reacted by becoming even more nurturing, blaming themselves or their lack of effective teaching for students’ transgressions. In contrast, others experienced a kind of emotional devastation, as if the plagiarism were a shocking betrayal of trust that seriously tarnished the supportive class climate. Regardless of the nurturer’s response, plagiarism altered his or her sense of professional identity as well as relationship with students.

On the other hand, instructors I spoke with who exhibited characteristics of the adversary saw themselves and their work as squarely in opposition to their students, a situation that Howard (2000), Murphy (1990), and many other composition scholars have decried as creating a power differential and classroom hierarchy that seriously damages the student-teacher relationship and sharply contrasts with the liberatory, supportive agenda inherent in composition pedagogy. Adversaries in my study believed their students were cheaters looking for short-cuts, and these instructors saw their role as apprehending and punishing wrongdoers. This oppositional mentality stems from the view of oneself as defender of academic honesty and integrity. As with the nurturers, when plagiarism occurred in an adversary’s class, the results were highly emotional. For adversaries, plagiarism hardened the belief that students were dishonest and confirmed the instructor’s role as protector of academic integrity. Like Kolich’s “avenging god” (1983, p. 142), who vindictively tracks plagiarists and fails them with contempt, most adversaries reacted with emotions directed toward students, such as anger and frustration.

I anticipated hearing about emotions and behavior that reflected nurturing and adversarial feelings from participants. However, a third identity emerged that I had not foreseen: the diplomat. Diplomats saw themselves as bridge-builders and pragmatists.
For individuals with diplomat characteristics, plagiarism was of concern but was also simply a part of the job that needed to be handled like any other responsibility. Diplomats saw their job as introducing students to the world of academic integrity and source use in a straightforward, measured, and matter-of-fact way. In addition, many instructors with diplomatic tendencies were familiar with plagiarism research and source use. Because they more fully grasped the slipperiness of plagiarism, diplomats seemed better able to rationalize students’ behavior when they plagiarized. Perhaps because of this mindset and the feeling that students plagiarize as part of their natural development as writers, diplomats experienced far fewer intense emotions when students plagiarized than did nurturers and adversaries.

The diplomats’ shift in focus from “students are doing this to me” to “this is just something students do” appeared to significantly deflate the emotionality of the plagiarism experience. In other words, diplomats did not waffle about how to proceed when suspecting a student had plagiarized, what to say to the student during the confrontation meeting, whether to follow through on the reporting procedures, what punishment should be given, or any other decisions that often wreak emotional havoc on nurturers and adversaries. In fact, emotions for diplomats throughout a plagiarism experience were nearly non-existent. The writing “error” was approached as something that was natural, expected, and swiftly taken care of by following through with established protocols.

These findings could suggest, however, that diplomats were merely adept at “masking” (Stough & Emmer, 1998, p. 355); that is, they were experts at pretending to appear outwardly calm and in control. Thus, it may be that diplomats were simply good
performers who used surface acting (Hochschild, 1986) to outwardly project a more acceptable emotion than the one that was actually felt. So good was the acting, in fact, that diplomats may have achieved a kind of deep acting (Hochschild, 1996), one that method acting teacher Stanislavski would have been proud of, where they changed how they felt so their emotions conformed to socially acceptable norms. Although I saw no indication that diplomatic behavior caused stress for my participants, Oplatka (2009), Grandey (2000), and Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) warned that controlling one’s emotions to keep them in line with workplace expectations can, over time, become emotionally exhausting.

The professional identities of the composition classroom are reflective of the framework introduced by Belenky et al. (1986), which identified the different epistemological perspectives women often use to learn about and understand the world. Recognizing the similarities can help illuminate the reasons for differences of emotionality between each identity. The researchers found that two forms of procedural knowledge (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 15) exist, separate knowing and connected knowing (Belenky et al., 1986, p. 101), which closely align with the diplomat and nurturer identities participants described in this study.

Belenky et al. (1986) argued that many women approach the process of understanding through connected knowing. Rather than looking for how their idea might differ from others’, connected knowers take a subjective stance, suspending judgment as they attempt to discover the ways their thinking connects with others’ (Clinchy, 1996). Thus, the question for a connected knower is, “What makes someone think this way, and how can I value that perspective rather than criticize it?” Understanding cannot be
arrived at by simply applying rules or policies--the process involves considering the experiences and context of others’ perspectives (Clinchy, 1996).

Connected knowers, then, seek to affirm and connect with others in the same way that nurturers seek to support and connect with their students. Likewise, just as with the nurturer professional identity, the connected knower wants to step “inside” the other’s perspective to see what it feels like, and as such, approaches relationships with empathy. Because writing instructors with the nurturer’s characteristics work collaboratively alongside their students, they may deeply sense the student’s fear of failing the course and of not sounding scholarly enough. They can imagine the temptation to plagiarize or take shortcuts because of a looming deadline or difficult assignment. Nurturers recognize the complex nature of plagiarism and source ownership.

This connected-nurturer approach to teaching is not without consequences. The willingness to accept multiple realities (e.g., multiple reasons for why plagiarism might occur) can place the instructor in an emotionally intense situation when plagiarism occurs. Likewise, the clear understanding nurturers have of their students’ perspectives, challenges, and feelings, can make an act of plagiarism feel like a personal affront that shatters a harmonious relationship. Participants in this study spoke of experiencing strong, negative emotions, feeling that they had failed their students or had not been supportive enough, or that their students had deliberately betrayed them.

In contrast, Belenky et al. (1986) believed that separate knowers approach learning objectively, examining how their position conflicts rather than connects with another’s. The separate knowing orientation implies that one take an autonomous, less personal stance from a distance. This concept aligns well with the diplomat professional
identity in the writing classroom. Here, the instructor supports students by acting as a
guide who diplomatically introduces them to the concepts, rules, and expectations of the
academy in a measured and neutral manner. The autonomy of the separate knower
implies there is less personal, emotional involvement, something that was clearly evident
in the diplomats I encountered. For them, little emotional labor was expended when their
students plagiarized. Rather than a personal affront, it was just something that sometimes
happens and that needed to be addressed.

Thus, of the two ways of knowing/identifying, connected-nurturers in this study
experienced far more emotional labor when dealing with an episode of plagiarism.
Diplomats, perhaps because of their more objective, separate style, were able to remain
relatively free of negative emotions and emotional labor when plagiarism happened.

Belenky and her colleagues (1986) argued that the separate and connected
epistemological orientations are not mutually exclusive nor should they be divided along
gender lines. However, although men and women have characteristics of each
perspective, connected knowing may be an important and under acknowledged way that
many women come to understand the world and their place in it. The feminization of the
composition profession (Micciche, 2002) and the abundance of female composition
instructors suggest that many professionals working in the discipline may be connected
knowers. Likewise, because considerable composition pedagogy focuses on
emancipatory goals of liberating student voices (Yoon, 2005), where empathy for
multiple ideas and for students’ perspectives is highly valued (McLeod, 1995; Richmond,
2002), it seems logical that connected knowing is often cultivated by both male and
female writing instructors. As such, being a nurturer and a connected knower in the
composition classroom when plagiarism occurs creates an emotional conundrum: Although one may be better able to know why one’s students plagiarize, their actions result in strong, sometimes conflicting, negative emotions.

Like Belenky et al’s (1986) separate and connected knowing, the professional identities I identified should not be considered necessarily good or bad--they are simply different styles that participants enact and embrace. The question then becomes how can instructors best balance their connected and separate selves so they avoid sacrificing themselves from the emotional labor that occurs when students plagiarize? Providing instructors a forum to learn of the professional identities that exist could lead to realization of one’s own professional identity and style. Thus, to reduce the emotionality in the writing classroom, particularly during episodes of plagiarism, the challenge may be to find a better balance between the nurturer and diplomat identities.

Summary of Professional Identities and Emotions. The three professional identities that emerged from these findings suggest that instructors in my study employed different stances or positionalities in the classroom in their relationships with students. Instructors with nurturing characteristics worked as caregivers to support their students’ development, while those with adversarial characteristics saw themselves in opposition to their students. Diplomats saw themselves as leaders introducing students to the concept of academic integrity in an even-handed manner. When plagiarism occurred, the consequences were different for each professional identity. The nurturer and adversary experienced heightened emotions and emotional labor. Although the diplomat may have been slightly emotional when discovering the plagiarism, the situation was handled far less emotionally, as a practical matter that simply needed to be addressed by following
the accepted protocols. Thus, plagiarism, in a sense, derailed the instructor-student relationship for nurturers and adversaries whereas diplomats were able to maintain the relationship. Perhaps because the act of plagiarism was seen as far less personal, diplomats were able avoid disrupting their relationships with students when plagiarism occurred.

**Emotional Rules Silence Emotions**

Of particular concern is how the emotional rules of the composition workplace (e.g., it is inappropriate to feel anger or resentment toward one’s students) threatened to silence the voices of some of the instructors in this study. The unmistakable message some received was to hide their feelings, particularly from administrators, if those feelings did not conform to the emotional norms of the workplace. In other words, if one felt angry or resentful, do not let students, colleagues, or administrators know this. Likewise, although many instructors say they felt adversarial (and did so quite often in interviews), only one mentioned feeling this way in his pre-interview questions. Significantly, most made a point of telling me how much they disliked feeling adversarial. To admit to feeling something that violates an emotional feeling rule was perhaps less offensive if one emphasized how much the feeling was disliked. Likewise, it may have been easier to express inappropriate feelings to an interviewer in a confidential research setting but not to students, administrators, or department colleagues. Thus, I heard in participants’ voices the “secret dread” (Shapiro, 2010, p. 617) of not responding like a good writing teacher should and could imagine how feeling one way but trying to appear to feel another could, over time, make one feel like a fake, obliterating what Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) termed one’s “authentic self” (p. 89).
**Self-Directed Emotions May be Problematic**

This study revealed that more than half of the emotions instructors experienced during plagiarism were self-directed. When students plagiarized, some writing instructors initially blamed their students but then shifted to finding blame or failure in themselves. In part, this move away from student-focused negative emotions, such as anger, frustration, and resentment, to emotions of self-examination indicated the contemplative response of an educated, mature adult. In other words, experienced instructors know the importance of pedagogical reflection and the significance of thinking deeply about how to avoid a negative teaching experience and improve learning outcomes. Nevertheless, a sustained focus on the self may serve to strengthen the highly debatable concept that plagiarism occurs because of something the instructor does or does not do. Indeed, we often react to plagiarism as if it is something students deliberately do to us as writing teachers as opposed to a choice students make that, in the end, has nothing to do with us at all.

Likewise, the professional identities of nurturer and adversary can be viewed as self-centered; that is, both put the focus of attention squarely on the instructor. For the nurturer, the instructor is concerned with “What’s my role in my student’s success or failure?” For the adversary, the instructor is focused on “What has the student done to me?” Both concentrate a substantial amount of the emotional energy on the instructor. In contrast, the diplomat understands that “Plagiarism is not about me at all but about the student.” This less self-focused reaction might be another reason why the diplomat identity seemed to carry with it far fewer negative emotional consequences.
The Impact of Gender on Emotional Responses

Findings from this research support earlier findings from studies of emotions and gender that suggest men and women experience emotions differently and adhere to gender stereotypes (Brody, 1993; Brody & Hall, 2008; Hess, Senécal, Kirouac, Herrera, Philippot, & Kleck, 2000; Plant, Hyde, Keltner, & Devine, 2000). However, the limitations discussed in Chapter I may have played a role in the findings and, thus, must be considered when one interprets the results.

The findings indicate that women spoke of being far more emotional during a plagiarism experience than did male participants. Some men were initially reluctant to express how they felt, but women shared their feelings abundantly and without encouragement. Females in this study were overwhelmingly empathetic and nurturing, although some of the male participants described similar feelings of deep care and concern for their students. Nevertheless, female participants may have been adhering to feeling rules or social display rules that suggest women are more emotional than men and are permitted to express emotions more than males (Brody, 1993; Brody & Hall, 2008; Fabes & Martin, 1991; Simon & Nath, 2004). Likewise, because I am a female, it might have been easier for female participants to be open with me about how they felt.

My research findings on gender and anger, however, differed from those of prior research. These studies (Diener & Lucas, 2004; Hess et al., 2000; Plant, et al., 2000) suggest that men feel more anger than women. In my research, male instructors either experienced far less anger during a plagiarism experience or were far less willing to admit to me that they had felt anger. This difference might stem from the gender emotion stereotype that anger suppression is an important trait for men (Diener & Lucas, 2004)
and that anger is an inappropriate emotion in the classroom (Cowie, 2003; Winograd, 2003). Thus, when speaking to a female researcher, male participants may not have wanted to admit that they had been angry with a student. On the other hand, when I spoke with female participants, they readily shared their feelings of anger, as they may have perceived this emotion to be far more acceptable and relatable for a woman.

In addition, female instructors in this study described possessing characteristics of the nurturer far more frequently than male instructors. This, too, could reflect the display rule in society that women are more maternal, and therefore, more natural caregivers (Ferguson & Eyre, 2000) as well as the notion in education that women educators have a “caring orientation” (Hargreaves, 1998, p. 836). Therefore, women may have been responding to me in ways they felt they were expected to respond. If this was so, it is somewhat surprising that female instructors also expressed having far more adversarial characteristics than male instructors. Again, this could have occurred because females are more comfortable admitting to a female researcher that they were angry, frustrated, and otherwise oppositional with students. Of interest, however, is how infrequently women admitted to feeling nurturing or adversarial in their written comments; in fact, in their pre-interview questions, only a few female participants mentioned their role involved nurturing students’ development, and none admitted to being adversarial.

On the other hand, male instructors exhibited far more characteristics of the diplomat than female instructors. There are several possible reasons for this. First, as Stratham et al. (1991) have shown, students’ perceived stereotype of the “learned professor” is as an assertive and knowledgeable male. Such a view might inherently make male instructors appear more confident in their abilities as an instructor in the
classroom. If this is the case, an act of plagiarism might be seen by male instructors as less of a threat to their teaching abilities than it could be for female instructors. Furthermore, in their conversations with a female researcher, male instructors might have wanted to appear more emotionally in control, another gender stereotype reinforced in culture and supported by considerable research (Brody, 1993; Brody & Hall, 2008; Hess, Senécal, Kirouac, Herrera, Philippot, & Kleck, 2000; Plant, Hyde, Keltner, & Devine, 2000).

In summary, my findings related to gender are generally consistent with much earlier research showing females are more emotional (Brody & Hall, 2008; Fabes & Martin, 1991; Simon & Nath, 2004) and have less problem sharing their feelings (Brody & Hall, 2008) and that self-report measures of emotion are complicated by participants’ desire to adhere to gender role expectations and stereotypes (Brody, 1993; Brody & Hall, 2008; Hess, Senécal, Kirouac, Herrera, Philippot, & Kleck, 2000; Plant, Hyde, Keltner, & Devine, 2000).

**Recommendations for Future Research and Administrative Action**

Why should higher education administrators, such as deans, department chairs, writing program administrators, and others, care about instructors’ emotional labor when students plagiarize? For some, the answer may be to tell instructors they should all just rise above it and take the heightened emotionality out of the situation. Here, the thinking goes, instructors should treat plagiarism as simply a violation of any other basic academic policy, such as those for lateness or attendance. I suspect, from my years as a writing program administrator and from the results of this research, that for the many writing instructors who understand the complex nature of plagiarism as well as the cultural,
disciplinary, and generational nuances involved, reacting to plagiarism without emotion may be impossible.

In some sense my findings seem to suggest that in order to reduce the emotional labor involved when plagiarism occurs, composition instructors should strive to become more like diplomats by educating themselves about plagiarism’s causes and the context-bound, complicated nature of the ownership of words and ideas. The majority of the diplomats in my study appeared to experience far fewer emotions and less emotional stress than that of the nurturers or adversaries. Nonetheless, having an in depth knowledge of these issues did not guarantee that instructors in this study experienced no emotional turmoil, including that which was associated with feelings of anger, frustration, and empathy. Some instructors reacted emotionally to student plagiarism regardless of how much they knew the plagiarism scholarship. My findings seem to suggest, however, that this is one way to lay the groundwork for reducing the negative emotional impact of plagiarism.

Future research could more deeply explore the role of gender in instructors’ emotional responses to plagiarism. For example, studies could be done with male and female researchers or interviewers as a way to reduce the limitations of a single gender researcher. In addition, further study could compare writing instructors’ beliefs about plagiarism to administrators’ beliefs as well as to those of instructors in other disciplines.

If additional research on emotions and plagiarism parallels my findings that some composition instructors feel responsible for their students’ plagiarism, administrators could create opportunities for writing faculty development and graduate TA training. Work such as this could be used to more effectively support instructors in light of the
complex relational dynamics that often are exacerbated when plagiarism happens. Administrators could support programs that broaden writing instructors’ understanding of how multimodal texts are complicating how students read and incorporate sources into their own writing. Activities such as these could focus on the findings of the Citation Project (The Citation Project, n.d.), which are challenging our assumptions of how students interact with texts. Workshops, book groups, faculty learning communities, and other activities could give writing faculty a deeper understanding of disciplinary attribution conventions, language acquisition theory, and the many personal and social reasons for why a student might plagiarize.

Faculty across the curriculum are being challenged by the influx of international students, and administrators at many institutions have reacted to this changing enrollment trend by supporting faculty development efforts that address these students’ differing learning styles and help capitalize on the unique cross-cultural benefits international students bring to the classroom. In addition to these important topics, however, instructors and teachers-in-training could also learn about different cultural attitudes toward source attribution. Simply having a better understanding of the culturally-bound attitudes toward plagiarism would likely reduce faculty stress when international students inadvertently plagiarize.

Likewise, institutions that adopt detection programs, like Turnitin, do so at a considerable investment, and as such, administrators are often in a position to encourage their use. Faculty training is typically offered on academic dishonesty, the importance of using the detection service, and directions on how to submit student work for inspection. This training should be expanded to consider the benefits as well as the consequences of
these services, including their potential to negatively impact class climate. And writing instructors in particular could learn how to use detection services as learning tools that support students’ growth as writers rather than as policing tools that threaten to turn caring instructors into adversaries.

All of these efforts promise to do more than simply lessen an instructor’s emotional labor--they ultimately help support student learning. Other steps can be taken specifically targeted at this goal. For example, administrators should support faculty development opportunities for writing teachers that focus on creating enhanced lesson plans to more effectively teach quoting, citation, and source attribution in light of the research on plagiarism. During lessons on these topics, instructors could be encouraged to talk openly with their students about what plagiarism feels like from the teacher’s perspective and an author’s perspective. Conversations such as these could lead to meaningful class discussions on copyright, fair use, the ethics of source acknowledgment, and the ownership of ideas and texts. Likewise, orientation programs for new students should include sessions on plagiarism and source use. These sessions could address some of the misconceptions about common knowledge, ownership of words and ideas, and source use as well as clarify the disciplinary and cultural nuances that exist.

Equally important from a policy standpoint, higher education administrators should take a hard look at academic integrity policies and honor codes that define plagiarism in fixed ways that fail to consider intent as well as the many other disciplinary and cultural distinctions that complicate its definition. Writing studies scholarship supports the notion that plagiarism is, in fact, a highly multifaceted concept that sharply contrasts with those narrow definitions. Similarly, administrators should consider the
unintended consequences of establishing academic policies that require certain steps be followed when a student is suspected of plagiarizing. Specific demands, such as requiring the instructor to report the offense and the penalty assessed in writing to the chair, the student’s dean, and others, may not take into account the context of the plagiarism, the student’s background, the rhetorical situation of the assignment, and the relationship the instructor has built with the student. The action of documenting an honor code violation and flagging a student’s permanent academic record can be fraught with unintended emotional consequences for an instructor, who, for example, may fear damaging a student’s academic reputation. Ignoring all of these complications and consequences and requiring an instructor to take action regardless of the situation could do much to increase the instructor’s emotional labor and job stress.

Thus, research on the emotional impact of plagiarism and actions taken by higher education administrators could help inform institutional policy decisions and responses to academic integrity violations that better consider instructors’ perspectives on source use, their positionality in the classroom, and relationships with students. Importantly, institutions of higher education should explore and contest the persistent belief that plagiarism is a signal entity rather than a highly complex, often political and cultural concept that is situated in broader institutional realities.

**Reactions from the Researcher**

When I began this study, I had taught college writing for more than 15 years, and throughout that time, many of my students had committed some form of plagiarism. However, I never followed through with any academic integrity reporting procedures, preferring to handle it myself. In reality, I am sure that, as a non-tenure track, contingent
faculty member, I had concerns about students retaliating by giving me poor evaluations (an important criterion for rehire). I also did not want to be perceived as an instructor who often had students plagiarize in her courses. And, as someone who dislikes confrontation, I feared the dreaded meeting with the student, worrying that I would make someone cry or that a student might become violently angry with me. So, I spoke to students sternly about plagiarism and why it was a problem in their writing, but I always allowed them to rewrite and resubmit their papers. In some way I think I rationalized that this approach was better for the student and more effectively encouraged his or her development as a writer.

During this study, as I pondered the conversations with participants, read and reread the transcripts and their pre-interview comments, and as I drafted the findings, I was teaching two writing courses: one upper-level course on medical writing and a second-year composition course. In both courses, I had a student plagiarize. This time, I met with each student, described the plagiarism, failed each on the assignment, and followed up on the required paperwork for the dean’s office. Although I do not know if this was the better or more correct response than the one I typically used, it felt altogether different for me as an instructor; that is, I was far more calm and in control and far less emotionally stressed.

I believe that my experience studying plagiarism and the many conversations I had with participants shaped my responses this time around. In one sense, I believe I was trying on a new role by acting more like a diplomat, approaching the situation in a more measured and objective fashion. Yes, I was concerned about my students’ feelings and the plagiarism, but I also sensed that spending time fretting about how I should respond
and what I should or should not do would not be emotionally healthy for me as an instructor. I think I learned this in the voices of participants as they described their struggles, challenges, successes, and failures with their students who had plagiarized, and I am grateful for this insight. At least in my case, better understanding plagiarism and the emotions it generates helped me handle the experience with far less emotional labor.

**Concluding Comments**

The range of emotions instructors’ experience when their students plagiarize can be far-reaching; therefore, it is critical to provide instructors a space to give voice to those feelings. Silencing emotions will only serve to increase the emotional labor involved in suppressing “inappropriate” emotions and invoking “appropriate” ones based on predetermined cultural and gender stereotypes and professional norms—work that over time may take its toll on instructors’ enjoyment of the work they do in the writing classroom. Likewise, the emotional labor involved in navigating an organization’s emotional rules could be lessened if instructors better understood how an act of plagiarism is about the student and not about the teacher at all.

We are just beginning to understand instructor emotion and the important role plagiarism has as a catalyst for substantial emotional labor in the composition classroom. If teaching, by its very nature, is rich with emotion, then far more attention should be paid to the emotions of plagiarism that threaten an instructor’s sense of efficacy, professional identity, and relationships with others.
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APPENDIX A

Telephone Script to Enlist Participants

**Researcher:** I’m Ann Biswas, and I’m a Ph.D. student in Educational Leadership at the University of Dayton. My dissertation has to do with plagiarism, something that has been a growing concern of mine over my many years of teaching composition.

I’m also the Director of Writing Programs for the English Department at UD, so this topic is of particular interest to me and our writing faculty, as I’m sure it is to all of you at Midwest State University.

I’ve had students plagiarize, and it’s been a really difficult experience – knowing how to handle it, what to do, how to react with students, and those kinds of things. Have you had students plagiarize in your composition courses?

**Respondent:** (possible response) Yes, I had two incidents of this just last semester in my first-year composition course.

**Researcher:** The study I’m working on might really be of interest to you then. I’m
interested in understanding how writing instructors emotionally react when their students plagiarize – how do they feel, how does it change their work in the classroom, how do their feelings change how they interact with students and colleagues—that sort of thing. The purpose of the research is to help inform faculty development efforts (and maybe even TA training) – to give us the support we need when students plagiarize and to help us better understand how plagiarism can impact us both inside and outside the classroom.

I'd love to talk with you about this, as I'm interested in interviewing faculty from all ranks and backgrounds who teach composition and have had students plagiarize (intentionally or unintentionally). It’ll probably just be one interview for about 1 hour. And, we could meet in your office at Midwest State if that’s convenient (or at a local coffee shop if you’d prefer). My schedule is very flexible.

**Respondent:** (possible response) Yes, this sounds really interesting…

**Researcher:** Of course, I have IRB approval for this study from UD and from Midwest State. To ensure your confidentiality during the research, pseudonyms will be used on all data, including audio recordings, file names, and transcripts. I won’t be telling anyone the names of who is participating in the study or who isn’t. I’ll email you a letter that has more details about this.

Before we get together, I have a brief questionnaire that I’d like you to fill out. It’s just a few questions that are intended to help you think back on a time when a student
plagiarized and to help you recall how you felt and how you reacted. It’s a form that you can fill out and email it back to me.

Do you think we could schedule a time now for me to come over there for an interview?

**Respondent:** (possible response) Sure, how about in two weeks…

**Researcher:** That sounds great. As soon as we hang up, I’ll email you the letter describing the study and the questionnaire. I really appreciate your agreeing to help me with this project.

One more thing…I’ll be calling several instructors from the English department at Midwest State, and I’m wondering if there is anyone else there that you’d recommend I contact regarding this study – someone who, like you and me, is also really concerned about plagiarism….
APPENDIX B

Email to Participants

(Date)

Dear (Participant Name):

Thank you very much for agreeing to be a participant in my dissertation project, which examines writing faculty experiences with plagiarism in their students’ work. Our interview is set for [date and time] at [place]. As a writing instructor myself at the University of Dayton, I am eager to hear about your experiences and hope that my research will add to the growing knowledge base on plagiarism and better inform faculty development and TA training efforts to more effectively support writing teachers. This letter will describe this project in more detail.

With this study, I am interested in learning how teachers feel when students plagiarize and whether and how this experience impacts them professionally.

I have received IRB approval for this project from both the University of Dayton and Midwest State University. To ensure your complete confidentiality during this research, pseudonyms will be used on all written data, including notes, transcripts, and file labels.
In addition, any presentations or publications based on this research will only include pseudonyms.

I will shortly be emailing you a file with a list of six questions to help you begin to recall and think about the feelings you experienced when a student (or students) plagiarized in your composition course. Please complete this and return it to me before our interview. I anticipate that the interview will last no more than one hour. During this conversation, we’ll explore in more detail what happened during this “plagiarism experience,” how you felt, and how you responded.

I truly value your comments and insight on your experiences and thank you for the commitment and contribution you are making to my dissertation research. If you have any questions about this project, please don’t hesitate to contact me at abiswas1@udayton.edu or (937) 438-2500.

Sincerely,

Ann Biswas
Doctoral Candidate, Educational Leadership
School of Education and Health Sciences
Director of Writing Programs, Department of English
University of Dayton
APPENDIX C

Participants’ Written Responses

Name:
Academic Rank / Title:
Years Teaching Writing:
Gender:

This document will serve as a form of prewriting for the interview I will conduct with you soon. It is hoped that answering these questions will encourage you to begin recalling and thinking about certain prior teaching experiences and how they have affected you. Please answer these questions to the best of your ability, and feel free to write as much or as little as you like.

When you are done, please send this completed form as an email attachment to abiswas1@udayton.edu.

1. Describe a time when you discovered a student had plagiarized on a written assignment for your course. (e.g., what was the assignment, how did you discover the plagiarism?)
2. Consider how you felt when this happened, and describe your emotions (e.g., you can discuss, for example, your emotions when you first suspected plagiarism, when you confirmed it, when you talked to the student(s) and/or the class about this, and after you felt this situation was resolved).

3. In what ways, if any, do you think incidents like the one you described have changed your relationships with students?

4. In what ways, if any, do you think incidents like the one you described have changed your relationships with your colleagues?

5. How have incidents of plagiarism in your composition courses impacted or altered your teaching?

6. How has plagiarism in your composition courses and the emotions you experienced during these times, affected your professional identity as an English faculty member?
APPENDIX D

Interview Topics

The topics for each interview will mirror Research Questions 1 through 4:

1. For Research Question 1 (How do composition instructors emotionally react when faced with plagiarized texts?), I will have participants describe an experience (or experiences) they had when they realized a student had plagiarized and to describe how this experience(s) made them feel.

2. For Research Question 2 (In what ways do incidents of plagiarism potentially complicate and alter composition instructors’ relationships with their students and colleagues?), I will explore whether and in what ways participants believe their relationships with students and colleagues may have been impacted by their emotions after experiencing plagiarism in student work.

3. For Research Question 3 (In what ways do composition instructors’ emotional responses to incidents of plagiarism potentially impact their pedagogy?), I will explore whether and in what ways participants believe their feelings altered what they do in the classroom and in on-one-one conferences with students after experiencing plagiarism in student work.

4. For Research Question 4 (In what ways do composition instructors’ emotional responses to incidents of plagiarism potentially affect their sense of professional
identity?), I will explore whether and in what ways the incident(s) of student plagiarism impacted how they feel about being a writing instructor and about the job they do.
APPENDIX E

Invitation to Member Checking

RE: Plagiarism Study Preliminary Findings

Dear (Participant Name),

I hope this email finds you well and near the end of a plagiarism-free semester. I have been hard at work on my dissertation since your interview late last year, and I wanted to follow-up and let you know some of my preliminary findings. Part of the dissertation process involves reporting back to participants with this information and finding out if you see yourselves represented somewhere in the findings. In addition, if you've had any other thoughts on plagiarism and your emotional response since the interview, I’d love to hear them.

Below is brief overview of what I learned from the interviews and pre-interview responses for this project:

Emotions Experienced

Participants described having experienced 13 emotions during episodes of student plagiarism in their writing classes.

1. Emotions Directed at Students
   
   - Negative emotions: Anger, Resentment, Disappointment, & Frustration
• Compassionate emotions: Empathy & Sadness

2. Emotions Directed at Self

• Negative emotions triggered by students’ actions: Hurt, Betrayal, & Cynicism
• Negative emotions triggered by one’s own actions: Guilt & Failure
• Negative emotions triggered by physical sensations: Anxiety & Stress

The Impact of Plagiarism on Instructors’ Sense of Professional ID & Relationships with Students

Participants described 3 main professional identities. Some fluctuated between 2 or 3 identities at different times while others solidly maintained a single professional ID throughout their teaching, regardless of plagiarism episodes.

The Nurturer

• Mentors, Guides, Coaches
• Highly emotional when plagiarism happened: Consequences of experiencing these emotions: (1) became even more nurturing, (2) blamed the plagiarism on their teaching, and/or (3) became adversarial with students for their betrayal of trust.

The Adversary

• Police, Opponents, Hunters
• Highly emotional when plagiarism happened: Consequences of experiencing these emotions: (1) confirmed beliefs that many students are cheaters, and/or (2) confirmed instructor’s role as protector of academic integrity.

The Diplomat

• Bridge-Builders, Pragmatists
• Their job is to introduce students to the world of academic integrity and source use in a measured, matter-of-fact way
• Most had an in-depth knowledge of intertextuality and plagiarism research.
• Consequences of plagiarism: Initial emotions quickly neutralized to focus on plagiarism as a practical matter that needed to be addressed. Little emotional labor spent deciding how to handle the situation.

**Impact of Plagiarism on Relationships with Administration & Colleagues**

For most participants, student plagiarism negatively impacted their relationships with administrator. Many spoke of getting mixed messages from administrators (to be both nurturing with students and adversarial in the instructor’s pursuit and punishment of plagiarism).

For most participants, student plagiarism negatively impacted their relationships with colleagues. Reasons why varied, but in general, colleagues could seem to be either too soft on plagiarism or too adversarial about plagiarism with students.

**Impact of Plagiarism on Pedagogy**

Participants told me that student plagiarism (as well as advances in writing teacher pedagogy over the years) had changed what they do in the classroom. For example, participants described changes in classroom management (e.g., when and how often plagiarism was discussed), assignments (e.g., what topics were used and how they were selected), and grading (changes in the points given for prewriting, drafts, and the final draft; whether to collect sources with final drafts).
A Few Preliminary General Conclusions

- Plagiarism impacts writing instructors’ professional ID and sense of self efficacy as well as relationships with others
- Plagiarism is situated in larger institutional realities
- If we better understood how plagiarism impacts us as writing teachers, we might be able to reduce the emotional labor and conflict that result

Again, I can’t thank you enough for taking time out of your busy schedule to talk with me about your experiences. Please let me know by replying to this email if you see yourself represented in my findings and if you have anything else you’d like to add to the conversation.

Best,

Ann Biswas