CONNECTED PEDAGOGY AND TRANSFER OF LEARNING: AN EXAMINATION OF GRADUATE INSTRUCTOR BELIEFS VS. PRACTICES IN FIRST-YEAR WRITING

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Transfer of learning, or students' ability to take knowledge learned and use it in new contexts, is one of the most important pedagogical issues facing writing teachers today. Transfer has been a growing area of concern as we work to better prepare students for diverse writing contexts in educational, personal, and professional settings. Additionally, finding more effective ways of teaching for transfer is critical because of growing national pressure to demonstrate learning, fueled by studies such as *Academically Adrift*. In recent years, transfer has been the focus of substantial attention in all areas of education. In *How People Learn*, the National Research Council argued that "transfer" is synonymous with "learning" and that the best classrooms focus on transfer. Likewise, the National Science Foundation recently issued a series of recommendations for future transfer research, including the need for a better understanding of instructor attitudes towards transfer—an area directly addressed by this research. Additionally, a growing body of research from writing studies has focused on pedagogical interventions and students' experiences with transferring writing knowledge.

This research examines eight first-year composition (FYC) graduate instructors' beliefs and classroom practices concerning

transfer. I present interviews with instructors, observations of instructors' FYC courses, and descriptions of their course materials. Grounded theory analysis reveals differences between what instructors believe about transfer and what they enact in their writing classrooms; these gaps include both the content included in their courses and how they deliver that content. Some graduate instructors demonstrated a lack of knowledge about writing beyond their own fields, which presents challenges in teaching for transfer. Those teaching writing courses linked with disciplinary courses were found to engage in more "connected" transfer instruction than those of similar backgrounds teaching in general FYC classes. These two critical findings, then, suggest that 1) we need more instructor education focused on transfer and writing studies, and 2) we should re-envision how we assign students to classes in our programs. The article concludes by describing the concept of connected teaching, a new framework for transfer-focused instruction.[1]

Background and Significance

Defining Transfer

Salomon and Perkins describe two pivotal theories for understanding transfer: low-road and high-road. Low-road skills are automatic or well learned and transfer effortlessly. High-road skills must be transferred with conscious mental effort; most advanced writing skills fall into this category. High-road transfer further breaks down into two areas: forward-reaching, where individuals make connections between what they are learning and what they think they will need to know in future contexts, and backward reaching, where individuals connect to past experiences. For forward reaching and backward reaching connections to be made, Bransford and Schwartz argue that learners must recognize situations where knowledge can be useful; Salomon and Perkins call this recognition "mindful abstraction." This recognition and connection on the part of the learner are critical pieces of the transfer puzzle. An activity theory

perspective to Salomon and Perkins' work would argue that the school system—including faculty—must support students in engaging in mindful abstraction and building connections to other contexts.

Research on Writing Transfer

Research beginning in the 1980s by Herrington, McCarthy, and Walvoord and McCarthy describes students' struggles with writing in college disciplinary courses. Recent studies conducted by Beaufort, Bergmann and Zepernick, and Wardle demonstrate that students continue to struggle with transfer of learning from FYC to diverse disciplinary and workplace contexts due, in part, to an inability to build connections between contexts. Beaufort's case study of one student documents Tim's struggles to transfer learning from FYC to his coursework in engineering, history, and later, the workplace. Junior and senior students in Bergmann and Zepernick's study were completely unaware that FYC aimed to teach them transferrable writing skills, reporting that they neither felt that FYC taught them how to write in multiple disciplines nor understood FYC as abiding with any disciplinary standards (129-130), a finding echoed by Wardle's 2009 study of FYC genres. Wardle's 2007 research found similar issues, where FYC students "did not perceive a need to adopt or adapt" writing skills from FYC to other areas (76). The underlying tensions apparent in these discussions of transfer emphasize the content of FYC—which leads directly to pedagogy.

Teaching for Transfer: Content and Delivery

In light of the above findings, writing researchers have begun to seek out best practices to enact more transfer-focused FYC curriculum through descriptive studies. However, much less has been said about the role of faculty beliefs and practices in delivering that curriculum. Building on the earlier research of Russell and Carter, Wardle's 2009 work advocates finding a balance between recognizing general principles and teaching specific writing skills (768). Downs and Wardle encourage

teachers to move away from genre-based approaches to a "Writing about Writing" curriculum where FYC serves as an introduction to the discipline of writing studies. Wardle's 2007 work presents three transfer-oriented pedagogies, including 1) encouraging students to willfully pull out abstract principles, 2) self-reflection and monitoring learning, and 3) mindfulness (willingness to consciously pay attention to one's surroundings and learning) (765-771). Beaufort argues that for successful transfer to occur, students need to be taught knowledge from five knowledge domains: writing process, discourse community, rhetorical approaches, genre, and subject matter (19). Having students understand how knowledge is mapped across contexts is a clear theme in multiple approaches to teaching for transfer. The above literature indicates, albeit indirectly, that a transfer-focused curriculum is based on both content and delivery. *Content* includes an emphasis on discourse-communities, real-life genres, writing about writing, and types of knowledge; *delivery* includes building connections, encouraging certain kinds of thinking, and modeling mindfulness and reflection.

Even if we are to teach the helpful knowledge that Beaufort and Downs and Wardle suggest, we risk failure without framing that knowledge carefully in the classroom. Presseley and Afflerbach demonstrated that while students are clearly aware of genre, style, and citation differences among courses they are taking, they may view these differences as course-specific rather than as transferrable concepts. Their work suggests that the delivery of content—that of building connections between learning contexts—is just as important as the content itself. Because of this, I examine the relationship between FYC instructors' beliefs and teaching practices, both in terms of the content they teach and how they deliver said content. Because Pressley and Afflerbach's work suggests that the content alone cannot foster transfer, we also must consider how that content is delivered to students in the classroom.

Instructor Beliefs about Transfer

Thus far, most research on writing transfer, including the research described above, has primarily emphasized students. The previous research largely does not address the manner in which instructors understand transfer and how those beliefs impact their practices in FYC. In fact, very few studies directly address faculty beliefs concerning transfer. Lightner, Benander, and Kramer's 2008 study demonstrated that faculty and student attitudes towards transfer differed considerably. While students and faculty across the disciplines agreed that material should transfer between courses, faculty had much higher expectations for successful transfer than students. These authors suggest that both faculty and student attitudes can pose barriers to successful transfer. In a second article, Lightner and Benander provided reflective accounts of committed faculty enacting a transfer-focused curriculum within a general education program. Because research involving graduate writing instructors' beliefs about transfer is limited, this study seeks to fill this gap by providing evidence of their beliefs and practices.

One challenge of studying instructor attitudes and beliefs about writing transfer is rooted in the sustained controversy concerning the goals of teaching college writing, which Fulkerson addresses in his 2005 article. Fulkerson sees the main divide in the field as teaching students to be "more articulate outsiders" using postmodern/cultural studies approaches versus teaching students to be "more successful insiders" using discourse, genre, and rhetorically-based approaches (679). This is critical because the "more articulate outsider" perspective does not necessarily see preparation and transfer of learning to future writing contexts as a goal. Although Fulkerson's analysis appeared before writing studies' interest in writing transfer, he illuminates a number of issues relating to FYC instructors and transfer, including questioning the consistency of our goals and how our goals are aligned to our practices. These challenges and issues lead directly to the present study.

Study Context and Methods

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What do graduate instructors teaching FYC believe about transfer of learning, writing in diverse fields, and general academic writing skills instruction (GWSI)?
2. What relationship exists between graduate instructors' beliefs about transfer and their pedagogical practices (both content and delivery)? Is this relationship dependent on instructor background and/or type of course?

Context

This study took place at a Midwestern public research university in an award-winning FYC program. The semester I began data collection, the FYC program offered 189 sections staffed by over 150 instructors and taught approximately 3,600 students. The program has four types of FYC courses, including a standard four-credit course (70% of sections), a three-credit accelerated course (14% of sections), a four-credit ESL course (5% of sections), and a four-credit learning-community course (fall only; 10% of sections). Masters and doctoral students in the English department are the primary instructors of record and teach over 90% of all FYC sections.[2] New graduate instructors are required to participate in a year-long mentoring program in which they meet twice a week to learn about writing pedagogy and teaching with technology. Two of the eight goals of the FYC program closely align with transfer of learning: "to prepare students for writing in later university courses across the curriculum by helping them learn to articulate, develop, and support a point through both first-hand and archival research" and "to teach students to use the conventions of form, style, and citation and documentation of sources that are appropriate to their

purposes for composing in a variety of media for a variety of rhetorical contexts." Although the goals do not include the term "transfer," it is implied through their discussion of preparation for university courses and other rhetorical contexts.

The FYC program's "syllabus approach" curriculum allows instructors to choose a variety of approaches to writing instruction. Syllabus approaches are designed by instructors, piloted, and then approved by the first-year writing committee. Yearly meetings for syllabus approach groups take place to ensure that all instructors are working within the same framework. Each syllabus approach group maintains a website that includes sample assignments and course materials; however, the specific assignments and syllabus are determined by individual instructors. From interviews, instructors indicated they were building their own assignments in the spirit of the syllabus approach or heavily modifying assignments from the group website.

Syllabus approaches included in this study are "rhetorical situations" (two instructors); "composing through literature" (two instructors); "multimedia" (two instructors and "rhetorical situations in learning communities" (two instructors). The inclusion of four syllabus approaches was intended to represent the wide range of teaching philosophies in the field concerning FYC and to strengthen the validity of the study. The two learning community (LC) sections included homogeneous groups of students majoring in Nursing and Computer Graphics Technology with linked disciplinary courses.

Participants and Procedures

A total of eight sections (8 instructors and 153 students) were enrolled in this study. Graduate instructors were recruited via an email sent to the FYC instructor listserv prior to the start of the semester, and data collection took place during the fall term. To understand instructors' beliefs, all eight instructors were interviewed for 45-60 minutes on their beliefs concerning writing instruction and transfer. The interviews were conducted during

the last half of the fall semester; instructors were compensated $20. The interview script can be found in Appendix I.

All instructors (6 female; 2 male) were Ph.D. students and had completed the year-long mentoring course prior to the start of the study. Instructors possessed three to twelve semesters of teaching experience including FYC, business/technical writing, creative writing, literature, secondary education, and corporate training. Instructors came from the following fields: rhetoric and composition (RC) (4), theory and cultural studies (1), poetics/creative writing (1), and literature (2). Five of the eight instructors had completed graduate work in rhetoric and composition beyond the one-year mentoring program: four RC Ph.D. students and the cultural studies student (who completed an M.A. in RC).

In their review of research on faculty beliefs and practices in higher education, Kane, Sandretto, and Heath discovered that studies of faculty teaching behavior often report what is said in interviews but not what is done in the classroom. Therefore, to examine the relationship between instructor beliefs and practices, I collected course materials (n=43) and conducted two classroom observations (n=16) with each instructor. Course materials included syllabi, assignment sheets, course texts, and class handouts and activities. I observed each of the eight classrooms twice during the 15-week semester, scheduling one observation before and one observation after my interview with each instructor. I worked with the instructors to choose observation days that were comparable and meaningful—the initial observation took place within the first four weeks, when instructors were introducing a new assignment, and the second observation took place after the eighth week, when instructors were teaching analysis or research skills. These observations provided an opportunity for comparison among instructors and represented situations where instructors might engage in transfer-focused, connected instruction. During each observation, I used a double-entry observation log and wrote thick descriptions of the teaching practices observed, supplementing those descriptions

with artifacts from the classroom. During analysis, the frames of connected and non-connected teaching emerged as key concepts.[3]

Analysis

Due to the exploratory nature of this study and the lack of research on faculty attitudes towards writing transfer, grounded theory was used as a primary analysis technique. Grounded theory, developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss, asks researchers to set aside pre-existing frameworks or categories for analysis. Using the grounded theory approach, I systematically analyzed each interview question or sub-area in the three data sets and coded these based on emerging themes, moving later to each dataset as a whole and then triangulating between datasets. The frame of connected teaching emerged within the datasets independently; this became the primary analytical frame and focus. After conducting the grounded theory analysis, which revealed a great deal about the delivery of instruction, I also examined the instructional content by coding each major assignment using Beaufort's five knowledge domains—a common rubric for examining transfer-focused content.

Limitations

This study has three limitations worth noting. Although the purpose of this research was to provide an in-depth, exploratory examination of the role of graduate instructor beliefs and practices about transfer, it focused only on graduate instructors who were teaching within a particular context. As such, we need further research on instructor attitudes and practices concerning transfer in a diverse number of settings, including more work in examining full-time faculty and adjunct faculty. A second limitation of this study is the number of observations I conducted, which provided a limited view of each instructor's teaching practices. To address this limitation, I collected and analyzed course materials from each instructor and triangulated these materials with their interviews. However, it is possible that instructors were making connections that took place outside of the classes observed or outside of course

materials provided to students. Finally, the inclusion of only two learning communities, as compared with six standard FYC courses, left less room for comparison between the two approaches.

Results

This section examines what graduate instructors believe about transfer of learning and how these beliefs are enacted within their classrooms. The results suggest three factors that influence FYC instructors' emphasis on teaching for transfer—instructors' beliefs about transfer and related areas, the amount of coursework within rhetoric and composition completed, and the type of course they are teaching (learning community vs. general section).

What do graduate instructors teaching FYC believe about transfer of learning and general academic writing?

Transfer as a Goal

Early in the interview,[4] I asked instructors, "What is the most important thing you teach in your first-year writing classroom?" All eight instructors indicated the need for students to learn that writing is used in many different contexts and the desire to help their students approach writing contexts beyond the course—in other words, teaching transferable content (although none used the term "transfer"). Instructors had varying views about how transfer might be taught, including building connections, learning genre or rhetorical analysis, developing positive attitudes about writing, understanding that writing is a lifelong process, and using sources effectively. Instructors in the study also described their attempts at teaching for transfer, including examining connections between FYC and other contexts (4), shifting students' attitudes about learning (1) and teaching rhetorical or genre analysis (3).

Effortless Transfer

Instructors' beliefs concerning transferability were linked to both their previous coursework and views about the validity of general academic writing, or what Petraglia calls general writing skills instruction (GWSI). Three of the eight instructors, Amber, Ralph, and Paul, whose education did not contain any training in the field of rhetoric and composition beyond the yearlong mentoring course, believed in GWSI. They defined "good writing" as a singular, unified structure and argued that most, if not all, academic writing fit that general structure. These three instructors emphasized aspects of GWSI, such as thesis statement writing, five-page essays, and organizational strategies they believed were used throughout the disciplines. They did not see transfer as a particularly challenging concept, and their responses suggest that students engage in transfer automatically and effortlessly after FYC. For example, Paul discussed the importance of teaching students how to write a successful five-page paper as transferable to every discipline:

> The very first conference I had with them…I asked every single one of them what their major was. And I said, "I don't really know a lot about that field but…at the end of the semester, I hope you can write a five-page paper on a piece of literature, on a story, on a novel, and make it pretty good. But this is not a class in which you are reading about literature, writing about literature, and forgetting about it. The techniques that you learn are things you can use in your field." I'll repeat [what I said] throughout the semester, like when we were in the library. I said, "Everything's here. Like any topic you might be able to find. But now you have the skills to research any topic a professor asks you to research."

As Paul's explanation demonstrates, he assumes that writing a five-page paper about literature is immediately useful in their fields (even though he admits to not knowing much about those

fields in other parts of the interview) and that students, having had the course, have the skills they need to write in other courses.

Difficult Transfer

Five instructors, those with graduate coursework in RC, linked, questioned, and complicated GWSI and transferability.[5] These instructors indicated that they tried to teach with transfer in mind but expressed skepticism yet hope that transfer was really happening. April, for example, said:

> I think [transfer] is our goal, at least, I think it's my goal. To give the kids something to work with or to pass on. I don't want them just going in and taking an English class just to take an English class. . . . It's my goal to give them a toolkit that they can take on. I'm not sure it actually happens. From my own experience, it didn't happen for me.

The skepticism and hope about transfer expressed by these five instructors suggest that transfer is, as Dara said in her interview, "the great unknown." Dara continues,

> I would explain a lot of my philosophy and what are my beliefs and my hopes about transference, so that [students] would understand what I'm trying to do. You know, we fail at [transfer] a lot, and that's another belief I have is that we really shouldn't hide that from students.

Lack of Writing Knowledge

Amber, Ralph, and Paul, who believe in GWSI and in "effortless transfer," also demonstrated contradictions between their admitted lack of knowledge of writing in other fields and beliefs about transferability. When I asked Amber about GWSI, her response was (emphasis added):

> I suppose general academic writing is, well, to me it means being able to formulate an argument and write a clear

paper. Because you are going to have to be able to do that if you are taking a history class, a literature class, like I had to write a paper when I was in a music class. *I don't know if scientists write papers. I kind of think not…*But I think [GWSI] can be taught.

Yet in other parts of her interview, Amber claimed she was teaching students skills that they would use in all of their other courses, "I do try to give them the skills that apply across all areas of the academy." A similar contradiction was present in Paul's response to the same GWSI question. When asked what was the most important thing he taught, Paul said he knew that all majors go through a similar research process. But in his next response, he admitted that he had no idea what it is like to write an engineering paper and questioned how and if engineers wrote. Ralph described similar struggles, relying on the concept of GWSI as a way to mitigate his own admitted lack of basic knowledge of writing in other fields, especially scientific and technical fields.

In sum, all instructors indicated that transfer was a critical goal in teaching FYC. Instructors had differing beliefs concerning GWSI and writing in the disciplines; these appeared to be influenced by coursework in RC. Next, I'll examine how instructor beliefs translate into classroom practices through an analysis of writing assignments and observations.

What is the relationship between what graduate instructors believe about transfer and their pedagogical practices in terms of content and delivery? Is this dependent on instructor background or type of course?

All instructors submitted their course materials, which included 34 assignments (26 from general sections; 8 from LC sections). The assignments showed considerable variation in genres including researched arguments (20.6%), genre/rhetorical analysis (20.6%), literary analysis (17.6%), personal reflections (14.7%), and other/multimedia assignments (26.5%). Likewise,

course observations revealed a number of typical FYC activities including rhetorical/genre analysis (28.7% of activities), in-class writing/workshopping (17.8%), rhetorical concepts (21.6%), and grammar (7%).

Potentially Transferrable Content in Assignments

An analysis of course materials and class observations reveals that instructors provide content to students that is mostly consistent with their beliefs that transfer matters. To examine the assignment content and its relationship to instructor beliefs, the following groups were identified based on instructor interview responses about transfer and differences in courses taught (LC vs. Regular):

- *Effortless Transfer (Regular classroom):* Represents three instructors who believed transfer to be effortless and had no graduate work in RC
- *Difficult Transfer (Regular classroom):* Represents three instructors who believed transfer was challenging and who completed graduate work in RC
- *Difficult Transfer (LC classroom):* Represents the two LC instructors who believed transfer was challenging and had graduate work in RC

Beaufort's five domains, commonly used to examine issues of transfer in the broader literature, were employed to analyze assignments for potentially transferrable content. Because Beaufort argues that these domains work together, individual domains, as well as how many domains were covered across the course, were examined.[6]

As Table 1 describes, all groups provide some potentially transferable content, including writing process knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, and subject matter knowledge. The Difficult Transfer (Regular) instructors seemed to spend more time on genre knowledge and rhetorical knowledge than the

Effortless Transfer group, two areas that are critical to successful transfer and adapting knowledge to new assignments. However, the Difficult Transfer (LC) instructors provided assignments that directly address all five of Beaufort's domains and provide genre and rhetorical knowledge more often than the other two groups. Of particular note is the Difficult Transfer (LC) instructors' emphasis on discourse community knowledge, which wasn't covered in any assignment by the other two groups. Even basic writing instruction, like writing process, was emphasized more strongly by LC instructors.

Table 1
Content of the Eight Courses

Instructor Group	Writing Process	Rhetorical Knowledge	Subject Matter Knowledge	Genre Knowledge	Discourse Comm. Knowledge	Covered All Domains in Course
Effortless Transfer (Regular) (12 assignments; 3 instructors)	8.3%	16.6%	16.6%	16.6%	0%	0%
Difficult Transfer (Regular) (14 assignments; 3 instructors)	7.4%	21.4%	7.4%	28.5%	0%	0%
Difficult Transfer (LC) (8 assignments; 2 instructors)	25%	37.5%	62.5%	25%	62.5%	100%

Instructors who taught in Regular classrooms do show some differences based on their belief systems in terms of the amount of potentially transferable knowledge taught, particularly in the rhetorical, subject, and genre knowledge areas. However, the type of course taught (comparing the two "difficult transfer" groups) also had an impact on how instructors, even those with similar belief systems, teach. This issue becomes more apparent

when we examine how instructors deliver potentially transferable content.

Delivery: Connected and Non-Connected Teaching

Grounded theory analysis revealed the frames of connected vs. non-connected teaching and can help explain the importance of not just what content is taught, but the manner in which content is delivered in a writing classroom. Those with connected teaching approaches believe that faculty must help students build explicit connections between learning contexts while those with non-connected teaching approaches assume that transfer occurs automatically and does not necessarily need to be addressed.

Of the thirty-four total assignments, eight (23.5%) asked students to make explicit connections from the immediate classroom to other writing contexts. Of those eight assignments, seven took place in LCs. Of the twenty-six assignments from regular classrooms, only one assignment (3.8%) asked students to develop direct connections between course content and their futures or engaged in any reflection about learning. Ralph's (Effortless Transfer) final "Personal Reflective-Response Essay" asked students to reflect upon the overarching course themes, readings, and assignments and how they directly relate to students' perceptions and future lives. In the remaining seven LC assignments, students were asked to make connections between learning and their chosen professions. Dara asked her nursing students to examine major issues in nursing, to explore the concept of discourse community, and to write personal reflections on their decision to enter nursing. Marie asked her CGT students to explore communication practices and controversy in CGT and to create a professional portfolio.

I observed the two LC instructors teaching in a connected manner. On both days I observed Dara teaching the nursing LC, she made explicit connections between FYC and literacy practices in nursing. Dara spent most of one class period clarifying her "discourse community" assignment by asking students to analyze her assignment sheet, to discuss assignment sheets as a genre, and

to examine university faculty as an audience. Dara then modeled this approach to assignments that students brought from other courses, immediately demonstrating the usefulness of reading assignment sheets in other academic contexts. In Marie's computer graphics technology learning community, Marie performed a similar "understanding writing assignments" lesson.

Attempts to build explicit connections did not take place in any of the twelve regular classes I observed. This was true even when instructors were teaching material directly discussed in their interviews as being transferable, such as research skills or genre analysis. What I did observe, however, were substantial disconnections between what these six instructors said in their interviews and what they enacted in their teaching practices. For example, April (Difficult Transfer, Regular) emphatically discussed how genre analysis helped students transfer knowledge to other contexts in her interview. She said, "I see [genre analysis] as an opportunity to teach them how to approach assignments, how to approach new genres, how to write for any given situation, including first identifying the situation, finding examples, working from models, etc." However, when I observed April teaching this genre analysis for the first time in her class, she did not make those connections clear to students. Rather, the activities for the day were focused entirely on students' understanding the genre of the proposal for the specific assignment with no connections being built elsewhere (as Dara was able to do). April's assignment sheet, handouts, and course schedule likewise did not provide/encourage any connections beyond the assignment. The remaining five Regular instructors in this study are similar to April in that they describe an overall goal of having students learn transferable knowledge and skills but teach in a non-connected manner. I observed three instructors, including April, briefly tell students they would use material in the future, but they provided no specifics. Although students were learning potentially transferrable content, that content remained non-connected to future writing contexts in the regular classrooms.

In sum, these findings demonstrate that instructors all agree that transfer is one of their goals, although they have disagreements on the difficulty of transfer and its relationship to GWSI in writing classrooms. These beliefs certainly do seem to matter, especially concerning rhetorical and genre instruction among instructors teaching a general approach. However, just as importantly as their beliefs, instructors teaching in the general sections appear to teach in a non-connected manner to their students. This is true even of those instructors with extensive coursework in RC who fully admit to the problems of GWSI and who complicate teaching for transfer. In contrast, LCs seem to allow and encourage instructors to teach in a more connected manner (which is clear when we compare instructors with similar beliefs but different classroom setups). Next, I examine these three factors: beliefs, education/training, and themed learning communities and make suggestions for pedagogical principles to foster connected teaching and transfer.

Discussion

Results reveal that transfer is a challenge for graduate FYC instructors in at least three ways: first, while instructors believe transfer is important, they have differing views about how difficult transfer is to enact. While some positive transfer-focused instruction is happening in all classrooms, instructors who believe transfer is difficult seem to focus more on potentially transferrable content, especially rhetorical knowledge and discourse community knowledge. However, those teaching regular FYC are not spending time connecting content to other aspects of students' lives, which suggests we need to pay attention to not only the *content* of FYC but also the *delivery* method of FYC. Also, instructors with limited graduate coursework in RC assume transfer occurs through GSWI, an approach long criticized by the field of rhetoric and composition. Finally, these same instructors lack knowledge about writing in other fields—presenting potential barriers for connected teaching and transfer.

As previously described, scholars including Downs and Wardle and Beaufort have provided evidence for the kinds of material that may be transferred from FYC—in other words, the content we teach. As study results revealed, Difficult Transfer instructors trained in RC did engage in delivering some content that was potentially transferable. However, they did not actively build connections between contexts and activities in general FYC sections. Difficult Transfer instructors teaching LCs, holding nearly identical beliefs and training, were able to teach in a more connected manner. Based on this data and previous literature, I posit the following Connected / Non-Connected Pedagogical framework for the importance of delivery in transfer-focused instruction:

Non-Connected Pedagogy

Non-connected pedagogy provides little to no direct emphasis on connecting coursework to other contexts (civic, educational, professional, and personal). This may be because faculty have made the assumptions that material will transfer automatically and that students are able to make connections to other contexts themselves. At best, faculty using a non-connected approach address issues of transfer in a cursory manner, making blanket statements that the material will be "useful to students later." In teaching rhetorical analysis, for example, an instructor might encourage students to examine the concepts of ethos, pathos, and logos in political speeches but fail to have students make broader connections to other contexts or encourage mindful abstraction.

Connected Pedagogy

Connected pedagogy emphasizes connections between course content and students' current or future writing contexts. Connected pedagogy can be included in course activities, readings, class discussions, writing assignments, metacognitive reflections, and student research. This teaching directly addresses the students' need for forward-reaching knowledge as described by Salomon and Perkins. McKeough, Lupart, and Marini suggest

that because transfer is so difficult and the variables that encourage successful transfer are so wide ranging, instructors of all disciplines should clearly encourage students to adapt knowledge across contexts—to build connections. A FYC instructor using a connected approach in teaching rhetorical analysis might encourage students to learn about how ethos, pathos, and logos apply to their fields or professions and in their everyday life; provide students with activities that examine these principles in other current coursework; and encourage students to actively monitor their learning through reflective, metacognitive writing.

Although the concept of "connected" teaching emerged independently in the study data, the necessity of building connections is well-reported in the transfer literature (Salomon and Perkins, Pressley). Bransford and Schwartz argue that transfer is an active process and that an individual's interpretation and perception of a situation where prior knowledge and skills may apply are largely dependent on the knowledge that an individual brings to the situation (82). Likewise, Van Duer demonstrated that connected, explicit teaching was more effective in encouraging self-directed learning. The need for connected teaching is also supported by Salomon and Perkins' concept of high road transfer, which requires learners to be actively monitoring situations in which transfer could occur. Encouraging students to build connections between current learning and future contexts will better prepare them for the types of writing tasks they will face once they leave the FYC classroom.

Connected Pedagogy, Training, GWSI, and Definitions of Writing

Of fundamental importance to teaching transfer-focused FYC is this study's finding concerning the lack of knowledge that three of the eight instructors of FYC had regarding the nature and/or existence of writing outside their fields and their faith in GWSI as a mechanism to facilitate transfer. In "Ways of Knowing, Doing, and Writing in the Disciplines," Carter emphasizes the "disjunction" between writing faculty and faculty in other

disciplines and "the division between writing *in* and writing *outside* the disciplines" where disciplinary faculty see writing as something separate from their disciplinary knowledge (385). But these issues aren't limited to disciplinary faculty. As study results reveal, writing instructors are also often distanced from disciplinary writing contexts.

Although this sample size is small, if we consider the lack of funding for faculty professional development, the challenges with contingent labor, and the lack of training in RC for many FYC instructors, it is plausible that a good number of FYC faculty are unaware of writing and communicative practices in diverse disciplines and accept GWSI without question. The implications of a lack of knowledge about writing are substantial for transfer and connected teaching: How can "effortless transfer" instructors like Amber, Ralph, and Paul help students connect writing knowledge to diverse fields if they lack knowledge of the nature of writing, composing, or even the existence of writing in those fields? This is not to say that writing faculty must know everything about the writing that takes place in diverse fields; however, in order to make direct connections, faculty need to know something specific about how the skills and knowledge we teach connects to other areas. They should also be critical of GWSI "mutt genres" as Wardle suggests, because these genres lead students away from transferable content. Because very few teachers are experts in writing in many of the fields that students explore, faculty can work to assign projects that ask students to learn more about writing in their field. The "Writing about Writing" (WAW) approach advocated by Downs and Wardle can be used to encourage more connected pedagogy and to build both student and instructor knowledge of writing. My own previously published work also provides a series of suggestions for teaching for transfer, including scaffolding, directly addressing transfer, and student inquiry projects encouraging connections (See Driscoll). One outcome of these findings might be to place even more emphasis on broadening definitions of writing in diverse settings, in complicating GWSI, in bringing in more

metacognitive reflection, and in understanding the challenges with transfer.

Connected Pedagogy and Learning Communities

Study results concerning the difference in disciplinary LCs vs. general FYC in terms of connected teaching also support critiques of GWSI and arguments for a more discipline-based curriculum. According to Petraglia and Russell, GWSI assumes that a common core of writing skills exist that are easily transferred to other contexts. These GWSI beliefs—and associated non-connected teaching behaviors—are especially problematic when comparing the strong desire of students for connections between current learning and future writing contexts (Bergmann and Zepernick, Driscoll). These findings suggest that shifting faculty beliefs and emphasizing certain kinds of goals, content and training, are possibly not enough to encourage transfer of learning in FYC classrooms. Rather, we must seek to provide opportunities for more focused, connected teaching, including encouraging more disciplinary and fewer GSWI focuses in FYC.

This is not to say that linked disciplinary courses are not without their own difficulties. As Wardle reports in her 2009 study, one instructor she followed over two semesters of a linked biology course reported that despite substantial effort, the instructor struggled to teach students biology-based genres (779). Wardle concludes that "the activities of FYC do not provide the content to practice writing in [disciplinary] genres in any meaningful way" (781) and that FYC instructors need to start teaching genres in an explicit way—hence Downs and Wardle's arguments for a WAW curriculum where students analyze rather than produce genres across the academy. The WAW curriculum proposed by Downs and Wardle is compatible with the connected teaching framework advocated here.

Results reveal that regardless of beliefs towards transfer and graduate coursework, instructors aligned with regular FYC sections teach in a non-connected manner, while instructors who have LC sections teach in a connected manner. While it is possible

that this finding is a result of the two learning community instructors' individualized teaching styles, it is important to note that these two instructors shared quite similar beliefs and training in the field with three other instructors teaching in the general sections (all were in the "Difficult Transfer" group). It seems more likely that the makeup of these courses themselves forces exigency in the form of connected teaching. Faced with a homogeneous student population that cares deeply for its major/field of study, instructors teaching in LCs are almost required to address how to connect the coursework to their discipline in ways that regular sections are not.

Connected Teaching Practices for Facilitating Transfer

Because not every writing program is in a position to use a learning community model, we must find other ways to develop connected pedagogies that encourage transfer. This study suggests that writing instructors need to take more steps to connect FYC content and past/present/future writing situations. The table below provides features of connected vs. non-connected teaching practices and the source of each of the suggested practices.

Connected Pedagogical Practices	Non-Connected Pedagogical Practices
Demonstrating specifically how material might be used beyond the course through direct examples, models, activities, and student inquiry projects (Study results)	Telling students simply "they will use this beyond the course" or saying nothing about connections (Study results)
Making no assumptions that transfer takes place but rather directly addressing it through connected instruction (Study results)	Assuming transfer takes place automatically or effortlessly (Study results)

Understanding discourse community knowledge; teaching all five knowledge domains (Beaufort)	Assuming students can understand and adapt to the differences in discourse communities effortlessly (Beaufort)
Writing about writing in other fields; showing how course concepts relate (Wardle, study results)	Writing in "Mutt Genres" that do not represent non-FYC contexts (Wardle, Russell)
Teaching rhetorical concepts in a connected manner (Graff)	Teaching rhetorical principles in isolation (Study results)
Building in metacognitive reflection (learning about learning) and having students monitor their own learning activities (Livingston, Yancey)	Requiring reflection without teaching value for learning within and beyond course (Livingston)
Understanding that writing can be taught in a contextual, disciplinary, forward-thinking manner (Russell, study results)	Assuming that writing will transfer through GWSI (Russell, Petralgia)

Figure 1: Connected vs. Non-Connected Teaching

Finally, reflective writing bears special mention here because it is one of the ways that we can encourage students to build connections in any classroom. Many of the activities promoted in Figure 1 can be at least partially addressed using reflective writing in conjunction with other activities. Reflective writing can provide students with prompts and activities designed at building connections between contexts (Yancey) and can encourage students to engage in metacognitive awareness about their learning. I provide some examples in Appendix II of connection-based reflective writing that I use in my writing courses to encourage and facilitate transfer.

Conclusion

This article presents a mixed-methods, descriptive study of eight FYC graduate instructors with an emphasis on instructor beliefs and practices concerning transfer. Results from this study and others like it indicate that we must revise our writing programs to better meet the needs of students by facilitating transfer of learning. While part of the burden of teaching for transfer can be addressed by creating professional development emphasizing connected and non-connected teaching for existing faculty, we also need to know who teaches in our programs, what kinds of training they receive, and how we group students within writing courses.

This study raises a number of important questions that can be addressed by future research, including: What is the relationship between training in RC and knowledge of writing in a wide range of fields? How do the frames of connected and non-connected teaching occur in diverse writing programs? How might we better train instructors, including full-time, part-time, and graduate, to foster connections? What is the relationship between the type of student grouping (LC vs. regular) and instructors' attempts at connected teaching? Do these study findings apply to non-graduate instructors? I encourage researchers and teachers to continue the important work of understanding challenges and successes associated with teaching of transfer in writing courses.

Notes

[1] Special thanks to Wallis Anderson, Linda Bergmann, Edmund Jones, Sherry Wynn Perdue, Lori Ostergaard, Jennifer Wells, and two anonymous reviewers for feedback on this manuscript.

[2] I attempted to recruit two adjunct faculty members into the study to gain representation of all faculty who commonly teach FYC at this institution. However, both adjunct faculty I initially recruited were not able to devote the time necessary to complete the interviews due to their heavy workload. It's also important to note that

FYC is almost never taught by full-time faculty at this institution due to the emphasis on the graduate program and the undergraduate professional writing major.

[3]For a description of the student findings from this larger study, please see "Connected, Disconnected, or Uncertain: Student Attitudes about Future Writing Contexts and Perceptions of Transfer from First Year Writing to the Disciplines." *Across the Discipline* 8.2 (2011). Web.

[4]When inviting the instructors to participate in the study, I told them the study was about teaching writing, not transfer specifically. To avoid biasing my study, I questioned instructors about writing and teaching in general first, saving specific questions related to transfer for the end.

[5] I asked about GWSI and transfer in separate questions, but instructors often linked them in their responses.

[6] No single assignment covered all five domains.

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APPENDIX I

Instructor Interview Script
This was the script used for the semi-structured interviews. Please note that I asked numerous follow-up questions to each instructor based on instructor responses that are not included in the script.

Ice Breaker Question: How is your semester going so far?

Q1: I'd like to ask you about how you approach the teaching of writing. What are your core beliefs about teaching writing?

Probe: How are those beliefs reflected in your writing classroom?

Probe: Do you think your students share your beliefs?

Follow up: What is the most important thing you teach in your first-year writing classroom?

Probe: Why is [answer] that important to you?

Q2: Can you describe a typical day in your writing classroom? How much time is spent on small-group work? In-class writing? Discussing readings, etc.?

Probe: Which activities do your students find most useful?

Q3: In the field of rhetoric and composition, there has been some debate about the idea of general academic writing–whether or not it exists, what features it has, if it can be taught etc. What are your thoughts on general academic writing?

Probe: Would you say that you teach general academic writing? Why or why not?

Q4: What is your belief about the transfer of writing skills to other disciplines?

Probe: Do you try to teach students skills that are transferable?

Probe: What types of activities do you do to help teach writing skills that will be useful to students across the disciplines?

Probe: Do you feel it is your job to teach students how to write in their discipline? Why or why not?

Probe: What would you do if you were approached by a student in the sciences who was upset because he didn't think the course content was relevant to his major?

APPENDIX II

Connected Teaching Examples for Writing Classes
The following examples can be used for written reflections, homework assignments, or in-class activities. The goal of these questions is to encourage students to build connections between prior, current, and future writing contexts.

Questions for Initiating Learning
I usually use this set of questions as a freewrite activity in class. After the freewrite, we have a group discussion and we develop a "class" response (this is also really helpful for finding gaps in your instruction!). This set of questions can also serve as a heuristic for students approaching any new assignment.

- What do I already know about writing in this genre?
- Where have I encountered similar assignments before?
- What do I already know about my subject?
- What do I need to find out about my subject/genre?
- How can I find that out?
- Where can I get help if I need it?

Questions for reflecting upon learning
These questions can be used to help students connect learning at the end of a writing assignment.

- What did you learn from this experience?
- Where did you succeed in this assignment? Where did you struggle in this assignment? What did you learn from that success and/or struggle that will be useful to you in future writing situations?
- What did you learn about your topic and how does that apply to your future career/coursework/personal life?
- What did you learn about writing and how does that apply to your future career/coursework/personal life?

Sample Connected Teaching Assignment: Profile of Communication in Your Field

The profile of your chosen field of study will ask you to research and write about your chosen field with an emphasis on discourse community conventions in written communication. You will be required to interview two individuals for the paper: a professional in the field and an experienced student in the field (upper division or graduate). Your audience for this assignment is fellow students interested in learning more about communications in your field. You should define any jargon or concepts that may be foreign to this audience.

Assignment Objectives:
- To allow you to gain familiarity with how writing is done in your field (including student and professional writing)
- To allow you to develop professional communication skills
- To practice academic writing
- To practice finding and integrating multiple types of sources (primary and secondary) into your writing

Your task is to develop a profile of the "discourse community" in your field of study (or, if you are undecided, a potential field of study). You should discuss the following in your profile piece:

Interviews: You will interview two individuals from your chosen field. One individual should be a professional and the second should be an advanced student. As a class, we will develop a list of questions to use with your interviews. Use your interviews as a "source" for your profile.

Where and when is writing used: Using your interviews and at least three secondary sources, please describe:
- How do people write in your field? What format is the writing in? Is it long and detailed or short and to the point? How much of it is done? Provide at least two specific examples of genres. Note: do not limit yourself to thinking that an "essay" is the only form of writing: email communications, reports, notes, documentation are also forms of writing.

- How else is information communicated in the field? Through professional listservs? Conferences? Casual discussions? Poster presentations?
- How does one begin to write professionally in the field? What does one need?

Your profile should be approximately 1500 words in length and use proper APA documentation.

In addition to the profile, you will write a reflection that examines your writing process in this assignment.