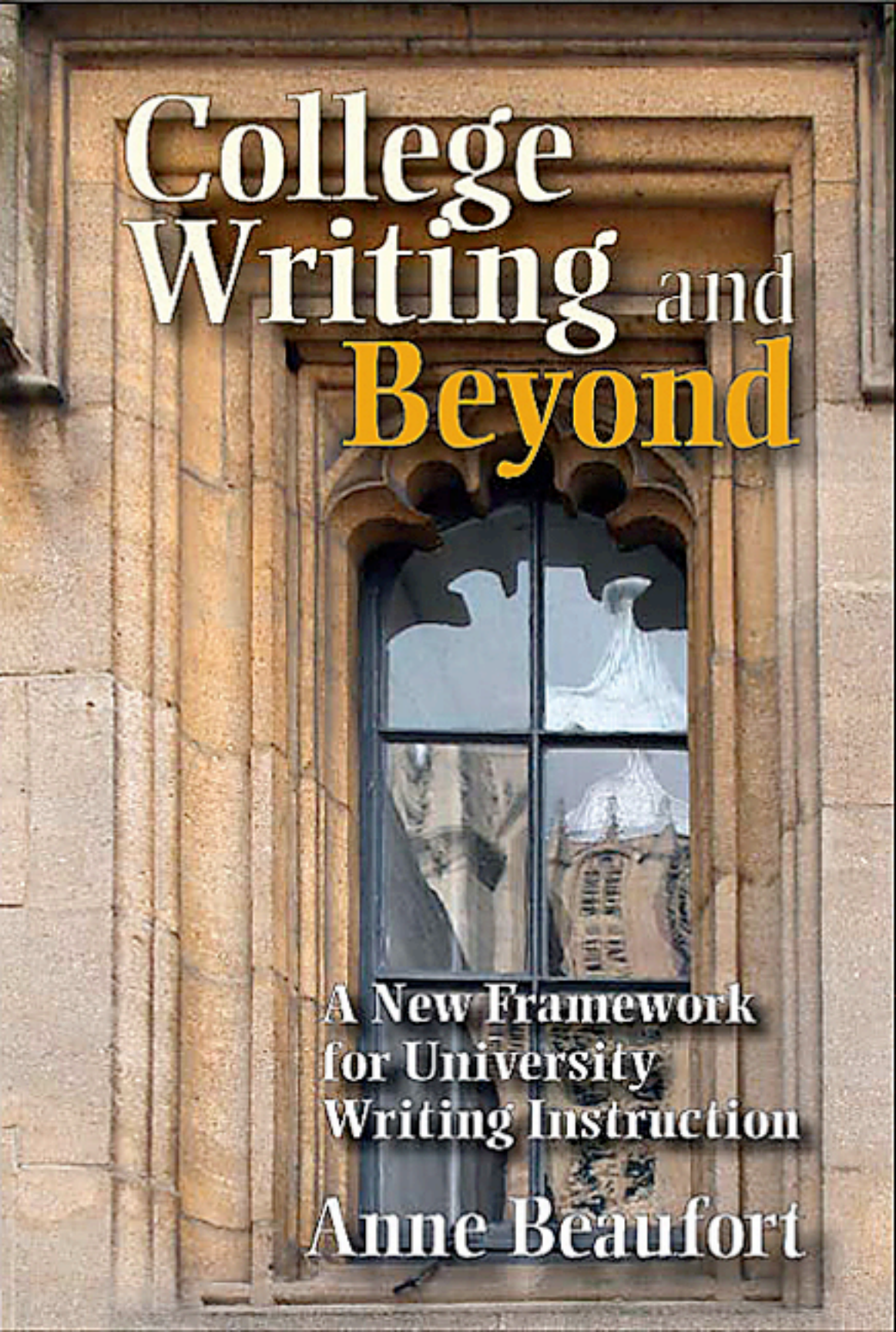
College Writing and Beyond
A New Framework for University Writing Instruction
Anne Beaufort

COLLEGE WRITING AND BEYOND

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Excerpt:

"Teaching for Transfer"

from chapter six "New Directions for University Writing Instruction"

Second, teachers in all disciplines should employ techniques that aid transfer of learning for writers. As Premack (1989) says, "The objective of both education and (in a sense) intelligence is transfer. We commend teaching that enables the student to perform correctly in situations different from those in which he was trained" (p. 239). In light of the issues presented in this case study, I would argue that all faculty should acknowledge and make clear the socially situated aspect of the writing they assign, so that students understand the connection between writing conventions and the work those conventions are meant to accomplish in given discourse communities. Two recent additions to the literature in composition studies, Devitt (2004) and Smit (2004) make this same plea. I add my voice to theirs, but with a more specific appeal.

Smit (2004) says,

> Writing teachers get what they teach for, instruction in particular kinds of knowledge and skill and not broad-based writing ability. If we want to promote the transfer of certain kinds of writing abilities from one class to another or one context to another, then we are going to have to find the means to institutionalize instruction in the similarities between the way writing is done in a variety of contexts (pp. 119–120).

I would argue that we are looking to teach not similarities in the ways writing is done in different contexts, but rather, to teach those broad concepts (discourse community, genre, rhetorical tools, etc.) which will give writers the tools to analyze similarities and differences among writing situations they encounter.

We have seen in this case that Tim was given little explicit instruction in the particular socially based writing conventions of the three writing contexts he encountered in college. If that had been the case, he most likely would have adjusted more readily to the changing expectations for writing as he moved from one discourse community to another. There was one exception: Carla emphasized the importance of considering audience in any act of composing. So Tim tried to consider audience when writing to his history professors or his engineering professors. But the concept of "audience" as traditionally defined in rhetoric does not go far enough toward illuminating a complex web of social relations, values, and conventions a writer must take into consideration. So, for example, Tim thought the history professor who had young children would resonate with an introduction to his history topic that drew an

analogy to raising children. But what Tim did not understand was that discourse community norms in history required altogether different strategies for connecting with one's readers; as a result, his rhetorical strategy was ineffective.

Or, in the case of genre conventions, Carla favored the more literary, exploratory form of the essay and did not name this particular "subgenre" of the essay to her students. So, Tim did not readily adjust to the more hierarchical, linear form of logic and structure for the academic essay that his history professors wanted from him. Nor did his history professors explain what conventions were to be followed in a historical essay compared to essays in other discourse communities.

All faculties can benefit from being grounded in the research on transfer of learning and in genre and discourse community theories, the two most important organizing frameworks for understanding writing in multiple social contexts. And this theoretical background is especially critical for teachers and tutors of writing. Writing teachers and tutors are in the unique position of preparing students to enter others' discourse communities. Writers would benefit greatly if careful attention were given in classroom and writing center instruction to key concepts that will help them to become skilled learners in other social contexts for writing.

The research on transfer of learning has yielded some key principles that can apply in any context of learning. I summarize those principles briefly here and demonstrate how they apply specifically to facilitating transfer of learning with respect to writing.[38] Perkins and Salomon reviewed more than two decades of research on transfer of learning and concluded that "To the extent that transfer does take place, it is highly specific and must be cued, primed, and guided; it seldom occurs spontaneously" (Mikulecky et al. 1994). They are referring in particular to "high road transfer," those types of situations in which "mindful application of abstract concepts to new situations" is required (Perkins and Salomon 1989) In particular, they suggest what teachers can do to facilitate transfer:

> learners are shown how problems resemble each other; learners' attention is directed to the underlying goal structures of comparable problems; . . . examples are accompanied with rules, particularly when the latter are formulated by the learners themselves; . . . learning takes place in a social context (p. 22).

In another article, they refer to "mental grippers" for organizing general domains of knowledge that then can be applied in local circumstances(Perkins and Salomon 1989). The concepts of "discourse community" and "genre" can be two such "mental grippers" for writers, and well as the model for writing expertise I have drawn, which includes subject matter knowledge, rhetorical knowledge, and writing process knowledge as well.

Flower (1989) makes a similar argument. She says the most worthwhile thing we can teach is "rhetorical knowledge and principles of rhetorical problem-solving that will transfer across different writing tasks." She refers to "writing plans" (what I refer to as genre knowledge) and "topic knowledge" (what I call subject matter knowledge) in addition as helpful tools in transfer situations. And she points out a key problem with transfer of learning in school contexts for writing:

> In school writing the social, rhetorical context is often buried and the student is used to dealing with assignments, not problems . . . when the writer sits down to compose, his or her old assignment-driven strategies for producing text leaves no room in the writing for rhetorical problem-solving (p. 20).

This was clearly the case for Tim in all three school contexts—freshman writing, history, and engineering. Writing tasks were mostly assignments, i.e. responses to an authority figure's need to evaluate the learner's competence, not rhetorical problems to be solved within the context of a network of discourse community members whose texts existed for multiple social purposes. Rhetorical problem-solving became a reality for him only when he moved into his first job and the relation of texts to social action was immanent and clear.

What is clear in all of the literature on transfer of learning is *first, that learners need guidance to structure specific problems and learnings into more abstract principles that can be applied to new situations.* As Gick (1987) says, "Experts shift their basis for categorizing problems from relatively surface attributes of problems to more abstract, structural attributes that cue principles relevant to the solution" (p. 39). These are the "mental grippers" Perkins and Salomon refer to and this is where conceptual knowledge of discourse communities and genre knowledge becomes useful. If students are led to see the features of a discourse community represented in a particular course and understand the properties of discourse communities in general, and ideally, have opportunities to

analyze (with guidance) several discourse communities, they can then take that skill in analyzing a discourse community into new social contexts for writing. And likewise with the concept of genre: we cannot possibly teach all genres students might need to know in the future, but we can teach the concept of genre and ask students to apply the concept to analysis of several text types.

I have also just exemplified the *second principle for aiding transfer of learning, namely, giving students numerous opportunities to apply abstract concepts in different social contexts.* Teachers often assign different types of genres in a course, but and if there were also a discussion of the similarities and differences among the genres, applying the concept of genre to those genres assigned, students would learn how to use the concept of genre to analyze new text types they need to read or write. And along with multiple examples of genres in action (rather than mere writing assignments), teachers can acknowledge both the immediate social dynamics of a given course—the temporary discourse community of the course—and through case studies, or examples from their own work in various discourse communities, they can acknowledge and exemplify to students "real" rhetorical problem-solving in multiple discourse communities.[39]

And there is a *third principle for increasing the chances of transfer of learning that runs throughout the literature: teaching the practice of mindfulness, or meta-cognition.* Literally "thinking about thinking," meta-cognition implies vigilant attentiveness to a series of high-level questions as one is in the process of writing: how is this writing task similar to others? Or different? What is the relationship of this writing problem to the larger goals and values of the discourse community in which the text will be received? These and other reflection-in-action types of questions, if a part of the writer's process, will increase the ability to learn new writing skills, applying existing knowledge and skills appropriately (i.e. accomplishing positive transfer or learning).

In sum, to aid positive transfer of learning, writers should be taught a conceptual model such as the five-part schema I have laid out here for the "problem-space" of a writing task, i.e. the five knowledge domains they will need to draw from to complete the task. Then, they can work through each aspect of the writing task in a thorough manner, looking for what in the current situation for writing is similar to past writing tasks, or analyzing new tasks with appropriate "mental grippers" for understanding. And teachers and tutors should also assist in what

Perkins and Salomon refer to as "bridging," i.e. "[mediating] needed processes of abstraction and connection-making" (1989). Acquainting students with the need for bridging and the tools I have laid out here for doing so will teach them to learn for transfer. This is meta-cognition on the teacher's part. (Appendix A gives further examples of ways to teach or tutor for transfer of learning.)

The third recommendation I make here, based on this case study and my experience as a writing program administrator, is that *department chairs, writing program administrators, and deans would greatly increase the "return on investment" in writing instruction if they foster opportunities for faculty to create sequential, developmentally-sound writing sequences that extend across courses in a major.* I would urge the same for those who propose composition texts to publishers and to the editors at those presses who specialize in composition rhetorics and readers. The sample assignments in such texts, I suggest, would aid writers to a much greater degree if they followed the principles laid out here.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1993) say, "For many, the effect of years of practice is simply to produce increasingly fluent bad writing" (p. x). And Young and Leinhardt (1998) say "[there is a need for] models for systematic instruction of disciplinary writing." If we are going to foster advanced levels of writing literacy in students we graduate from higher education, we cannot assign responsibility for this goal solely to a single course or even two; nor can we expect that any type of writing task will do. Smit (2004) echoes my plea:

> To insure that students do generalize certain aspects of writing, colleges and universities will have to make writing in different courses more related and systematic, so that instructors can build on what students have learned previously. They will have to implement what Arthur Applebee calls an integrated curriculum ". . . Somehow we have to break down the barriers between writing classes and the barriers between the instructors of those classes; we have to get over the notion that instructors are mini-dictators of their own private domains" (p. 193).

Sequencing should occur both within courses and across courses and departments. John Williams, a history professor, realized that requiring a single major paper at the end of an upper-level history seminar, a typical practice in the disciplines, would have yielded better results if, in the early weeks of the course, he had built in smaller writing and critical thinking tasks that introduced the skills needed to accomplish the capstone essay

for the course (Beaufort and Williams 2005). Lower and upper division courses and even graduate courses should be accompanied, no matter what the discipline, by a sequence of writing tasks for students to undertake that will gradually increase the challenges in the tasks assigned and move students along in critical areas of writing expertise: discourse community goals and values, genre conventions in the community, and interpretive/critical thinking skills that are necessary companions to subject matter, rhetorical skills, and writing process skills.[40]

The data presented here point to this need for continuity of writing instruction across the college curriculum. Assignments Tim received, both in freshman writing, in history, and in engineering did not evidence a clear sequential path that would allow both repetition of skills in order to refine them and gradual, linked assignments requiring new writing skills.

The sequence of assignments in Tim's first course in freshman writing sought to introduce a series of different but related rhetorical problems to the students. But the jump from personal, expressive genres (letters, journal entries, first-person narratives) to the community service writing project (a newsletter article reporting on an unmet market need) was a shift of great magnitude: Tim missed the cues from the newsletter editor on what was expected and also became self-critical for writing something that he felt did not uphold his romantic notions of writing for self-expression that had been unleashed in the same course in earlier assignments. So he bridled at the community service project and had to write several drafts to produce both the content the newsletter editor wanted and a style the editor wanted.

In the second freshman writing course, the sequence from field research (an interview), to rhetorical analysis of a single source, to the major research assignment could have fostered an awareness of the multiple sources of information on a topic and how different sources might yield different sorts of data. The assignment to analyze one text was intended to teach critical reading skills that could then be applied in the longer research assignment. But the bridges between these assignments—the principles I have spelled out here—did not become evident to Tim as far as I could see. And in Tim's case, the lack of perception of any continuity between the three assignments was exacerbated by the fact that he took the option of writing on three very different topics (Vatican II, genetic engineering, and ecology in Russia) for each of the assignments.

In the six history courses spanning three years from which Tim showed me work, I could see only one shift in the assignments: in his freshman year, he was working mostly with secondary source material (he did work with a couple of primary source texts—Benedict's *Rule* and Augustine's *Confessions*) but starting in his sophomore year he was working almost exclusively with primary sources. But the types of intellectual tasks he was asked to take on—the scope of reading and analysis or synthesis of materials, the interpretive tasks, even, the genres—were either similar throughout the three years of coursework in history, or in one case, harder in his freshman level course than some of the tasks in subsequent sophomore and junior-level courses. Mostly, he was still writing five-to-seven page essays in his upper level seminars and the tasks were the same as the tasks given in his freshman-level courses: analyze a historical text or a historical period. It is not surprising, then, that his skills in writing history did not show noticeable improvement.

There was less writing in Tim's engineering courses: he gave me only a literature review and three product proposals—two from his junior year and one from his senior year. The only variations apparent in the product proposal assignments were in the subject matter of the proposals. He did get repeated practice in writing project proposals (and as a result, the language became more appropriate to the genre), but the assignments were virtually the same across courses.

As noted earlier, there is little documentation of discipline-specific writing sequences at the college level. And Haswell (1991) likens most composition textbooks to "default cookbooks." He says, ". . . although the cookbook method may help clinicians assess and find material, it does not diagnose individuals or lay out a plan for therapy" (p. 292). While I would not want to liken writing curricula to therapy, nonetheless, Haswell's point—that there is a dearth in the literature of plans for writers' developmental processes—is valid. Even within composition studies, there is not enough emphasis on developing curricular sequences across writing courses. Teacher autonomy should not be the primary criterion for curricular decisions when students' developmental progress is at stake. And within writing courses, the model derived from Moffett (1983) for sequencing assignments from the personal essay to more abstract arguments (based on Piaget's child development theory), needs to be revisited. At least, in my own teaching I have found two problems with starting students with expressive/personal writing: 1) without an intellectual framework for analyzing personal experience,

which hopefully the course will provide, students generate a superficial narrative without substantial intellectual content and 2) in college settings, this type of discourse is generally an anomaly, so students tend to dismiss the importance of the assignment in relation to their other work. I still offer students the opportunity for personal exploration of the course theme, but generally in ungraded freewriting done in class.

The conceptual model of the knowledge domains in disciplinary writing articulated here could enable curriculum developers to conceptualize course sequences, assignment sequences, and even course content that would maximize students' opportunities to build subject matter and critical thinking expertise, as well as awareness of discourse community norms and norms for key genres employed in the discourse community. And in addition to style guides, which many disciplines use and are helpful for sentence-level and documentation issues, departments could provide students with tips about the specifics of rhetorical situation and composing processes useful in a given discourse community. A few in composition studies (Kiniry and Strenski 1985, Rose 1989, Spear 1983) have begun to articulate general sequences of assignments that build on Bloom's taxonomy of critical thinking tasks. Work is needed as well in specific content domains. For example, in history, some have begun studies on the critical thinking skills and rhetorical knowledge needed to work with texts as sources for historical analysis that can inform the design of history curricula (Gunn 2000, Hall 1987, Walvoord and McCarthy 1990, Woodman 1988).

Others also offer useful frameworks for conceptualizing curricular sequences at the college level: Berryman (1992) gives a useful framework for creating what he calls cognitive apprenticeships: considerations of content, sequencing of content, and methods of instruction, including the social factors that influence learning.[41] Kiniry (1985) argues for sequencing expository and persuasive writing assignments taking into account the intellectual hierarchies developed in cognitive psychology and Kovac (2001) instantiates such a sequence of assignments across four years of a college-level chemistry curriculum.[42] And Russell (2001), unlike Kiniry and Kovac, makes explicit the need to combine not only the cognitive apprenticeship aspects of learning to write for specific discourse communities, but also the social dimensions.[43] Others (Beaufort 2000, Lave and Wenger 1991, LeFevre 1987) echo the social apprenticeship aspect of learning, a dimension that should be added in curriculum design.

As with most matters in education, there is no one "right way" to build a sequential writing curriculum. But certainly the research and the principles I have referred to here should be considered in developing comprehensive, well-sequenced writing curricula in all disciplines. And it should be noted that the evaluative climate of schools can sabotage even the most well-thought-out writing curricula and pedagogies and undermine efforts to introduce students, as apprentices, to disciplinary practices (Greene 2001, Nelson 1990). Methods of assessing students' writing development is another critical factor in aiding maximal learning.

In addition, setting writing assignments at an appropriate level of difficulty, providing some but not too much scaffolding to assist students in their zone of proximal development, as Nelson's research attests, is not easy. Tim did not try as hard with assignments that seemed to him ill-conceived. Factoring in students' backgrounds and personal interests in conceiving of curricula that will motivate and inspire a sincere effort is yet another complication of designing successful writing curricula (Alexander 2003). Tim sometimes was thinking beyond school in his creative approaches to assignments. When an assignment allowed him to tap into his personal interests (the Stalinism essay is an example), he expended more effort. As Bazerman says, if we want motivated writers, we need to assign problems they want to solve for more than the grade.

In spite of these significant challenges, our task as educators is to give our students the very best writing instruction, based on the sound principles that research has demonstrated can increase individuals' writing literacies in multiple discourse communities. Additional longitudinal, comprehensive studies of the development of writing expertise in a variety of discourse communities and the influence of curriculum and instruction on that development would aid our efforts in this area.

CODA

When an administrator asks, "Are students learning to write better in these courses?" usually the answer cannot be a simple "yes" or "no," as this case study demonstrates. When a teacher sits down to plan a course or to grade a set of essays, no matter how many times the task has been done in the past there is a certain feeling of needing the fortitude of Hercules yet again. When a tutor meets with a writer who is stuck or uncertain, the question is, "Where to start?" Because of all the factors

in a writer's growth I have outlined here, one must consider multiple variables all together. To each—administrator, teacher, tutor—I would say courage is needed, and patience, and compassion. These must come from within. What I have hoped to supply here is the added element of what to consider as curricular or evaluative decisions with regard to writing are made.

If we return to the questions raised in Chapter 1, I trust the reader has found at least partial answers here:

- *Why can't graduates of freshman writing produce acceptable written documents in other contexts?* In part, because each context requires specialized or "local" know-how. And in part, because we have not yet become experts at teaching for transfer.
- *How can we expend dollars for writing programs wisely? How can we apply the research in composition studies to re-conceptualizing writing programs and teacher/tutor training?* Coach faculty to assign serious intellectual questions for exploration in writing courses and instantiate the inquiry in particular discourse communities. Create developmentally sound linkages in writing curriculum across disciplines and within disciplines. And teach for transfer.
- *How can we set students on a life-long course of becoming more expert writers?* Let them know what is entailed in gaining expertise—continuously tackling more and more difficult writing challenges. Let them practice learning new genres and the ways of new discourse communities and point out the ways in which they have learned these things. Challenge them to apply the same tools in every new writing situation.

Jeff Davis (2004) says there is a source beyond reason where truth originates. I have tried to apply reason here. I hope I have also touched truth.

APPENDIX A
From Research to Practice: Some Ideas for Writing Instruction

Here I briefly lay out a few of the teaching strategies I and my graduate student and collaborator, Dana Driscoll, have developed and tested in the classroom to put into practice the principles laid out in Chapter 6—principles that enable writers to become more flexible and learn writing requirements in new contexts more readily. I also draw on the excellent work of Amy Devitt, Mary Jo Reiff, and Anis Bawarshi in *Scenes of Writing: Strategies for Composing with Genres* (2004). And if ideas I think are mine were in fact borrowed from others but I no longer remember, I trust those individuals will let me know so that I can express gratitude and give proper acknowledgement.

TEACHING FOR TRANSFER

As I explained in Chapter 6, writers will not automatically bridge, or bring forward, appropriate writing strategies and knowledge to new writing situations unless they have an understanding of both the need to do so and a method for doing so. In other words, writers, if they want to gain expertise in multiple genres and discourse communities, have to learn to become lifelong learners. The developmental process for writers never ends.

So teachers and tutors who teach for transfer are doing a great service to their students. I would encourage all to read the articles I have cited by Perkins and Salomon (1989) for a deeper understanding of the research on transfer of learning. Keeping in touch with one or several students over the course of the students' education and entry into the work world to see what writing situations and difficulties they encounter and how they handle them can also enrich one's perspective on teaching writing. The ideas presented here will also guide teachers and tutors to aid their students in developing what Smit (2004) calls "rhetorical flexibility" and I would refer to as multiple writing expertises.

1. Teach learners to frame specific problems and learnings into more abstract principles that can be applied to new situations.

> Expert knowledge is not just a head full of facts or patterns, a reservoir of data for the intellect to operate upon. Rather, it is information so finely adapted to task requirements that it enables experts to do remarkable things

with intellectual equipment that is bound by the same limitations as that of other mortals (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1993, p.30).

The model of writing expertise (see Figure 1, page 18) as well as the concepts within the framework that are specific to writing situations—discourse community, genre, and rhetorical situation, are the kinds of "abstract principles" that can be taught explicitly and may help writers to frame their knowledge in ways that aid transfer to new writing situations. Generally, I begin with the concept of genres, and then, after students have read, discussed, written in several genres and we have talked about the nature of each, I bridge to the discourse communities students know and participate in. These "meta" discussions and activities are interwoven with the normal course activities of reading, discussing, and analyzing core readings and working on writing projects. Here are just a few of the ways these concepts can be introduced:

Ways to Teach Genre Awareness

- Type up a horoscope in poem format (short lines/verses). Ask a student to read this "poem." Ask for comments on the features that make it a "poem." Then reveal the true genre and discuss how one's mental schema for a genre influences the way one reads and interprets texts.
- Ask students to make a list of 10 genres they regularly read. Have them pick three and describe how they read them differently. Do the same exercise with 10 genres students regularly write. Then hypothesize how the genre prescribes or influences the processes entailed in reading or writing them (from *Scenes of Writing*).
- Collect multiple samples of a short, simple genre: for example, obituaries, wedding announcements, news briefs, postcards, abstracts of journal articles. Using a matrix like the one on the next page (acknowledging its simplified format for describing genres), ask students to identify key genre features. Then discuss the social actions and values represented in these genre features.
- Give students a short reading selection without disclosing the source. Ask them to infer the genre, then discuss its properties and how that influences the meaning of the text. Some possible sources: newspaper or magazine editorials, song lyrics, advertising copy.

GENRE FEATURES

	obituaries	journal abstracts
Rhetorical purpose(s)		
Typical content		
Structural features		
Linguistic features		

- Assign a brief topic and a genre students will use to write on the topic (for example, an ad to sell something in the newspaper). Then assign the same topic to be written in a different genre (a bulletin board notice? a listing on eBay?). Compare treatments of the subject in the two genres and how rhetorical purpose, content, structure, and linguistic features change (or not) in each genre (from *Scenes of Writing*).
- After students have collected multiple examples of a genre, analyzed the genre, and have written in that genre, have small groups write a "how to" guide for composing in this genre that other writers can use (Coe 1994).

Ways to Teach the Concept of Discourse Community

- Introduce the concept with a definition such as this: "A discourse community is a social group that communicates at least in part via written texts and shares common goals, values, and writing standards, a specialized vocabulary and specialized genres." Then present numerous examples of texts from very divergent discourse communities and ask students if they can discern which discourse community "owns" or uses the text (for example—the baseball scores reported in the daily newspaper, or lyrics from a rap song). Based on these text samples, students may speculate on what the features of the discourse community are, using the definition as a heuristic.
- For a given discourse community the students know (one's major, or a social group one is associated with), brainstorm a list of all of the genres one uses in the discourse community.

For each genre, ask students to identify common elements that are found in all of the genres that reflect on the discourse community's goals, and norms for good writing. Have them compare the relationships between the genres.

- Ask students to bring to class sample texts from discourse communities they are members of. Remind them of the definition of discourse community. Have them do a brief freewrite on the ways that discourse community defines itself via its shared texts. Discuss their examples.
- Do a matrix such as the one below for the discourse communities of different academic disciplines. Have students who are familiar with (or majoring in) the different disciplines complete the matrix for their discipline. Have a whole group discussion of similarities and differences in the features of different academic discourse communities.

	Natural Sciences Discourse Community	Social Sciences Discourse Community	Humanities Discourse Community
Discourse community goals & values			
Typical genres (oral and written)			
Norms for genres (standards for good writing)			
Writers' tasks/roles in the discourse community			

- Show students two texts on the same topic, but written for different discourse communities (for example, a science report in *The New York Times* and one on the same topic in a scientific journal such as *Nature*). Ask them to list the differences they see. Refer back to the definition of discourse community and ask students to infer what the discourse community that "owns" each text values, based on features of the sample genres.
- Have students join a listserv or newsgroup and "lurk" for two weeks (a virtual discourse community). Observe special terminology used, or common terms that are given special meaning.

Observe who the members are. Answer these questions about the discourse community: What do you think the goals of the community are? How do the community's goals and values shape what they write? What else do you notice about the writing of this group? What content is important to this group? What themes are expressed across multiple texts? Are there dissenting voices? (from *Scenes of Writing*)

- Assign an ethnography of communication for a discourse community of the student's choice (an academic community, a social organization, a volunteer group they work for, a workplace setting, etc.). Teach the skills for taking field notes and conducting interviews and gathering written artifacts. Assign a library research component as well—what others have written about this discourse community. Discuss ways of parsing the definition of discourse community for analysis of the data. Have students prepare a final report on their research to describe the discourse community to an outsider. For examples of ethnographies of discourse communities, see Beaufort (1991), Fishman (1988), Heath (1983).

2. Give students numerous opportunities to apply abstract concepts in different social contexts

> If knowledge is just items in a mental filing cabinet, then it is easy to acknowledge that an expert must have a well-stocked filing cabinet, but that is like saying that a cook must have a well-stocked pantry. The pantry is not the cook, the filing cabinet is not the expert. What counts with cooks and experts is what they do with the material in their pantries or memory stores (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1993, p.45).

Once students understand the frameworks for analyzing writing in different social contexts, they can be given tasks that invite comparisons, and using the concepts to "decode" what is happening in new writing situations. For example:

- Have students compare texts assigned in a given course they are taking for genre features and relationship to the discourse communities represented.
- Ask students to collect writing assignments from different

courses and different professors. Students can analyze the assignments for genres assigned and inferences in the assignment about the discourse community represented.

- Assign students a writing task in a given genre for a given discourse community. Then ask them to write about the same content for a different discourse community. Afterwards, ask them to reflect on the differences in how they approached the tasks (writers' roles), what values and goals of the discourse communities they had to keep in mind, and what norms for genres they needed to change for a different discourse community.
- Assign a community service project or an internship in a field related to the subject matter of the course. Prepare students to analyze the social context using the theoretical lenses of discourse community knowledge and genre knowledge and rhetorical situation as they are working on the assignment. Bridge back to the academic context with a discussion of differences between the academic discourse community and the discourse community of their field work.

3. Teach the practice of mindfulness, or meta-cognition, to facilitate positive transfer of learning

> In its fullest sense progressive problem-solving means living an increasingly rich life—richer in that more and more of what the world has to offer is taken into one's mental life. But that increasing richness, because of its time and cognitive demands, requires the judicious reduction of peripheral problems. Sages like Henry David Thoreau have been telling us that for a long time (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1993, p.).

This principle is an extension of the familiar step in the writing process of reflection after the project is completed. What is important for transfer is constantly connecting new and already-acquired knowledge. Here are some suggestions for fostering meta-cognition about writing knowledge that will also aid transfer of learning.

- In the write-ups for writing assignments, make explicit to students the ways in which the new work connects to skills already practiced.

- Have students keep a process journal. At the end of each writing project, they can answer a series of questions such as these:

  1. *What did I learn in doing this writing project about writing itself?*
  2. *How did I learn what I learned in this project?*
  3. *How does this new knowledge about writing connect to what I already knew about writing?*
  4. *What do I want to remember to apply to the next writing project or situation?*
  5. *How did this project add to my understanding of the concepts of discourse community and genre?*
  6. *Which knowledge domains did I struggle with the most in this writing project: discourse community knowledge? subject matter knowledge? genre knowledge? rhetorical knowledge? writing process knowledge? What could I do better in the next project in one of these knowledge domains?*

- Have a general discussion with students after all have completed their process journal for a project—a meta-discussion about process. At the end of the discussion, have students add to their process journal anything else they want to remember for the next project as a result of the discussion.
- Midway through a new writing project, encourage students to look at their process entry for the last project to see what they need to remember to do in this project.
- When students receive written feedback on their work, have them respond to that feedback in their process journal.
- Format grading rubrics in ways that highlight the specific concepts about writing you want to reinforce with students. Use the same rubric consistently on multiple assignments. At the end of the course, ask students to analyze these feedback rubrics for changes/growth in their writing skills.