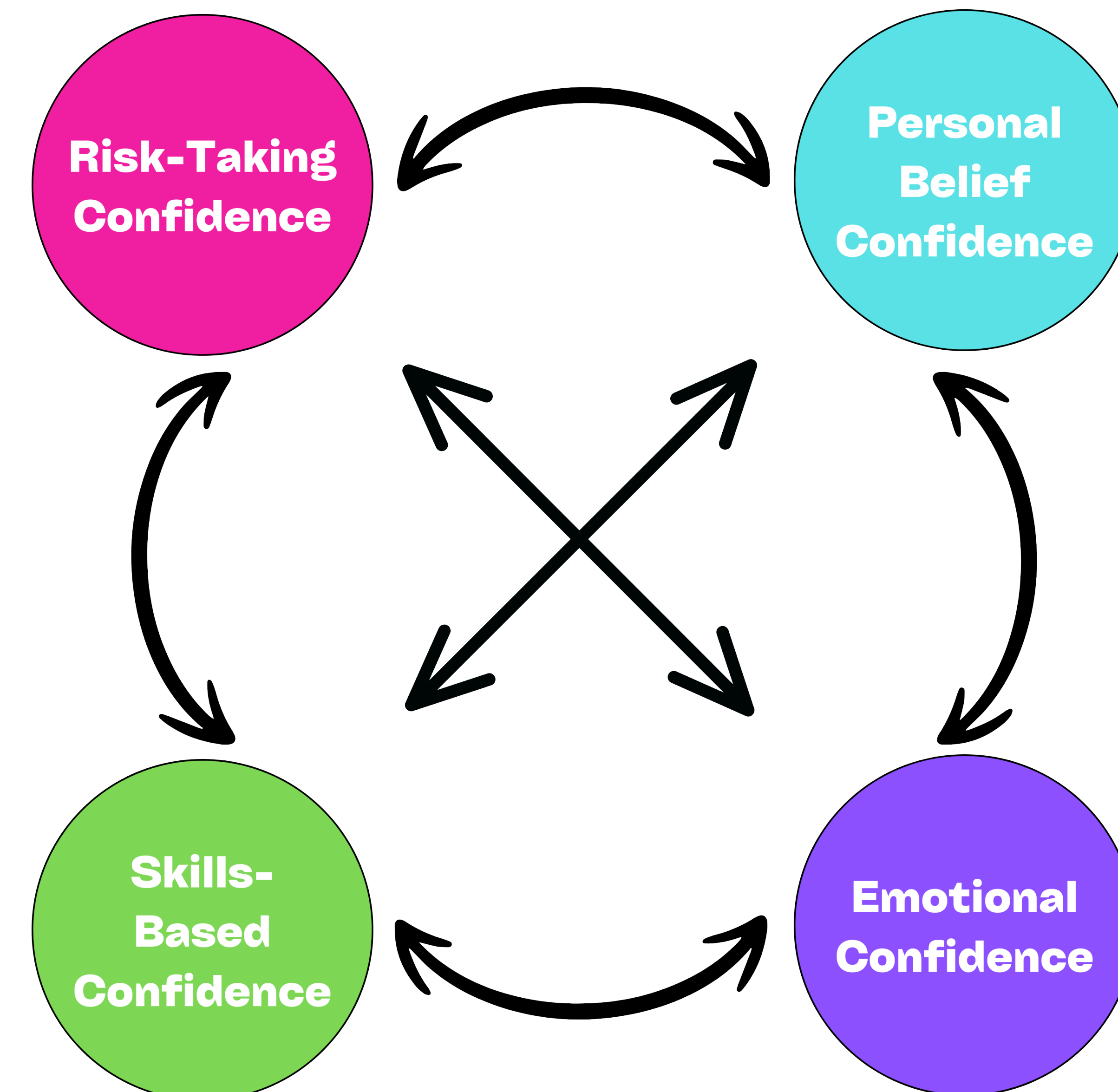


But You Are a Writer -- Analyzing First Year Composition Courses to Foster Student Confidence in Writing



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How Do Students Define Confidence?



Personal Belief Confidence
is related to the classic saying, "I think I can," as it involves students identifying as a writer and believing in themselves as writers.

Emotional Confidence
is about how students feel before or while engaging with writing, and it is heavily influenced by classroom environments, peers, and instructors.

Skills-Based Confidence
concentrates on having the necessary skills or abilities to complete a writing task, and it involves students being able to talk about writing, give and interpret feedback on writing, and utilize academic conventions.

Risk-Taking Confidence
focuses on students pushing themselves outside of their comfort zone to let go of old writing models and try new ways of thinking and writing. The end goal is for students to practice writing skills they have learned as they pursue personal academic interests.

What Is Student Confidence?

Goals of the Study

- To learn how the distance between instructors and students impacts student confidence
- To discover ways to bridge the gap between instructor and student perspectives on first year writing
- To learn how to intentionally foster student confidence as a TA for first year writing courses

Research Questions

- What are the best teaching practices that foster student confidence in writing in a first year writing course?
- What styles of teaching foster student confidence in writing the most in a first year writing course?
- How do students think of and define confidence?
- How do faculty think of and define confidence? Are these definitions similar or different to how students define it?

Methods

- Chose three sections of Seminar in Writing and Rhetoric courses at Rider University to observe
- Administered a survey at the beginning and end of the semester to each class
- Tracked and interviewed one to two students from each course throughout the semester
- Interviewed each instructor at the start and end of the semester

Who Is Talking About Student Confidence?

- **Andrea Yelin** and **Bai Li** both discuss student confidence, but they do not clearly define the term
- **Nancy Sommers** and **Donald Daiker** both offer student confidence as a "name drop," but they do not address this term any further
- **Peter Elbow**, **David Bartholomae**, and **Christina Haas** each discuss various first year writing experiences, but they do not mention student confidence at all

Where Does Student Confidence Come From?

Best Teaching Practices (Chosen By Students)	
Topic Development and Brainstorming	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading and discussing assigned articles - Viewing and discussing assigned media - Brainstorming and developing topics as a class 	
Professor Feedback on Multiple Essay Drafts	
Peer Tutoring/Embedded Tutors assigned to Composition Courses	

How Student Language Impacts Their Writing Process	
Defined Writing Process	"I usually read the prompt and figure [out] my thesis right away. Then I'll break what each body paragraph is going to be about and where my sources will be used. Then I'll write my first draft. Then review and make some edits for awhile until I'm happy with my paper," ~ Zara (Post-Survey)
Zero Draft/All In One Shot	"I love brainstorming...I like to freestyle and I like to think about it as I'm doing it, and I feel creative when I'm writing...I do enjoy revising. I like going back and changing it after the fact and making sure it's strong and adding whatever words I think would fit in better" ~ Michael (End of Semester Interview)
No Process Yet Defined	"Just jump right in and [hope] something sounds good" ~ Dave (Pre-Survey)

Why Does Student Confidence Matter?

The more students learn how to use concrete forms of language, the more confident they will become in each category of confidence, and this will create a foundation for the risks they take in any future field of study.