Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer

A 20x20 Introduction to Writing Transfer Research – Jessie L. Moore, Elon University

The Role of Students’ Attitudes Towards Foreign Language Writing and the Problems and Opportunities of Transfer – Ketevan Kupatadze, Elon University

Intellectual Ethos as Transcendent Disposition – Van E. Hillard, Davidson College

Metaphors and Transitions: Using the Rhetorics of Dance to Understand the Rhetorics of Writing – Meg Morgan and Tamara Johnson, University of North Carolina at Charlotte
A 20x20 Introduction to Writing Transfer Research

20x20 (a.k.a. PechaKucha) =
20 slides,
20 seconds per slide

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Borrowed Legends – Perkins and Salomon

High Road → Mindful Abstraction (Bridging)

Low Road → Practiced Habits (Hugging)
Borrowed Legends – Perkins and Salomon

Both automatic?
Near transfer!

Automatic → Standard
Far Transfer
Borrowed Legends – King Beach

Transition:
Knowledge generalized across social space and time

Consequential Transition:
Transition is consciously reflected on, shifts individual’s sense of self or social position
Borrowed Legends – Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström

Prepare learners to be boundary-crossers and change agents

Build on activity theory
Borrowed Legends – Meyer and Land

Jan Meyer and Ray Land
Threshold concepts = transformative, core of the disciplinary world view
Questions about Writing-Related Transfer

• students’ transitions from first-year composition (FYC) to subsequent or concurrent contexts

• students’ perceptions of writing experiences after FYC

• students’ transitions to professional and community contexts
Questions about Writing-Related Transfer

• students’ knowledge of genres and use of prior knowledge when encountering new genres

• how feedback on previous assignments affects students’ future writing

• structures of educational experiences that facilitate transfer
Disciplinary Methods for Studying Transfer

- Surveys of faculty (Nelms and Dively, Wardle “Mutt Genres”)
- Surveys of students (Adler-Kassner, Majewski, and Koshnick; Clark and Hernandez; Driscoll; Nowacek; Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey; Sternglass; Wardle “Mutt Genres”; Wardle “Understanding Transfer”)
- Focus groups with faculty (Adler-Kassner, Majewski, and Koshnick; Nelms and Dively; Wardle “Mutt Genres”)
- Focus groups with students (Bergmann and Zepernick, Nowacek, Wardle “Mutt Genres”, Wardle “Understanding Transfer”)
- Interviews with faculty (Bacon, Beaufort, McCarthy, Nowacek, Wardle “Mutt Genres”)
- Interviews with students (Adler-Kassner, Majewski, and Koshnick; Anson and Forsberg; Bacon; Beaufort; Driscoll; McCarthy; Nowacek; Rounsaville; Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey; Sternglass; Wardle “Understanding Transfer”)
- Interviews with workplace or community organization supervisors (Bacon)
- Classroom observations (Bacon, Beaufort, McCarthy, Nowacek, Sternglass)
- Composing-aloud protocols (McCarthy)
Disciplinary Methods for Studying Transfer
Contexts of Writing-Related Transfer Studies

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Research Outcomes and Transfer Theories

Students do not expect writing to transfer from course to course or from courses to professional contexts.
Research Outcomes and Transfer Theories

Faculty do not identify transfer attempts:

• Faculty perception: Students don’t transfer knowledge from first-year composition

• Nowacek study: Faculty don’t recognize transfer attempts when students make them
Transfer is messy...
Tools
- Ways of Knowing
- Prior Knowledge
- Genre Awareness
- Writing Curricula

Subjects
- Agents of Integration
- Student Perceptions of Transfer
- Student Identities

Objects → Outcome(s)
- Discourse Community Knowledge
- Writing Process Knowledge
- Subject Matter Knowledge
- Rhetorical Knowledge
- Genre Knowledge
Uncharted Areas

• non-academic activity

• more boundary-crossing: collaborations with other disciplines and new research methods

• other institution types, geographic regions, and identity groups
Elon Research Seminar

• 2 year/3 summer project

• Sponsored by the Center for Engaged Learning at Elon University

• Current Topic –
  Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer
Elon Research Seminar

• Institutional research projects
  and
  10 multi-institutional research projects

• 45 participants from 5 countries and 20+ institutions

• Range of institution types → Broader range of contexts
• What terms best capture transfer practices/theories?

• What types of reflection best support critical transitions?

• How do students transfer writing knowledge between languages?

• How do specific curricula (e.g., Writing about Writing) impact transfer?
Elon Research Seminar Conference

June 25-26, 2013
Elon University
CFP coming this week...
Proposals due January 6, 2013