

Telling What They Know; Performing What They Say: Genre Awareness and the Transferability
of Writing

Heather Hill

A dissertation
submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2012

Reading Committee:

Anis Bawarshi, Chair

Sandra Silberstien

Candice Rai

Program Authorized to Offer Degree:

English

©Copyright 2012
Heather Hill

Table of Contents

| | Page |
|--|------|
| List of Table | iv |
| Chapter 1: Introduction: Genre Awareness and the Problem of Transfer | 1 |
| Chapter 2: Creating a Transferable Genre Pedagogy | 31 |
| Chapter 3: Awareness as a Means to Production?: One Student's Process of Learning to Write for Social Science | 65 |
| Chapter 4: An Essay is an Essay is an Essay: When Tacit Knowledge make Genre Awareness Unnecessary | 100 |
| Chapter 5: Reinforcing Genre Awareness through Experience with New Genres | 138 |
| Chapter 6: Conclusions, Implications, and Future Research | 169 |
| Appendix 1: Survey and Interview Questions | 190 |
| Appendix 2: English 131 Course Syllabus | 193 |
| Appendix 3: Genre Analysis Worksheet | 200 |
| Appendix 4: 5 Paragraph Jane Shaffer Essay Outline | 202 |
| Works Cited: | 205 |

Acknowledgement

At the center of this dissertation are the three students, Anna, Richard, and Pedro, who generously allowed me to spend several hours with them each quarter. I am eternally grateful for their willingness to participate in this study.

I am thankful to Scott Stevens for first introducing me to rhetoric, genre theory, and writing studies, and for encouraging me to apply to graduate school.

I am grateful to my colleagues Jennifer LeMesurier, Christopher Martin, and Misty-Anne Winzenried for the endless conversations about genre and transfer that have helped me to clarify my thinking about this project.

I am deeply thankful to Sandra Silberstien for her encouragement and support of this project, and to Candice Rai for reading early drafts and giving excellent advice that has helped me improve the writing in this dissertation.

I could not have finished this work without the constant encouragement and generous feedback from Anis Bawarshi whose unending support and mentorship has been an inspiration to me both professionally and personally. His thoughtful reading and exceptional advice has made this a much better dissertation. His seminar on genre in my first year of graduate work was the original inspiration for this work, and his scholarship on genre has informed this work to a great extent. I am forever grateful.

List of Tables

| Table Number | Page |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| 1. Course Evaluations | 53 |
| 2. Example Survey Responses | 59 |
| 3. Example Survey Responses | 60 |

Telling What They Know; Performing What They Say: Genre Awareness and the Transferability of Genre

Abstract

Because genre is critically important to the ways that writing works throughout the different disciplines, discussions of whether and how to teach genre has become a debated subject among compositionists. In response to this debate, Amy Devitt has proposed teaching “genre awareness,” which does not attempt to explicitly teach the features of a genre, but rather teaches students *about* genre - how genres work, how to make more rhetorically informed decisions about genre when they find themselves in new writing situation. This dissertation presents results from a study testing the transferability of a genre awareness approach to first-year composition. Through a qualitative study of three students who took a first-year writing class focused on genre awareness, this project seeks to understand the extent to which students draw on the genre awareness they were taught when writing papers for other classes, and to what extent genre awareness contributes to students’ ability to successfully write these papers. Research data includes interviews with students, analysis of written work, interviews with instructors, and class observations.

Key words: genre awareness, rhetorical genre studies, transfer, first-year composition, qualitative research

Chapter 1: Introduction: Genre Awareness and the Problem of Transfer

“Transfer of writing skills from one social context to another is a major issue as yet given too little attention in conceptions of writing curricula” (Beaufort 2007).

Recently composition scholars have become interested in the extent to which writing instruction transfers to students’ other university classes. These studies (Carroll 2002, Beaufort 2007, Downs and Wardle 2007, Wardle 2007, as well as others) have shown that the writing skills taught through many pedagogies currently being used in first-year composition classes do not transfer when students move on to their other courses. Transfer – a complex process of using prior knowledge in new contexts – is a major goal of education and has been shown to be influenced by multiple factors. However, the findings that writing instruction does not automatically transfer to other writing situations have caused some to claim that a general first-year composition class cannot teach students to write for the university, which has in turn caused some scholars (Brannon, Goggin, Kitzhaber, Russell, Petraglia, Smit, etc.) to echo Sharon Crowley’s (1998) argument that we should abolish the requirement altogether because it is not fulfilling its purpose. Still others, though, believe that it is possible to create pedagogies that will, in fact, help students to write for their university classes, and have thus attempted to create pedagogies that explicitly teach for transfer. Many have recently turned to a *writing about writing* curriculum - Downs and Wardle advocate for teaching first-year composition as “intro to writing studies” - while others have turned to a genre-based curriculum (for example Bawarshi 2003, Devitt 2004, Beaufort 2007, Tardy 2009). Amy Devitt, in particular, advocates for a genre awareness approach to first-year composition, which does not attempt to explicitly teach the features of a genre, but rather teaches students *about* genre – how genres work, how to figure out what genres will be appropriate in new situations, etc. Although scholars have begun to do work

on the influence of genre pedagogy (McDonald 2006, Tardy 2009, Artemeva and Fox 2010), more research is needed in order to assess whether genre awareness pedagogy helps students successfully write for their other university classes. This dissertation project follows up on the question of the transferability of genre awareness. Through a qualitative study of three students who took a first-year writing class focused on genre awareness, this project seeks to understand the extent to which students draw on the genre awareness they were taught when writing papers for other classes, and to what extent genre awareness contributes to students' ability to successfully write these papers.

In this chapter, I explore the arguments that have been made for the transferability of a genre awareness approach to first-year composition and argue that genre awareness has the possibility of creating five pedagogical conditions that have been shown to facilitate transfer. These include: having a high level of initial learning; being able to abstract concepts from a particular situation; being able to see the similarities and differences between situations; active learning and motivation; and meta-cognition (discussed in detail below). I begin this chapter with a review of literature on the transfer of learning, and especially the research demonstrating the problems with the transfer of writing, and follow with a discussion of the pedagogical conditions that have been shown to facilitate transfer, a discussion of the proposed solutions to the problem of transfer of writing and my own argument for a genre awareness approach to first-year composition.

Throughout this dissertation, I will discuss rhetorical awareness and genre awareness as existing on a continuum. Rhetorical awareness is defined as being able to assess the audience for the communication and flexibly target that audience, as well as the ability to analyze texts for their effectiveness. Genre awareness takes that several steps further to see rhetorical situations

as recurring and to understand typification of responses, and to be able to analyze texts for their recurrent social exigence and pattern of response (this definition will be discussed further below). Rhetorical awareness is a step towards genre awareness.

The Problems of Knowledge Transfer

In psychology and learning theory, the question of transfer is: how much of what is learned in one context can be taken and used in another? Before the foundational scholarship of David Perkins and Gavriel Salomon, the assumption throughout the academy had been that transfer happens automatically. However, as far back as 1901 and throughout the twentieth century researchers were reporting failures in transfer (Thorndike and Woodworth 1901, Thorndike 1924, Reed, Ernst, and Banerji 1974, Hayes and Simon 1977, Papert 1980, Scribner and Cole 1981, Feurzeig et al. 1981, Gick and Holyoak 1983, Linn 1985, Holyoak and Koh 1987). It is now commonly recognized that the assumption that learning transfers automatically is, as Perkins and Salomon state, “inordinately optimistic” (“Teaching” 23). Transfer of learning has been found to be difficult for several reasons, not least of which is that knowledge is context specific and thus difficult to generalize in such a way as to be useful in new contexts. Theorists of situated learning (especially Lave 1988, Lave and Wenger 1991) suggest that transfer may not exist at all since knowledge cannot be decontextualized. Transfer is also difficult because much of the learning in schools is inert and passive and so is not actively carried with students when they move to new contexts. These issues have caused Perkins and Salomon to conclude that “very often the hoped-for learning transfer does not occur” (“Science”).

These studies showing the failures in transfer do not mean that transfer of learning is impossible. Along with the studies showing failures in transfer, there have also been studies throughout the twentieth century demonstrating successes in positive transfer of learning (Judd

1908, Karona 1940, Palinscar and Brown 1984, Nowacek 2011). For example Rebecca Nowacek argues that “students transfer knowledge across disciplinary boundaries more often than current theories of transfer expect or acknowledge” (10). Similarly, Mary Soliday suggests “that general principles of rhetoric probably do transfer across situations” (xiii). However, the failures do indicate that transfer is not an easy task to attain and that in order to have higher success rates of knowledge transfer in schools, we need to be working to create pedagogies that will facilitate transfer. We may also need, as Nowacek argues, new theories of transfer that can account for the more complex ways that knowledge transfers between disciplines, because “current theories of transfer inhibit the ability to recognize instances of transfer and obscure the institutional obstacles to making transfer visible” (11).

When transfer has been seen, it has usually been what Perkins and Salomon call “low-road transfer,” where the surface characteristics of the two situations are so similar that transfer happens almost automatically. For example, students learn to read in elementary school and then transfer that skill to multiple other contexts throughout school and beyond (however, reading does not always transfer automatically either, especially to very specific, highly technical contexts such as law). “High-road transfer,” where the surface characteristics of the situations do not seem similar, is much more difficult because it “depends on deliberate, mindful abstraction of skills or knowledge from one context for application to another” (“Teaching” 25). For example, when students are asked to write school essays and they automatically write a five-paragraph essay without consciously thinking about it, this is a case of low-road transfer. However, if a student is asked to write a science lab report and consciously thinks about the summarizing techniques they were taught in English classes and uses those when summarizing their procedures in the lab, this would be a case of high-road transfer. When the situations are

similar enough to prompt low-road transfer than transfer occurs; otherwise, transfer is less likely, and often doesn't occur without explicit instruction.

The problems of transfer are no less apparent in writing classes. Recent studies of transfer of writing done in first-year composition classes have found that very little of what is taught in these classes actually transfers when students move on to their other courses (Beaufort 2007, Carroll 2002, Wardle 2007). However, transfer is a fundamental goal of writing instruction. If students are unable to use what they learn in a writing class in other contexts, the value of the class is called into question. A major problem, as Lee Anne Carroll argues in Rehearsing New Roles: How College Students Develop as Writers, is that people do not learn to “write once and for all, and [then] ever after” write “well-crafted, cogently argued, eminently readable essays” (2). Writing develops slowly, over time, which means that we cannot expect one 10- or 15-week course to teach students to be expert writers. Also, because writing is context specific, there is very little that can be called “basic skills” in writing, which makes it difficult for writing skills to transfer from first-year composition to other classes. Carroll’s research findings “challenge the myth that writing is a stable, unitary skill that can be learned once and then applied in new circumstances” (27). Because of the disciplinarity of writing, students new to a discipline may not be aware of the disciplinary conventions and need time to be able to learn those before they can effectively use them. Through a study of 20 students, Carroll found that, among many things, what students learned in their first-year writing classes did not directly transfer to their other classes (9). One reason that writing doesn’t directly transfer is that, although composition scholars reject the narrow “basic skills” definition of writing, many composition teachers are still teaching writing as if it is universal even though what they are actually teaching is a specific type of writing that is only appropriate for their own

classes and so doesn't easily transfer to other writing situations.

Other studies (See for example, McCarthy 1997, James 2006, Bergman and Zepernick 2007, Wardle 2007, Beaufort 2009) have supported the notion that transfer of writing can be elusive. David Smit claims that "there is reason to believe that what a writer knows or is able to do is very local and context-dependant and will not transfer to another situation" (122). Anne Beaufort makes a similar argument in *College Writing and Beyond*. She tracks one student for four years of college and two years after to test the transfer of writing learned in first-year composition. She finds a general lack of transfer and some negative transfer (using writing from one situation inappropriately in another). The problem of transfer for Beaufort is that "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 the method for doing it" (177). And so she argues that we should be explicitly teaching for transfer, teaching students when, why, and how to use what we teach them in future writing situations.

Similarly, Elizabeth Wardle, in "Understanding Transfer from FYC: Preliminary Results of a Longitudinal Study," found very little evidence of transfer from her First-year composition class, even when students were taught with a focus on transfer. Even though students in her study claimed to have learned a lot in her first-year composition course and could articulate what they had learned, they claimed that they very rarely needed to use what they had learned. Students wrote very little and the writing assignments they did have were simple enough and similar enough to writing they had done in high school that they didn't need to use anything from FYC in order to get good grades. However, students did seem to carry with them from FYC a meta awareness of writing: "the ability to analyze assignments, see similarities and differences across assignments, discern what was being required of them, and determine exactly what they

needed to do in response to earn the grade they wanted” (76-77). Even more importantly, when students were presented with more engaging and challenging writing assignments, they did draw on some things learned in FYC, but Wardle points out that they very rarely did this consciously. Her findings suggest that the most important things that FYC can teach are “*meta-awareness about writing, language, and rhetorical strategies*” (82), and that the best way for FYC to accomplish this is to teach students about writing in the university and to help them think about how different disciplines use writing conventions.

A major reason for the lack of transfer of writing skills, as argued by Amy Devitt, in her 2007 “Transferability and Genres,” is that differences in rhetorical situations for different genres calls for different writing conventions and therefore puts in doubt the possibility of transfer. She claims that “any skills so generalizable as to be transferable from one situation to another would be so generalizable as to be virtually meaningless” (217). The main problem, for many students, is negative transfer, the attempt to use the same genre in two different situations that require two different genres. The problem occurs when students do not recognize the similarities and differences between situations. Students may see two situations as similar and use the same genre, when in fact the situations may be different and require a different genre. These students are identified in Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) as “boundary guarders,” “students who seemed to guard more tightly and engage in low-road transfer of their prior genre knowledge, even in the face of new and disparate tasks” (325). Recognizing similar situations, Devitt argues, may cause some writing skills to transfer, but only within the same genre. For example, a writer who learns to integrate and analyze quotes for a literary analysis paper will probably be able to use that skill in the next literary analysis paper, but trying to use this strategy in another genre may not work, and thus cause negative transfer.

Possible Solutions to the Problems of Transfer

The previous discussion of the problems of transfer suggests that because of the context-specific nature of knowledge, transfer vary rarely happens automatically, and when it does happen it is because the two situations are so similar that the transfer is unconsciously achieved. Because of the disciplinarity of writing, these problems persist equally or even more so in writing classes. Because of these problems of transfer, researchers (primarily) in educational psychology have been working to discover how to facilitate transfer. Results of this research suggest that some pedagogical approaches are more likely to encourage transfer than others. These include: having a high level of initial learning; being able to abstract concepts from a particular situation; being able to see the similarities and differences between situations; active learning and motivation; and meta-cognition. These conditions are discussed in more detail below.

A high level of initial learning. According to John D. Bransford, a depth of initial learning is necessary for transfer. Carl Bereiter (1995) concurs with this claim, stating that “what is typically viewed as a failure of knowledge to transfer is actually a failure to teach the conceptual knowledge in the first place” (28). Students cannot transfer a knowledge that they do not actually possess. The more in-depth the knowledge of the subject to begin with, the more likely students will be to draw on that knowledge when they get in new situations where it may be helpful. Also, those who truly learn with understanding are much more likely to transfer that knowledge than those who just memorize. The more opportunities students have for practicing what they are learning in different situations, the higher the initial understanding will be. Having a high level of initial learning and having multiple opportunities to practice this learning can help students in situations where low-road transfer is needed: when the new situation is so similar to

the previous one that transfer of that learning is almost automatic (Kain and Wardle 117). This low-road transfer will not happen if students have not had sufficient enough practice to fully understand the knowledge to begin with. As Perkins and Salomon argue, often transfer does not occur because “the skill or knowledge is not well learned in the first place” (“Transfer” 23).

Being able to abstract concepts from a particular situation. In order to affect what Perkins and Salomon call “high-road transfer” students must learn to abstract skills and knowledge from one context in order to apply them in another (Kain and Wardle 2005, Perkins and Solomon 1988). This idea is supported by Reiff and Bawarshi’s description of “border crossers” whose “breakdown and repurposing of whole genres” (e.g. abstracting of writing strategies from specific genres for use in others) “might be working to enable students to engage in high-road transfer and adapt to new contexts” (329). If students understand knowledge to be context-specific, they are less likely to attempt to transfer that knowledge. Therefore, students need to be taught broad, abstract concepts that can be applied to new situations. For writing instruction this means teaching such abstract concepts as discourse community, genre, rhetorical situations, etc. and providing curricular opportunities to practice using these concepts across writing situations. As Beaufort explains:

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 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 the 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. (151-152)

This is the major reason to teach students *about* genres rather than teaching specific genres that are only applicable to one context.

Being able to see the similarities and differences in situations. Knowledge transfer is more likely when learners see the similarities in two different situations. If a student learns something in one situation and then goes into another situation that s/he sees as similar, s/he will be likely to draw on that previous knowledge to help her complete the task in the new situation. Mark Andrew James (2008) points out that it is the individual's perception of task similarity and difference that is crucial to learning transfer rather than an objective similarity. If students do not see the similarities, they will be unlikely to transfer knowledge between those tasks. Teachers can help students to transfer knowledge by helping them to "see the similarities between what they have learned before and what they need to do in new contexts" (Smit 119). Expert writers begin to see similarities between old and new contexts and old and new genres. Novices don't always see these similarities and differences and so don't apply what they know, or apply it inappropriately. For example, in Lucille McCarthy's 1987 study, "A Stanger in Strange Lands: A College Student Writing Across the Curriculum," she found that her research participant, Dave, interpreted the writing assignments in three different classes as completely different from each other and completely different from anything he had ever written before even though there were significant similarities. Dave believed that each class had completely "new rules of use" in writing, which "appeared to have limited his ability to apply previously learned skills" (248).

Active learning and motivation. Transfer is best viewed as an active, dynamic process rather than a passive end-product of a particular set of learning experiences (Kane and Wardle 2005, Solomon and Perkins 1999). Being able to apply abstract concepts to new situations requires active mindfulness – being actively alert and engaged in the surroundings – and motivation, which will help students to assess those surroundings and discover the similarities

and differences between situations and be able to draw on relevant previous knowledge. Salomon and Globerson (1987) discuss dispositions towards learning and thinking that would make students more likely to transfer what they learned. They suggest that students should be helped to develop mindfulness, by which they mean an attentive, non-automatic, and active attitude towards learning. Scholars have also discussed the influence that motivation has on transfer (Pea 1987, Wardle 2007). These studies have shown that students need “the motivation to take advantage of transfer opportunities” (Marini and Genereux 3) which implies an active desire to successfully interact in the learning community and a willingness to go beyond passive reception of learning. Wardle also shows that students are more likely to transfer previous knowledge when they are actively engaged in the writing assignment, and Carl Bereiter (1995) argues that transfer may be aided by “certain dispositions of mindfulness and willingness to learn” (30). Students who are unmotivated, passive learners (or feel like they can get the grade they want without transfer) are unlikely to go through the extra steps of attempting to transfer previous knowledge into new situations.

Meta-cognition. If students are able to reflect on their learning, they will be more likely to remember and draw on that learning when they get into new situations. In order to transfer knowledge, during the initial learning students need to reflect on when, where and how they will be able to use the knowledge in the future. Once they get to that future situation, they need to be able to reflect back on previous knowledge and think about how that knowledge can be used in the present situation. As James explains, “metacognitive approaches to instruction have been shown to increase the degree to which students will transfer to new situations without the need for explicit prompting” (55). Although transfer has been shown to be aided by explicit prompting, meta-cognitive awareness of their own learning can help students to transfer that

knowledge without being prompted (because they will be able to do their own prompting).

Although meta-cognition is central in the conversation about transfer, Nowacek points out that meta-awareness is not always necessary for transfer. This is because transfer happens on a continuum. Low-road transfer happens automatically without conscious thought, whereas high-road transfer needs deliberate abstraction and meta-cognitive reflection on previous knowledge. As explained by Perkins and Salomon, high-road transfer “always involves reflective thought” (“Transfer” 26). However, “people tend not to monitor their own mental processes very much” (31) and so don’t transfer what they have learned as often as they could.

Writing Pedagogies Proposed as Solutions to the Problems of Transfer

Because of the research showing the limited transferability of writing skills taught in first-year composition, composition theorists have been attempting to create pedagogies that take into consideration the pedagogical conditions that facilitate transfer. Smit recommends an introductory course on writing, on current composition research, practice with different genres, and investigation of discourse communities, i.e. a *writing about writing* course. This advocacy of a *writing about writing* pedagogy has been echoed by several other scholars in recent years, in particular Doug Downs and Elizabeth Wardle. In "Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions: (Re)Envisioning 'First Year Composition' as 'Introduction to Writing Studies,'" Downs and Wardle advocate for teaching first-year composition as an introduction to writing studies course which seeks to improve students' understanding of writing, rhetoric, and language. Rather than attempting to teach students to write for the university, they propose to teach students *about* writing – how writing works in the university and beyond. Although most research on transfer has shown that writing does not automatically transfer from FYC to other courses, in Downs and Wardle's courses, they are honest about what writing instruction can and

cannot do, and they do not purport to "teach students to write," but instead teach students "some activities related to written scholarly inquiry" (559). Students learn "that writing is conventional and context-specific rather than governed by universal rules" (559), and so they learn that they will need to learn the appropriate type of writing for each new discipline they write for. Their pedagogy emerges from the disciplinary knowledge of writing studies and responds to writing research. The course itself focuses on writing research, and the major writing assignment asks students to conduct primary research on an issue of interest to them and the field of writing studies. The major assumption behind the Writing about Writing pedagogy is that when students learn *about* writing, they will change their thinking about how writing works, and thus change (for the better) the way they write.

Although Writing about Writing is a very plausible solution to the problems of transfer, it is not the only proposed solution. Because genres help students recognize situations and thus help them recognize the similarities in situations, genre pedagogy has become a point of discussion in the conversation about the transferability of writing. And because genre is such an important element to the ways that writing works throughout the different disciplines, discussions of whether and how to teach genres has become a debated subject among compositionists. In 1984, genre theorist Carolyn Miller reshaped the field of genre criticism and theory with her influential essay "Genre as Social Action." Miller famously defines genre as "typified rhetorical action based in recurrent situations" (159). With the idea that genres are social actions, genres became more than merely text-types, defined by their formal features, but instead were dynamic discursive formations, defined by the actions that they perform in the world, for both their readers and writers. Genres began to be more commonly seen as social constructs, historically and socially situated, which has had profound influence on the

composition classroom as Miller points toward in her conclusion. She states that “for the student, genres serve as keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of communities,” which has sparked a lively debate about whether and how to teach genres in composition courses.

One of the first to see the pedagogical implications of Miller’s definition of genre, Amy Devitt, in “Generalizing about Genre: New Conception of an Old Concept,” argued that we must move beyond genre as merely a formal classification, and see it as a rhetorical and social mode of making meaning (573). She concludes that taking into account this new conception of genre, teachers need to find new ways to teach novice writers how to read and effectively respond to the situations and genres they need (583). Devitt ends with a call for more research into “the most effective techniques of translating our better genre theory into better writing instruction” (583). In the decades since, many scholars have taken up this call, and have attempted to create composition pedagogies that take into account the new theory of genre. One of the major implications the new conception of genre has had for writing instruction is that because genres are seen not as just text types based solely on form, but instead as typical responses to recurring rhetorical situations, they can no longer be taught through just explicating the formal features, because they are not defined by those features. Also because genres are flexible, the features are not stable and so would be difficult to teach. The social nature of genres would also make them difficult to teach outside of their context of use, as noted by Mary Soliday (and many others) when she states: “We can give students better access to specialized genres if we give them access to the social situations of use from which genres draw their power and meaning” (xii).

The most vocal challenger of genre pedagogy that seeks to explicate the formal features of specific genres, Aviva Freedman, in her essay “Show and Tell? The Role of Explicit Teaching

in the Learning of New Genres,” doubts that teaching genres to composition students is necessary or even possible, and claims that the explicit teaching of genres could be potentially harmful to students. Freedman’s main goal is to argue against the kind of explicit teaching of genre advanced by what has become known as the Sydney School of genre. As explained by Bill Cope and Mary Kalantzis in The Powers of Literacy: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing, the Sydney school of genre instruction is based on the assumption that “students need to analyze critically the social purposes that inform patterns of regularity in language – the ways and the hows of textual conventionality” (2). The Australian school system has an explicit social mission to help empower the traditionally marginalized students by giving them access to education. Advocates of this approach to genre instruction, therefore, believe that students should be given explicit instruction in the textual features of the genres of power. The curriculum uses what they call the “teaching-learning cycle” which begins with modeling and then moves to collaborative production of the target genre and then individual production. Through explication of the formal features of the genres, the end goal is for students to be able to produce these genres and then use them whenever they are needed. In addition, though, as summarized by Bawarshi and Reiff (2010), the Sydney school approach attempts to balance text production with contextual understanding and relate linguistic patterns to social and disciplinary patterns. The advocates of this approach argue that it is a transferable pedagogy because it “can provide students with meta-linguistic resources that assist them in producing genres while also developing long-term competence that transfers to other situations” (Bawarshi and Reiff 180).

However, even with the social emphasis, explicit approaches to teaching genre have been called into question by many North American genre theorists (Freedman and Medway 1994, Devitt 2004, Coe et al. 2002, Freedman 1993, as well as others). The first potential

problem with explicit teaching is that it risks teaching genres as forms that are unchanging. This is one reason that Freedman and Medway (1994) warn that students need to learn a *critical* understanding of genres so that they can avoid following generic “rules” strictly (This idea has been echoed by several others, especially Devitt 2004), because genres have been shown to be dynamic and adaptable to particular situations and to the author’s particular purposes (Bazerman 1988, Berkencotter and Huckin 1993, Devitt 2004, Bawarshi 2003, etc.). If genres are only “stabilized-for-now” as Catherine Schryer (1994) has argued, then teaching the formal features would be unproductive because those features are always changing and adapting for particular situations. When a genre is taught by explicating the textual features, it makes it seem as if the genre is defined by those features, that those features don’t change, and that the features are an end in themselves. If students learn genres as strict structures that don’t change, they will not have the ability to adapt the genre appropriately for situations that may call for a slightly different response. This also has the possibility of causing negative transfer if students strictly learn the form of a genre and use it inappropriately in situations that call for something different (Devitt 2007).

A second problem with explicit approaches to genre is that they often teach genres out of context. Genres have been shown to be most effectively learned in the authentic context of their use (Freedman 1993, Devitt 2004, Kane and Wardle 2005, Tardy 2009, Artemeva and Fox 2010). Teaching genres out of context is ineffective because students will not understand the situation that the genre responds to, the social context of the genre, or the work that the genre does for the community that uses it (Devitt 2004, Beaufort 2007). This can cause students to misunderstand the purposes and ideologies embedded within the genre. Also, as Freedman argues, people learn genres all the time without being taught the features, so it seems

unnecessary. Those who need to learn those genres will learn them when they are immersed in the authentic context of their use without ever being taught them explicitly. These arguments cause Freedman to conclude that “explicit teaching is unnecessary; for the most part not even possible; and where possible, not useful” (226).

Freedman’s argument against the explicit teaching of genre has not deterred composition scholars from attempting to find ways of using the concept of genre to create a transferable writing pedagogy. Christine Tardy’s (2009) Building Genre Knowledge follows four international non-native English speaking graduate students in engineering and computer science to examine the ways that L2 writers build knowledge of genres. Similarly to Freedman, Tardy show that students only gain truly expert, rhetorical knowledge of genres when they have to use the genres for high-stakes, authentic situations, and that explicit teaching of the features of genres (outside of their context of use) is not helpful. Tardy shows that writers learn genres through previous experience (antecedent genres), repeated practice, genre models, meta-genres, mentors, written feedback, oral interactions (with mentors or peers), and disciplinary participation. However, although the genre pedagogy taught to Tardy’s research participants didn’t seem to be that helpful to them, Tardy concludes that because all writing is generic, genres must play a role in the teaching of writing and that we must figure out how writing classrooms can contribute to genre learning. Because Tardy finds that students only become experts in producing genres when immersed in the context of their use, she points towards a pedagogy that emphasizes genre awareness rather than genre production. This suggests that although students may not be able to become experts in genre production through a decontextualized writing class, learning genre awareness, as first proposed by Bawarshi (2003), Devitt (2004), and Devitt, Reiff and Bawarshi (2004), may help them more quickly learn new genres when they do become

immersed in the contexts of their use.

In response to the debate over genre instruction, Devitt (2004) has proposed teaching “genre awareness” which does not attempt to explicitly teach the features of a genre, but rather teaches students *about* genre – how genres work, how to analyze genres, how to figure out what genres will be appropriate in new situations, etc. The major goals of Devitt’s genre awareness pedagogy are to teach students how to approach new genres, to understand genres as more than just a classification of text types, to be able to perceive the purpose behind the form, and to discern the ideological assumptions behind the genres they are asked to write. Devitt hopes that her proposed pedagogy will “enable students to learn newly encountered genres when they are immersed in a context for which they need those genres [and] to learn the needed genres with greater rhetorical understanding and with more conscious acceptance of or resistance to the genres’ ideologies” (“Writing” 192). So, although, Devitt would agree that genres can only be fully learned in the authentic context of their use, through learning genre awareness, Devitt claims that students will be able to more quickly and successfully learn those genres, and that they will learn them with more rhetorical awareness.

Similarly to Smit, Devitt claims students need to be taught how to see the similarities and differences in the situations so they know when they can use known genres and when they need to manipulate the genre or use a different one. When students move into unfamiliar situations that require unfamiliar genres, Devitt argues, they often need to adapt known genres to fit the new situation. Becoming proficient with genres can benefit students when they encounter new writing situations if they learn to be flexible. Similarly, Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) argue that flexibility in repurposing genre knowledge “may be a key element to transferring knowledge and learning” (330). In most cases, writers draw on whatever genre in their genre repertoire that

seems to be the closest to the genre needed for the new situation, and so, as Devitt explains, every genre the writer learns well increases the likelihood of having a genre similar to the one needed in the new situation. Writers with large genre repertoires will move through different writing situations more easily. Teaching students genre awareness helps them develop the skills of assessing similarities and differences in situations and thus can help them more effectively choose appropriate antecedent genres. Students can decide how their known genres may not be appropriate for the new situation and can figure out how to manipulate the genre in order to make it fit the new situation.

However, if students are going to be able to transfer that genre awareness, they must be taught why, when and how they will be able to use it in future writing situations. Therefore we need to be explicitly teaching for transfer. Anne Beaufort suggests a curriculum that teaches students to “learn how to learn” new types of writing for new situations and that teaches students to be experts in “learning how to write” rather than trying to teach them to be expert writers in one situation (the situation of the first-year composition class, for example). She argues that students must be given the tools to figure out what kind of writing is appropriate for each new situation so that they can more effectively write for each new situation they come to. Although she distinguishes herself from Devitt and other genre theorists in her theory of writing expertise, her proposed pedagogy is quite similar to Devitt’s. She argues that students need to gain a critical understanding of the relationship between genre “conventions and the work those conventions are meant to accomplish in given discourse communities,” and that we should be teaching students how to analyze the similarities and differences among writing situations they come to so that they “can use the concept of genre to analyze new text types they need to read and write” (149, 152), and be more able to successfully produce those genres when they get into

the situations where they need them.

If genre awareness is taught with an emphasis on transfer, it can help facilitate transfer because it has the possibility of creating all five of the pedagogical conditions that foster learning transfer that were previously discussed. First, genre awareness, if taught explicitly, can cause students to have a strong understanding of the concepts of genre, rhetorical situations, and discourse community, as well as the steps they will need to perform in order to figure out the appropriate response to future writing situations. If students are given sufficient opportunities to practice genre analysis and situation assessment, they will potentially have a high enough initial learning to facilitate transfer. Secondly, using abstract concepts such as genre, discourse community, and rhetorical situation can help students see how these concepts are applicable in multiple contexts. Rather than teaching students how to write in one genre or for one particular situation or community, genre awareness teaches students *about* these abstract concepts so that they can be applied to any writing situation. Third, genre awareness teaches students to assess the similarities and differences in situations so that they will know when they can use previously learned genres and when they will need to manipulate those genres or use different ones. Because transfer is based on the students' ability to see similarities in situations, genre awareness teaches students to assess situations for their similarities. However, because of the possibilities of negative transfer, students also need to be able to assess when the situations are different so that they don't inappropriately transfer knowledge that is ineffective for the situation. Fourth, genre awareness also helps students remain active learners, if they attempt to use it. When students move on to classes after learning genre awareness, their knowledge of the need to assess the similarities and differences in situations, and their ability to perform genre analysis can help them to remain active in the process of learning what is an appropriate response for that

particular situation and community. Also, with the focus on ethnographic-based research involved with genre analysis, students learn that they need to figure out how writing is actually used by members of the community and so are more likely to actively seek out advice from instructors or more advanced peers. Lastly, genre awareness is a form of meta-cognition. Students learn to think about their own learning, to think about what previous knowledge they have that might be applicable to the new situations, and what genres they have in their repertoire that could be useful to them. As Beaufort argues, this type of meta-cognitive awareness implies an ability to ask high level questions about how the writing task is similar to or different from previous tasks, and how the writing task represents the values and goals of the discourse community. These meta-cognitive skills, when applied to the writing process, will, according to Beaufort, increase the student's "ability to learn new writing skills, [and] apply existing knowledge and skills appropriately (i.e. accomplish positive transfer of learning)" (152). Through genre awareness, students learn both forward reaching and backward reaching transfer (Perkins and Salomon). Through the discussion and use of antecedent genres, they learn to look backwards at what they already know and think about how it will be useful to them in the current and in future context, and they also learn to think forward about how the genre awareness they are learning will be useful to them in the future.

Genre awareness itself has the possibility of transferring, but that awareness can also cause other writing skills to transfer because the ability to assess situations can help students to successfully draw on antecedent genres and rhetorical strategies that might be appropriate for new situations. Although I have argued for genre awareness as a possible solution to the problem of the transferability of writing, the question of awareness versus production also needs to be addressed because awareness does not necessarily always lead to successful production.

Natasha Artemeva and Janna Fox take up this question in their “Awareness Versus Production: Probing Students’ Antecedent Genre Knowledge.” They study how antecedent genre knowledge affects disciplinary genre competence and find that “students’ ability to successfully identify and characterize rhetorical and textual features of a genre does not guarantee their successful writing performance in the genre” (1). In other words, the type of rhetorical awareness that gives students the ability to see differences in the surface features of genres is not enough to enable them to successfully produce those genres. In order to produce discipline-specific genres, students must “be immersed in the practices of a particular community” (7). In their study, the inability of students to see the similarities and differences in writing tasks made them less likely to transfer prior knowledge or caused false transfer. The students did not understand the disciplinarity of writing and expected to write the general “English essay,” even in specialized classes (e.g. most students produced typical school essays when the task in their engineering communication class called for a technical report). Many also believed that their success in high school English classes was enough to prepare them for college writing (again, even specialized writing). However, only those students who had prior experience writing in the genre were able to successfully produce the genre. Artemeva and Fox conclude that, although “certain types of instructional experiences ... may heighten students’ genre awareness and enhance their potential for genre production, they may not ensure it” (23). This “suggests that explicit knowledge may be a necessary but insufficient condition for the development of writing competence” (23). Although Artemeva and Fox found that the students in their study often relied on inappropriate genres that they had been taught in the past (negative transfer), those students had not been explicitly taught genre awareness, and Artemeva and Fox conclude that “recent attempts to teach genre awareness ... deserve further investigation” (27).

In summary, the argument made here implies that genres may only be able to be expertly learned within the authentic context of their use, and that only those with prior experience writing the genres can successfully produce them. However, it also suggests that a pedagogy focused on genre awareness can facilitate transfer and help students who have not written the genres before to be able to more quickly learn the genres once they get into those authentic situations, and may learn them with more rhetorical awareness of the values and ideologies embedded in them. This then, may allow them to not only consciously apply the conventions of the genre, but also resist them when the need arises. The bottom line, though, according to David Smit is that “we get what we teach for ... If we want students to transfer what they have learned, we must teach them how to do so” (134). And so genre awareness must be taught with an explicit focus on teaching for transfer. This dissertation project, then, contributes to this conversation by testing whether genre awareness does in fact accomplish all that it is proposed to accomplish, whether genre awareness transfers when students write for unfamiliar contexts and in genres they have not written before.

One last point about genre awareness pedagogy: As will be seen in more detail in the next chapter, one of the main goals of my approach to genre awareness pedagogy is to help students to assess situations for their similarities and differences. However, although genre awareness as explained by Devitt focuses on giving students the tools to figure out how to write new genres when they get into the situations where they are needed, I think that catching the subtle differences between the same genre (i.e. academic argument essays) but for different disciplines is even more difficult than figuring out the differences between completely different genres. Oftentimes students write in only one genre (especially in their first few years of college) and yet each discipline values different things for what is considered “good” writing in that genre for

their particular department or class. Negative transfer happens when students don't learn to catch these subtle differences and just write their essay the same way they always have (or exactly how they were taught in English classes). What students need to learn is the *flexible* use of antecedent genres (as argued by Devitt 2007, Reiff and Bawarshi 2011). Students need to be able to assess the situation, first for the genre needed, and then for how they may need to manipulate that genre for the particular situation. So, what I call genre awareness here includes the ability to assess the subtle differences within the same genre used in different disciplines and/or classes. Also, as will be seen throughout this study, genre awareness exists on a continuum on which students can move forward or backwards based on prompts and cues. The type of rhetorical awareness discussed by Aremeva and Fox is a simplified version of genre awareness that can be developed more fully as students gain experience with genres and writing in different disciplines and for new contexts.

Research Questions, Design, and Methodology

This dissertation project takes up the question of the transferability of genre awareness by tracking the progress of three students who were explicitly taught genre awareness in their first-year composition courses. Through this study, I have attempted to answer the following research questions: 1) When students find themselves in unfamiliar writing situations, to what extent (and how) do they draw on the genre awareness they were taught in order to recognize the similarities and differences in the situations and to figure out what kind of writing is appropriate for the new situation? 2) To what extent does genre awareness allow students to be more rhetorically aware of the purposes and ideologies embedded within the genres they are asked to write in their various university classes? 3) Are students able to transform their genre awareness into genre production and how do they do this? 4) Do students write more successfully because of this

genre awareness? 5) How is genre awareness further developed after students leave FYC?

To answer these research questions, I relied on survey research, single-case study, limited ethnography, class observations, and textual analysis of written work (see appendix 1 for list of survey and interview questions). The first step was a collection of surveys from students from all the first-year composition courses I taught using genre awareness pedagogy. The purpose of the survey was to get a broad understanding of what students remember and can articulate about the genre awareness they were taught in my class, and also to what extent students believed that they had used that genre awareness in subsequent classes. Because the later case studies are only of three students, the survey results also allow me to be able to generalize the findings more because they give me data from a wider population of students. The survey data also reinforces my own descriptions of what students learn in my class by giving evidence from students as to what they actually took from the class and what they believed that they had used when writing in other classes. In order to get more evidence about what students say about the course, I also look at my end-of-the-quarter course evaluations to be able to say more about what students learn and find valuable in the course.

The second step of this research was a case study of three students who took one of my first-year composition courses focusing on genre awareness. I had taught genre awareness four times, in two different courses: English 131, expository writing and English 110, the second half of a two course stretch model¹ introductory composition sequence. The three students that volunteered to participate were: Anna, a 131 student who was a strong writer and ended up getting a 3.9 in the course; Richard, a 110 student who was an average writer and whose final

¹ A “stretch-model” composition course takes a one-quarter course and stretches it into two quarters. The content and amount of work students do should be the same, but the stretch-model should go through that content at half the pace.

portfolio grade in the course was 2.9; and Pedro, a Mexican-American student from 110, who spoke Spanish as his first language and ended the course with a portfolio grade of 2.4.

The case studies required the collection of data from research interviews (with students as well as with their instructors), class observations, student writing, and public documents related to coursework (syllabi, assignment prompts, etc). I interviewed the students three times per quarter for two quarters (a total of 6 interviews each, except for Pedro who decided to not continue with the research after the 4th interview). The interviews work to extend the analysis of survey results, public documents such as syllabi and assignment prompts, and written work both from English 131 and 110 and from the classes they took afterwards. The first interviews were performed at the beginning of the quarter, when students were just beginning their classes, with the purpose of gaining an understanding of what students already know about the disciplines they are taking classes in, and especially what they understand about the type of writing that would be required in those classes. The second interviews were performed in the middle of the quarter, when students were in the process of writing a paper for their class. This interview helped me understand the writing processes the students were using to write their papers and to what extent they were drawing on their genre awareness to help them complete those papers. The final interviews were performed at the end of the quarter, after the students had received grades on their writing, and had received feedback from their teachers on that writing. This interview helped me understand the students' successfulness on their writing, how their teachers evaluated the paper, and whether the students had been correct in their assessment of the situation and of the values and assumptions of the discipline. This interview also helped me understand how the students' evaluation of their own performance related to how their instructor evaluated their performance.

Along with these interviews, this project also required class observations and interviews with instructors in those classes. The class observations gave me a more in-depth understanding of the discipline, class, and context of the writing assignments, as well as the amount of explicit instruction students were given for the assignment. This gave me first-hand knowledge of what instructors said about the writing assignments so that I would be able to see what students picked up on through their own assessment of the situation and what was explicitly taught to them. Therefore, it was especially important to observe these classes on the days they were assigning and discussing the paper(s) in depth. The interviews with teachers about student writing gave me a better understanding of the expectations of the discipline and of the particular teacher for those assignments. It also gave me a better understanding of the teachers' assessment of the students' successfulness on the assignments. I attempted to do two interviews with instructors (although this was not always possible), one interview near the beginning of the quarter and one after the course was over (after grades had already been posted). The first interview gave me a better understanding of the discipline, the course, and the expectations for student writing. As with the class observations, this helped me to see whether students were able to pick up on these expectations and use them in their writing. The second interview was about my particular case study student's work. It gave an understanding of the teacher's sense of the successfulness of the student's writing. It helped me to understand the teacher's grade/comments on the student's papers, and to understand what the teacher thought about the student's use of the genre of the assignment.

The purpose of single case research of this kind is to study one person or a small group in order to see the effectiveness of an intervention on particular individuals (Mertens). It is often used to test the effectiveness of particular instructional techniques, which makes it appropriate

for this project. One concern of case study research is how to make the research more valid, reliable, and generalizable. One way to increase the validity and generalizability is to study several different people who differ on several characteristics. The student participants in this study differ on several key characteristics, as will be seen through the case studies of each participant. Another way to increase validity and reliability is to have a second researcher look over the same data and make their own judgements. In this case, the students' teachers acted in this capacity. Their assessment of the students' work was used to verify my own assessment of the effectiveness of the papers. The third way to increase validity is to have multiple sources of data that can be used to support the claims being made. In this case, I use student writing, class observations, interviews, and other course documents to give several different kinds of data to support my claims.

Because one of the goals of qualitative research is to understand how the subjects themselves understand the way things work, the important things to investigate are how the students see themselves using genre awareness, how they see that genre awareness contributing to their writing process, and how successful they believe themselves to have been. Although this is one goal of this kind of research, I wanted to be able to say more than just what the students themselves understand of their own genre awareness. Also, students may not actually be aware of the ways that they are using genre awareness, and so their own self report may not be completely accurate. Therefore, I wanted to be able to verify their assessment, at least partially. To this end, I analyzed their written work, their grades/teachers' comments, and talked with their teachers about the assignments and the values of the discipline.

Because qualitative research is based on the assumption that reality is socially constructed, research is conducted through the interactions between the researcher and the

subjects (Mertens 1998). Knowledge is socially constructed by people active in the research process, and researchers attempt to understand the complex world of lived experience through the point of view of those who live it. One thing this means is that the research questions may be revised as the study evolves, because the interactions may cause the researcher to realize that the original questions are not really what is important. The purpose is to tell the story of the experiences of a group of people, and hopefully come to some conclusions about what this might mean in a wider context. This research paradigm also emphasizes that research is the product of the values of the researcher and cannot be independent of them, meaning that objectivity is never absolutely possible. Because of this, most qualitative texts argue for the importance of the researcher reflecting on their values, assumptions, beliefs, and biases, and monitoring those as they progress through the study to determine their impact on the study's data and interpretation. In my own case, I recognize that I have a stake in the results of this study, and that I am biased in the fact that I want it to have worked. I want to find that genre awareness transfers and that my class has been helpful to my students when they write for their other classes. I recognize this lack of objectivity even as I attempt, as much as possible, to remain objective and only see what is really there. Another problem can arise when the subjects know what the researcher is looking for, which may be the case with my study. The subjects can tend to tell the researcher what they want to hear instead of giving objective, honest answers, etc. For example, if the participants know that I will be looking at their use of genre awareness in the writing process, they may tend to use more of it than they would have if they were not participants in the study. Because of this, I was upfront with my research participants about this possibility and my own biases, in an attempt to decrease the likelihood of this happening. And whenever it seems to play a role, I accounted for it in my discussion. Although students had already been told what the study was

testing for (through information/consent forms), I attempted to keep all discussion very general in the hopes that their answers would not be skewed by my mentioning of genre awareness, etc. Though objectivity is rejected in qualitative research, validity can be achieved through multiple methods of data collection, and multiple examples of direct quotes used to support the inferences drawn. Therefore, I use research data from interviews, field notes, and document analysis.

This chapter has laid out the previous research on transfer of writing and the proposed solutions, and has argued for the transferability of a genre awareness approach to first-year composition instruction. Chapter two will give an in-depth description of my genre awareness course, and chapters three through five will report the results of the case studies that test the transferability of that genre awareness.

Chapter 2: Creating a Transferable Genre Pedagogy

In the first chapter, I discussed previous scholarly work on transfer and discussed the arguments for a genre awareness approach to first-year composition, and why a genre approach is proposed as a possible solution to the problem of transfer of writing. Because this project seeks to understand the extent to which students transfer genre awareness, it is important to know exactly how the students in the study were taught genre awareness. In this chapter I describe how I teach genre awareness in my own first-year writing classes – the pedagogy I use, the institutional context, as well as the results of an anonymous survey that shows what students are saying about the course. In general, students find the course to be very difficult and at the beginning they often get discouraged and bogged down with all the complex readings on genre. However, they state that the content is very useful and helpful to their writing, and they seem to come to value the course very much. Based on the writing they do in the class, by the end of the class, a majority of students demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of genre and the way it is used throughout the university and report having a marked improvement in their confidence in their writing and in their ability to figure out how to write for unfamiliar writing situations that they may come across in their academic careers (as indicated in their final review papers for the class). I begin this chapter with a discussion of the institutional context of the course, followed by a description of the course itself and some possible critiques, and end with what students are saying about the course (in the form of survey results and course evaluations). The chapters that follow this one include case studies that examine the extent to which this pedagogy transfers to the writing students do in other courses and the factors that contribute to that transfer.

Institutional Context

Founded in 1861, The University of Washington is one of the oldest public universities on the west coast. UW enrolls approximately 48,000 on-campus students annually and another 62,000 extension students (online and at branch campuses), and grants 12,000 undergraduate and graduate degrees per year. Of those 12,000 degrees granted, nearly 60% are given to white majority students. 20% of those are Asian/Pacific Islanders, most of whom are international, non-resident students who do not speak English as their first language. And the other 20% is a combination of African American, Hispanic, and other racial minorities (such as Native American).

UW requires all students (except transfer and running start students) to take one 5-credit Composition course and seven to ten Writing credits. UW does not have a placement exam and so students cannot place out of the Composition requirement. Students choose one of the courses in either our English department's Expository Writing Program or Interdisciplinary Writing Program. The Expository Writing Program consists of five different courses including English 131: Expository writing; English 121: Composition, social issues; English 111: Composition, literature; English 109/110: Introductory Composition (exclusively for Educational Opportunity Students and student athletes), and English 281: Intermediate Expository Writing. More than 4,000 students take one of these courses per year, with the majority taking the most general class, English 131. English 109/110 is capped at 15 students, 281 at 23, and the others at 22. These courses are taught almost exclusively by graduate student instructors from the English department. All instructors are required to take a one-quarter, full credit, seminar in composition theory and pedagogy, along with an extensive two week pre-service training.

The Expository Writing Program courses (except 281), while they may have different themes for the reading and writing topics, are similarly organized around a set of shared

outcomes (see appendix 2) that are designed to help students learn to write in a variety of academic contexts. These outcomes stress rhetorical awareness, analysis of course texts, claims and argumentation, and revision. The courses are typically organized into two sequences in which students write 3-4 short papers of 2-4 pages and a major paper of 5-7 pages. At the end of the quarter, students select between 3 and 5 of those papers to revise and resubmit, along with a critical reflection, in a final portfolio. Throughout the quarter, the papers are not graded, although extensive feedback is provided. The final grade for the class is based solely on the students' performance on the final portfolio, along with a participation grade. The final portfolio is graded on the extent to which the students fulfill the four course outcomes. Although the structure and outcomes of the courses are the same, and they use a common textbook, each individual teacher is responsible for choosing their own readings, constructing their own assignment prompts, and deciding what to focus on in class. Because of this, topics and use of class time vary greatly from course to course depending on the instructor.

This research project is based on my teaching of English 131 and English 110. English 131 is the most general and most popular of the Expository Writing Program courses. According to the course catalogue, English 131 focuses on the “study and practice of good writing: topics derived from a variety of personal, academic, and public subjects.” According to the EWP website, English 131 is a course in which “students work closely with peers and instructor to develop a portfolio of writing that reflects an ability to write papers with complex claims that matter in academic contexts. The readings in this class focus on academic discourse from a variety of disciplines.” The emphasis in this course is on teaching rhetorical awareness, close reading, argumentation, and revision strategies.

English 109/110 is a two quarter stretch model that also fulfills UW's composition

requirement. It is restricted to self-selecting Education Opportunity Program students and student athletes. This course is also taught exclusively by English graduate students. However, instructors cannot teach 109/110 until they have taught English 131 for at least one year. Because it is a stretch model, what is taught in one quarter in 131 is stretched to two quarters in 109/110. This means that instructors can spend much more time explaining and having students practice concepts related to the EWP outcomes. Discussions of readings can take two days rather than one, and the instructor has the luxury of teaching things that there just isn't time for in 131 (e.g. the difference between a summary and a critical summary). Often the students in 109/110 are less prepared for college than the 131 students. As the EWP website states, "The course is designed for students who are first generation college students and/or whose educational background has not prepared them for academic culture. Such students may be marginalized on the basis of economic, educational, or racial background." Often these students lack confidence and need encouragement in their writing more than anything. Most students self select into the course, but they may also be advised to take this course (as is the case with most of the student athletes).

English 109 uses a set of learning goals that focus on students' reading and understanding academic texts, learning to effectively use those texts (i.e. summarizing, quoting, etc.) in their papers, and beginning to learn to make claims and write academic arguments. They write several short papers of 1-3 pages that lead to a final paper of 4-5 pages. English 109 uses Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstien's They Say; I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing as the textbook and the class is designed to introduce students to academic writing. English 110, the second course in this sequence, is similar in many ways to English 131. It uses the same textbook, uses the same outcomes, and is organized into two sequences that end in a final

portfolio. However, 110 should have fewer papers (and the page length is often shorter) and fewer readings than 131 because it should be the equivalent of the second half of 131. At the end of English 110 and 131, students in either class should be producing similar work.

Course Description²

I designed my English 131 and 110 composition courses as genre awareness courses similar to the course advocated for by Amy Devitt. I also had the goal of explicitly teaching for transfer as advocated by Anne Beaufort and David Smit. So while these courses focus on genre, they also focus on teaching students when, why, and how to use what they are learning when they write for different situations throughout the university. These goals are articulated in my 131 and 110 course descriptions (see appendix 2 for full syllabus) which begin:

Most of you are probably familiar with what many call the “academic argument” essay. In this class we will focus on different *genres* of writing and how we can use the genre of the “academic argument” essay as an *antecedent genre* that can help you when writing for new writing situations that you may encounter in school and out of it. Through this course you will learn *genre awareness* which will help you be able to figure out what kind of writing is appropriate in each new situation that you are asked to write for.

When students first come to class, they do not have a complex understanding of rhetoric or genre and definitely don’t know terms like *antecedent genre*, *discourse community*, or *rhetorical situation*, which all become important concepts during the course. The typical high school curriculum focuses on the five paragraph essay, and most student come to the university thinking that that is the only type of writing they will need to know how to do. Because of this, my course is often an eye opener for them. One of the first things they learn is that the five paragraph essay is *not* the only type of writing they need to know. A major goal is for students

² The course described here was adapted from the English 301: Writing Studies course taught by Scott Stevens at Western Washington University in Fall of 2006.

to understand the disciplinarity and contextuality of writing and to understand how to figure out how to appropriately respond to writing assignments given to them in other classes. Because these are the main goals of the class, the first half of the course focuses on getting students to understand the concept of genre – what it is, how it has been defined, how it is used, why it is important, etc. – as well as the other related concepts mentioned above.

The first assignment is a simple one-page paper called “What is Rhetoric?” All they need to do for this paper is look up definitions of the word rhetoric and synthesize those definitions into one paragraph. Because of the definition of genre that they later learn, it is important that they have an understanding of rhetoric before we move on. All the readings in this course are either explicitly about writing or can be used to talk about writing. As my course description states, we mostly read “texts written by professional researchers and scholars in writing studies and genre theory.” These texts are difficult and require students to read closely and carefully. These texts also help students “to understand the concept of genre and how authors make rhetorical choices when writing in particular genres and for particular *discourse communities* and *rhetorical situations*” (course description). The first reading, Lloyd Bitzer’s “The Rhetorical Situation,” gives students an introduction to the concept of rhetorical situations, the idea of recurring situations, and what it might mean to create a “fitting response” to rhetorical situations. Many students find this text difficult and so the next text they read is the first chapter of Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi’s Scenes of Writing. This first-year composition textbook begins with a discussion of scenes, situations, and genres. It has a very clear discussion of rhetorical situations and how those relate to scenes of writing and to genres. This text helps students to have a better understanding of rhetorical situations and also gives a definition of genre – “The typical rhetorical ways of responding to a situation that repeatedly occurs within a scene” (22) –

for them to build on.

In my English 131 class, after reading the chapter from Scenes of Writing students write a scene analysis. For this paper, they must choose an academic scene and discuss questions such as:

- What is the place/setting of the scene? How is it structured? How does this structure add to or detract from the work being done in the scene?
- Who are the participants and how do they present themselves? What does this tell you about the types of work that gets done in the scene?
- What style of communicating is common? Is it formal or informal? What kind of vocabulary are they using? Do all participants use the same style? Why do the styles differ?
- What are people communicating about? What is the content of their communication? Does the content influence their style of communication?
- How do people time their contributions? Are their rules about who can speak and when? Who speaks the most and why?
- If you had never been in that particular scene (or a similar one) before, what would you need to know about the scene in order to act appropriately within the scene? (adapted from Scenes of Writing pg. 5)

In my English 110 class, students do not write this paper, but we spend more time in class discussing scenes of writing, how the scene effects what type of writing is appropriate, and we talk about all of the above questions.

The next two texts that students read are the introduction to Anis Bawarshi's Genre and the Invention of the Writer, and Amy Devitt's chapter from *Writing Genres*, "A proposal for Teaching Genre Awareness and Antecedent Genres" (In 110, we spend two days discussing each of these texts). We usually begin with Bawarshi (although I have done these two texts in either order). From our discussions of Bawarshi's text, they start to get the idea of discourse communities, and how writing is social. They begin to see genres as much more than categories used to classify writing based on form. They begin to see genres as dynamic social constructions

that are used for particular purposes to accomplish particular social actions within communities. They begin to see the ways that genres influence writers and readers, and begin to understand what is meant by ideology and how genres demonstrate ideology. They take this initial information about genres into their reading of Devitt, and build on it. I use Devitt's text for two reasons: One, it gives further explanation of how genres work, and second, it gives justification and the reasoning behind our class. This second reason is important because student motivation is always higher if they understand why they are doing what they are doing, so I think reading Devitt's text is a good way of saying "here is why we're doing this." Through our discussion of Devitt's text, students learn more about how ideology works in genres, how to use example text to help them learn new genres, and the idea of antecedent genres and how to use them. They also learn what genre awareness is, why it is important, and how it is going to help them in their future writing. Although we had discussed the dynamic nature of genres when we talked about Bawarshi, from Devitt they get more about the creativity allowed within genres and how genres work to both constrain and enable writing.

After reading these texts, students write a short paper (2-3 pages for Eng. 110, 3-4 pages for Eng. 131) called "Rhetoric and Genre." This assignment asks students to discuss the relationship between rhetoric and genre, drawing on Bizter as well as Devitt and Bawarshi. The assignment prompt states:

The majority of texts we read in this class come from scholars in the field of "Rhetorical Genre Studies." Why is it called *Rhetorical* Genre Studies? What does rhetoric have to do with genre? You have already given me a short paper that defines rhetoric, and we have been talking about rhetoric for the first few days of class. We will now be turning to genre and what that means. Your job in this paper is to synthesize some of the readings in order to tell me what the relationship is between rhetoric and genre. Why am I, as a person who studies genre, also necessarily, a rhetorician? These are the types of questions to keep in mind as you write your paper. Your paper should have a claim that tells me the

connection between rhetoric and genre.

This is the initial step toward a definition of genre that they will make in their next paper. This is also their first attempt at making a claim, as they have to argue for a particular relationship between rhetoric and genre. When discussing claims, we talk about how complex claims are debatable and controversial because there is no need to argue if everyone would already agree with you. We talk about how complex claims always address the opposing view point and always have several reasons that support the claim (subclaims). We work on creating a claim for this particular paper together in class, and then I have them work with groups on making claims before they are asked to write their own for this paper.

The next reading in this sequence is Stanley Fish's "How to Recognize a Poem when You See One." Up to this point, we had been focusing on genre from the point of view of the writer. Fish's text focuses on how genres work on readers. Drawing on our discussions of the social nature of writing, with Fish we discuss the social nature of interpretation, and begin to see that the "social action" of a text depends as much on how the readers use the text as the purpose of the author. Through Fish, students also get a better understanding of how context and social convention effects interpretation, and how knowing the genre causes people to interpret the text in a certain way. Through this discussion, students come to see how choosing genres carefully will make a difference as to how their own writing is interpreted and that if they want a certain interpretation of the work, they must think about what genre will cause that interpretation. Fish's text really helps to clarify a lot of the ideas discussed in Bawarshi.

The final text in the class for my 131 students is Lisa Ede's "Understanding Writing Situations" (my 110 students do not read this text). This chapter is about textual conventions and helps students to see how authors use different genre conventions when writing for different

situations and audiences. This chapter teaches students how to analyze textual conventions, make appropriate decision for their own writing, and gives examples of textual conventions in use. By showing three different texts written by Deborah Tannen, this text shows students how the audience and situation influence the choices writers make. When discussing this text, we talk about the examples from Tannen and discuss the types of examples used and what function they serve, the relationship established in each article between the author and reader, the differences in style and tone, the assumptions Tannen makes about what the readers already know, etc. Through this discussion students come to see how writers make specific rhetorical choices when writing for different situations.

At the end of the first sequence (about 5 weeks into the course), students write what I call the “Genre Conversation” paper, in which they must incorporate four of the readings we have done and “come up with an extended definition of genre” (assignment prompt). Along with this definition, they must also argue for why their definition is important, why learning about genre is important and what their definition means to them as writers. So, while they are arguing for their definition of genre, they must also think about why the concept of genre is important to their own writing. Throughout the course, whenever I assign a new paper assignment, we discuss antecedent genres and talk about how to use previous genre knowledge to figure out how to write each assignment. We discuss how the paper is similar to papers they had written in the past, and what genre they believe it to be, etc. So, we are always attempting to assess the assignment for its similarities and differences to assignments they had done in the past.

In order to help students to formulate a claim for the Genre Conversation paper we spend some time talking about what genres are not. Because we had already discussed that claims need to address the opposition, we need to figure out what that opposition might be. The students

generate a list that usually includes: rigid, strict, universal, eternal, simply categories, based solely on form, individual, etc. We then discuss how their definition of genre needs to be a claim that argues against one or more of the items on the list. They again spend some time working in groups on making claims for this paper. I also bring in sample student papers from previous quarters for them to discuss. Before the final draft of this paper is due, we have conferences in which they are grouped into threes and they must read and comment on each other's papers, and then they come to my office and we discuss each of the papers together. The following is an excerpt from one of these conference sessions with two of my 110 students. At this point one student and I are discussing another student's paper. In these conferences, the student whose paper we are discussing is not allowed to speak while we discuss his paper. I have a conversation with one student about the other student's paper, while he listens and takes notes³:

Student: Near the end it says "genres are created from antecedent genres, or from a situation that a writer is placed in." I get the first part, but then the second part, like, I don't know that it makes sense to me, because I know that like, there has to be a situation that you have to answer, or there's something that you don't agree with, and you have to ... um ... kind of like, make your point or your claim, but I don't get how a situation, or how genres can be created from a situation

Instructor: So, you pick the correct genre in order to respond to that situation.

Student: Oh, I see now.

Instructor: So, I thought this line made sense to me, if that's what he meant there. So, the genre is created in order to respond specifically to that situation that the writer is in.

Student: Ok, I see now. I just didn't get how like, I guess like, I thought that he meant that genres are created ... um ... so like, from that situation, like you create a completely new genre or something like that, and that couldn't happen.

Instructor: Oh yeah, yeah. So maybe he just needs to explain exactly what he

³ The students participating in this conference were IRB approved participants but did not become focal points of my case studies.

means in that sentence a little more.

Student: Ok so the first sentence of the paragraph says “One thing that must be understood is that genres cannot be taught. A teacher cannot teach a student how to write a scientific genre or essay.” I get what he’s trying to say here because, who was it?

Instructor: Devitt

Student: Devitt kind of like said something about that, but she didn’t say that you couldn’t, she said that you shouldn’t, so I kind of disagree with that. I think you can teach somebody, if you let them know that ...

Instructor: Right. So, that’s the argument that Devitt is making though, that genres can’t really be taught expertly in a decontextualized classroom. So, like, *I* can’t teach you to do a scientific report because you’re not going to use scientific reports in my class. You have to learn it in the authentic situation where you’re going to be using it. So, yeah. It can’t be taught out of context. And so that’s why she says, in a freshman composition class like this, we should not be trying to teach particular genres, ‘cause that won’t work.

Student: Ok, I was just confused ‘cause I thought he was trying to say that you can’t teach it, ever.

Instructor: Ever, like nobody ever, anywhere, can teach you.

Student: Unless you actually go and write about it or something, then you can learn it. But I get it now. He means like not in a composition class. Like you have to be in that specific place in order to learn it.

Instructor: Yeah ... Ok, so ... um ... the sentence that he said, this would be the third sentence: “The writer has to immerse himself in the genre and learn as they write it.” So that sort of makes sense, but it’s not necessarily immersing yourself in the genre. I mean, yes you have to learn to write the genre, but immersing yourself in the community that uses that genre. So, being in the authentic situation with the people who actually use this genre.

Student: So, like being in a science lab ...

Instructor: Where you’re going to be doing lab reports, that’s where, that’s the best place to try to learn those lab reports, with the community of people that use those genres.

These conference sessions are great for helping students to really get an understanding of how

genres work and how the texts they have read go together. Not only do they get feedback on their own papers, but they get to see what other students have written, and get some really detailed and individual discussion of things they are still unclear on. The “Genre Conversation” is usually the hardest paper they have to write, primarily because the texts they draw on are very difficult for them and it is often difficult for them to see connections between the texts. After the conference, though, students usually demonstrate a fairly sophisticated understanding of genre. The student I was speaking with in the conference extract above, for example, made this claim to define genre for his papers: “Although most people believe that genre is a classification based only on form, genre can be defined as an individual’s recurring rhetorical interactions within an environment or community that can be used to analyze, create, and organize ideas” (1).

After spending the first half of the course attempting to gain an understanding of what genres are and how they work, the second half of the class focuses on how the theory we discussed in the first half works in practice. The second sequence focuses on how they will use what they learned in the first sequence. We look at examples of genres and talk about how some of the theory works in the “real world.” For example, I recently wrote reviews of three CCCC panels, two of which followed a pretty strict structure of summarizing the panel, summarizing each paper, and ending with an evaluation. The third was very different, drawing on a lot of personal experience and possible applications of the issues raised in the panel. Some of the theory we discussed in the first half of the class talks about how genres are not strict structures and that authors are allowed to be creative within genres, and that genres are dynamic, always responding to the needs and purposes of individual authors and situations. And so at the very beginning of our second sequence, I bring this example of my own writing to show students what this would look like in practice. What is interesting about this particular example is that students

always like better the review that doesn't follow the "formula." They all agree that that particular review actually reaches the purpose of evaluating the panel better than the other two. This reinforces that idea that genres are based on purpose rather than form, and that sometimes in order to better reach the purpose of the genre, authors actually need to stretch the boundaries of the typical form.

Along with looking at examples of genres, we also focus a lot on how to figure out new genres when they get into the situations where they need them. So we talk about figuring out who you're writing to and doing genre analysis to figure out what the purpose of the genre is, etc. Students do two main projects in this sequence. The first is a public genre project where they write magazine articles and with a group create a magazine complete with cover, table of content, and advertisements, etc. Before starting this piece, they find magazine articles that they feel are doing similar things as they are attempting to do in their own article and they analyze these articles to help them figure out how to write their own. They bring examples of magazines to class, and with their groups discuss the purpose of the magazine articles, what the exigence is, and what the typical features are. Because they are all very familiar with the genre of magazine articles, it doesn't take a lot of analysis for them to be able to write one. They write a first draft that they peer-review with their groups, and then after revising their articles, they compile their articles together and present their magazines to the class in a "show and tell" presentation.

The final project is a "Professional Genre Project" where they must investigate a particular professional field (most often their major) and figure out what professionals in the field write, how they write, and why they write what they do. They find examples of a particular genre of professional writing, and they do a genre analysis of that genre, focusing on the scene and situation of the genre, how the genre is used within a particular community, and how and

why it is written in a particular way. The prompt for this paper states:

To understand how genres work within a specific context, you will do a genre analysis of a specific type of document produced within this professional context. From the documents that you study, you will make a claim about the expectations for these documents and explain how these expectations correspond with what you know about the context that informed the production of the genre, and how the features of the genre help the genre achieve its overall purpose. Your main claim for this paper is an explanation of the “social action” or the genre – Why does the genre exist? What work does the genre do in the world? ... The core purpose of this paper is to examine in depth *how* the genre as a whole functions within its rhetorical situation.

Before beginning this paper, they read an excerpt from Charles Bazerman’s What Writing Does and How it Does it that has a step by step explanation of how to do an in-depth genre analysis.

From this text, they understand that a genre analysis is more than just a description of the formal features, and learn that they must “go beyond those features we are already aware of, ... consider the variation in different situations and periods, ... [and] gather information not just about the texts, but about other people’s understanding of them” (22). Bazerman also gives some practical tips such as: framing “your purposes and questions to limit your focus, ... defin[ing] your corpus,” and selecting appropriate analytical tools (24-25).

After reading Bazerman’s text, they have an idea of what a genre analysis should do so that when they bring in examples of the genre they are analyzing, they have a place to start. Working with classmates that are studying similar communities and a similar genre (i.e. future business majors who are studying business plans, or future doctors and nurses studying medical case reports), they do a genre analysis worksheet that is adapted from Scenes of Writing (see appendix 3) that focuses on three aspects of the genre: The scene and situation in which the genre is used (where it appears, who writes and reads it, etc), the typical features (content, organizations, types of evidence, etc), and what the features tell them about the scene, situation,

and community (how the features help the genre fulfill its overall purpose, the ideology of the community, what actions the genre causes, etc.) After finishing the genre analysis worksheet, they must interview a professional in the field in order to see how people actually use the genre and to get answers to questions they were unable to answer with their own analysis of the genre. They write up their genre analysis, using the information from the worksheet and adding in evidence from their interview. Because these are genres students are usually unfamiliar with, the analysis they do for this paper is much more in depth than the one they did for the magazine project.

In my English 131 class, before writing their genre analysis, they read Carolyn Miller and Dawn Shepherd's "Blogging as Social Action" which is a genre analysis of blogs. This is a professional example of what they are attempting in their own papers, and explains the questions that Miller and Shepherd ask about blogs during their analysis (which are exactly the questions the students need to be asking of the genres they are analyzing): "What motivates someone to begin and continue a blog? What audience(s) do bloggers address? Who actually reads blogs and why? In short, what rhetorical work do blogs perform and for whom? And how do blogs perform this work? What features and elements make the blog recognizable and functional?" (1). We spend most of our discussion talking about how Miller and Shepherd answer these questions. My 110 class does not read this text, but in both classes, I bring in student example texts from previous quarters for them to read and we discuss why certain ones are more effective and how others could be improved, etc.

After the genre analysis, the final part of this project is for them to attempt to write the genre that they analyzed. The point of this assignment is *not* for them to actually be able to expertly produce these genres, because without professional disciplinary knowledge that is

impossible (and in most cases their content is actually fictional. e.g. they write a medical case report of a fictional patient with a fictional disease). Also, I do not spend any time teaching them the features of these genres (which, in most cases, I don't know anyway). The purpose is for them to see what it takes to learn a new genre, for them to discover the things that need to be done when they are asked to write a genre that they have never written before. The process they go through to figure out how to write the professional genre is similar to the one they will need to do each time they are asked to write a genre they are not familiar with. This final project exemplifies most fully the goals of the course in that the idea is not for them to learn how to write a particular genre, but for them to learn how to figure out how to appropriately respond to particular writing situations. By the time they have finished their genre analysis, interview, and begun writing the professional genre, they know a lot more about the genre than I do. I have them do a peer review with their groups before they turn in the final draft. This final project (the genre analysis and the final professional genre project) takes about three weeks to finish.

At the end of the course, students choose 3 or 4 papers to revise for their final portfolio (in 110 they revise 3, in 131 they revise 4). Because English 109/110 is supposed to be one two-quarter course, I allow my 110 students to choose one paper that they wrote in 109. Usually 2-3 students choose to do so. For both classes, students choose the papers based on which ones best help them show their fulfillment of the four course outcomes (see appendix 1). The most commonly chosen papers are the public and professional genres, and the genre conversation. Along with the papers they revise, they must also submit a reflection letter that makes an argument for their fulfillment of the outcomes, using their papers as evidence. We spend the last two weeks of class working on deciding which papers to revise, revision strategies such as cohesion and sentence structure, and working on the reflection.

In the last few weeks of class, we also focus on reflecting on what they have learned in the course and how they will be able to use that knowledge in future writing situations. Although we spent a lot of time talking about figuring out new genres when they get in situations where those are needed, at the end of the class, we talk a lot about how to figure out the subtle differences within the same genre for different classes. Because a lot writing assignments (especially in the first few years of college) are “academic argument essays” or “research papers,” student need to understand that even though they are called the same thing, what is expected on those papers may be different depending on the department they are writing for. In order to help them see this, I bring in writing assignment prompts from classes in multiple disciplines and we discuss how they would go about writing those papers, how they would figure out what the teacher is expecting, and how that paper is similar and different to the papers they wrote in my class or before. Through this discussion students learn to assess writing prompts, and to think about the values and expectations of the particular department and situation that they are writing for.

I believe that this genre awareness course, with its explicit emphasis on transfer, can help facilitate transfer because it has the possibility of creating all five of the pedagogical conditions that foster learning transfer that were discussed in chapter 1. First, genre awareness, if taught explicitly, can cause students to have a strong understanding of the concepts of genre, rhetorical situations, and discourse community, as well as the steps they will need to perform in order to figure out the appropriate response to future writing situations. If students are given sufficient opportunities to practice genre analysis and situation assessment, they will potentially have a high enough initial learning to facilitate transfer. In my course we spend the first half of the class discussing genre theory. Students write several papers explaining their understanding of

genres theory, and then turn towards application of that theory in the second half of the class. They practice genre analysis on several different genres in order to figure out the purposes and conventions of those genres. Their definitions of genre in their “Genre Conversation” papers are typically fairly complex. Through these discussions and assignments, I hope that student gain a deep enough understanding of genre to be able to take that knowledge with them and use it in subsequent classes.

Secondly, using abstract concepts such as genre, discourse community, and rhetorical situation, can help students see how these concepts are applicable in multiple contexts. Rather than teaching students how to write in one genre or for one particular situation or community, genre awareness teaches students *about* these abstract concepts so that they can be applied to any writing situation. The first half of my course focuses on teaching students these abstract concepts, and the second half focuses on teaching students how to apply those concepts. Students write in several different genres, but the purpose is not for them to become experts in writing for one situation (the situation of those particular genres); the purpose is for them to get practice in using the concept of genre and how to apply that concept in future situations.

Third, genre awareness teaches students to assess the similarities and differences in situations so that they will know when they can use previously learned genres and when they will need to manipulate those genres or use different ones. Because transfer is based on the students’ ability to see similarities in situations, genre awareness teaches students to assess situations for their similarities. However, because of the possibilities of negative transfer, students also need to be able to assess when the situations are different so that they don’t inappropriately transfer knowledge that is ineffective for the situation. Throughout my course, the major goal is for students to learn the disciplinarity and contextuality of genres. Whenever I give an assignment,

we spend time assessing the prompt and discussing what genre they need to write in and how the assignment is similar and different to papers they had written in the past. We also talk a lot about how to assess future writing assignments. I bring in writing assignments from other departments so that they can discuss the similarities and differences between those assignments and the ones they did in my class and before. Also, through seeing different genres and through the professional genre project, they see how different situations need different genres and that they will need to assess those situations for the genre and subtle differences in written conventions.

Fourth, genre awareness also helps students remain active learners, if they attempt to use it. When students move on to classes after learning genre awareness, their knowledge of the need to assess the similarities and differences in situations, and their ability to perform genre analysis can help them to remain active in the process of learning what is an appropriate response for that particular situation and community. Also, with the focus on ethnographic-based research involved with genre analysis, students learn that they need to figure out how writing is actually used by members of the community and so are more likely to actively seek out advice from instructors or more advanced peers. Especially with our professional genre project, students begin to see the need to figure out how members of a community use writing. Through their interview with a professional in the discipline, they learn the value of expert feedback on the genre. They also learn the value of doing genre analysis and hopefully will remain active and motivated enough in their future courses to draw on that knowledge to help them write those papers.

Lastly, genre awareness is a form of meta-cognition. Students learn to think about their own learning, to think about what previous knowledge they have that might be applicable to the

new situations, and what genres they have in their repertoire that could be useful to them.

Throughout my course, we are continually discussing previous knowledge that students have that may be applicable and reflecting on how what they are learning will be useful in the future. I ask students to write reflections on their learning several times throughout the course. Students write informal reflections in class, as well as several more formal reflections. In the Genre Conversation paper along with an extended definition of genre, students must also reflect on why learning about genre is important and useful and how they will be able to use the concept of genre in their future writing. In the final portfolio, along with students reflecting on the course outcomes, I also ask students to reflect on their development of genre awareness and how they will be able to use that knowledge in the future.

Because I consciously attempt to create those five pedagogical conditions that have been shown to facilitate transfer, I believe that this course has the potential to transfer to the writing that students do in other courses throughout the university. However, no pedagogy is ever perfect, and so we must also take into consideration the possible problems and critiques of the course.

Critical Reflection

There are several critiques that could be given for these courses. First, it would be difficult for someone not trained in genre theory to teach this particular course as I have designed it, using the texts I use and discussing genre in the way I discuss it. This critique is similar for other pedagogies that seek to teach for transfer. Downs and Wardle admit that their curriculum “cannot be taught by someone not trained in writing studies” (574). Those who are not trained in composition theory cannot teach a course in writing studies and likewise those not familiar with genre theory cannot teach a class in genre awareness. This doesn’t necessarily mean that they

have to be compositionists or genre theorists, but they do need some training in these areas to be able to successfully teach a class like this. The problem is that only a fraction of instructors who teach first-year composition have that kind of training. For the individual composition teacher who is a compositionist, this isn't a problem, but if one were to try to implement something like this in a whole program when most composition teachers are either lecturers or graduate students who study literature and cultural studies, this becomes an issue. Elizabeth Wardle has bypassed this issue at the University of Central Florida with an extensive teacher training program.

Although instructors may not be genre theorists or even compositionists, they can be trained to teach composition as if they were. In a recent (2011) presentation at the Conference on College Composition and Communication, Wardle argued that composition teachers need to be informed of the disciplinary knowledge and need to be trained in the research of composition, so that composition pedagogy can more align with the research of the field. In her study, training in composition research led to more professionalized teachers and more effective teaching. It also caused instructors to change the way they taught composition in order to more align their classes with the disciplinary knowledge. The field of composition has built up a considerable amount of disciplinary knowledge and that knowledge should be used to influence pedagogy, and can be used to influence pedagogy, if the instructors are trained in that knowledge.

Two other related critiques come from the students themselves. First, the students tend to find the course very difficult, and secondly, they complain that there is too much reading on genre. These critiques will be discussed in more detail below, as I go into detail about the end-of-quarter course evaluations.

Course Evaluations

In one of my recent 110 classes, I had one student ask (in a class session near the end of

the quarter) why we didn't read literature and write papers about that literature like "regular" English classes do. This led to a very good discussion, in which the other students in the class explained to him why I teach the course the way I do. By this point in the course, most of the students have been convinced of the usefulness of the course, so they talked about how they would use what they had learned in their future courses. They talked about how reading literature and writing literary analysis would not be as helpful because each discipline uses different genres and expects and values different things in writing and that knowing that and begin able to figure out what those expectations and values are is going to be the most helpful thing for them to learn. They talked about how using genre analysis would help them figure out genre conventions, etc. The question posed by this student, though, confirms that the course is definitely not what students are expecting when they sign up for it. One thing they are not expecting is the complexity of the readings. The texts we read in these courses are hard for first year students to understand, and in the first few weeks, it is often difficult for them to see how the abstract concepts we discuss are relevant to them as writers. However, they come to understand those concepts as the course progresses and they end the course with more confidence in their writing and in their ability to figure out how to write for new writing situations, and come to value the course greatly. These sentiments come out clearly in responses to the course evaluations.

The course evaluations give a broad, general picture of what student thought of the course. These courses were rated high on several categories that are significant to what I was attempting to do in the class (see table 1). The scores are out of a total of 5.

Table 1. Course Evaluations

| Category | Score (average of the three courses studied) |
|---------------------------|---|
| The course as a whole was | 4.0 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Explanation of underlying rationale for new techniques or skills was | 4.0 |
| Amount you learned in the course | 4.1 |
| Relevance and usefulness of course content | 4.1 |

The courses also scored high on hours that were “valuable in advancing [their] education.” Out of an average of 9.3 hours spent on the courses per week, students thought that 8.3 were useful in advancing their education. In my most recent 110 class, the numbers for hours spent and hours that were useful were identical, so students felt like every hour they spent on the course was useful to them. Students also marked the class high on “intellectual challenge presented,” “amount of effort put into this course,” and “amount of effort needed to succeed in this course.” These scores are marked as to how this course compares to other courses students have taken. A mark of 4 means average. On these three marks, these courses scored an average of 5.6. So, as mentioned before, students do find the course difficult, but they also find it useful and relevant in improving their writing. This sentiment is seen more clearly on the written comment sheet that students are given with the evaluations. The comment sheet has four questions:

1. Was the class intellectually stimulating? Did it stretch your thinking? Why or why not?
2. What aspects of this class contributed most to your learning?
3. What aspects detracted from your learning?
4. What suggestions do you have for improving the class?

For the first question, every student in the three Eng 131 and 110 courses studied said yes. This is where I see most often the students saying the class was difficult but helpful. For example, one student wrote, “This class challenged me to think beyond what I have been previously taught how to write. The course readings were often difficult to understand, but beneficial to my understanding of the concepts.” This same student mentions the readings for question number three as well. S/he says: “Many of the readings were dense and uninteresting. While reading them, I often wondered why they were important, but now I see the purpose the

instructor was trying to get at.” In the first half of the class students often don’t see how the abstract concepts are going to be useful to them as writers. Although students often don’t see the point at the beginning, they get a better sense of how the concepts work in the last half and so that seems to make up for the abstractness of the first half. For example, another student wrote “the idea of rhetoric was stimulating and very confusing at the beginning of the class. It made sense as we went along, though.” These comments are very typical and point towards another issue: Because the students find the concepts difficult at the beginning of the class, they often lose confidence in their writing ability.

Students usually come to class with a certain level of writing ability and confidence in that writing ability (although the 131 students tend to have higher confidence than the 110 students). And, while they usually end the course at a higher level of both ability and confidence, because of the difficulty of the readings and assignments, both of those tend to get worse before they get better. Based on their discussions with me in office hours and comments made in class, after doing the first few readings and papers, their confidence greatly diminishes. However, this may actually be a good thing. As Nancy Sommers and Laura Saltz found, in “The Novice as Expert: Writing the Freshman Year,” students who see themselves as novices and accept that status, actually make more progress in learning to write. So the loss of confidence, a realization that what they know and feel confident doing is going to need to be adapted, while at first may seem daunting to students, in the long run, it may actually help them to make further progress in learning to write. For my students, by the time they get to the second half of the course, they begin to see how the concepts we discuss are used in practice and how to use them in their own writing. This is the point where their confidence begins to increase, and by the end of the class, they feel much more confident in their ability to write for unfamiliar disciplines and

in unfamiliar genres. For example, on a survey I gave, one student wrote that everything s/he had learned in the class “will mainly help me on my confidence whenever I start writing a new genre.” So, by the end of the course this student was feeling that s/he had more confidence in his/her ability to learn to write unfamiliar genres. The lack of confidence at the beginning of the course may not be able to be bypassed, but one way to bypass the discouragement is to tell them at the beginning what their confidence level will be throughout the course. In my last few courses I have begun to talk to them at the beginning of the class about how their writing ability and their confidence will get worse before it gets better and this seems to have helped them to feel that lack of confidence and frustration/discouragement to a lesser degree. For example, on a final course reflection, one of my 110 students wrote:

In the beginning of the quarter, I was excited to begin a new writing course ... However, as we started discussing the concept “genre,” I lost all my confidence and hope. By that time, one day, you showed us a curve which decreased first for a while, then increases infinitely such as “√.” Then you explained to us that this curve shows the performance of most students in your English courses over the quarter. That was the day I found my hope back and I named that curve as “my progress curve” because I really wanted to believe that I would be improved. And today, I am writing this letter to show how your curve exactly represents “my progress” throughout the quarter.

In addition to the difficulty of the readings, students also tend to feel like there are too many readings about genre. I think, by the end of the quarter students are sick of genre and almost come to hate the term and hope to never hear it again. For example, one student wrote on a survey I gave

Genre was the focus of the reading ... it just kept coming up again and again ... Honestly, I thought it could have been more interesting. I ended up being interested in some of the materials we read and had to write papers on, but it would have been nice to have a little more variety of topic and not feel so overwhelmed with the same rhetoric being used over and over around us.

I have heard similar comments from students who have laughingly told me that they hate genre

and hope they never hear the word again. Although they understand the usefulness and expect to use what they learned when they write for other situations, they are happy to not have to study the concept anymore. This, I think is a valid point. How much genre is too much genre? How many readings do they need to do in order to get the point? I think if I were to teach this class as a semester course rather than a 10-week quarter course, I would broaden the topic to be more general writing about writing class rather than focusing exclusively on genre. This, I think, would help students continue to feel motivated and interested in the class. In general though, students are intellectually challenged and come to value the course greatly. And although no pedagogy is ever perfect, results of the research presented in the following chapters shows that this course is an important first step in students' development of genre awareness.

Survey Results

Although the course evaluations are useful in giving a picture of what students generally think about the class, the following survey results give a more detailed picture of the genre awareness that students gained from the class. As part of the research for this project, I collected anonymous surveys to see what students thought they had gained from my class. Most students received the survey right after the class ended, but several classes were sent the survey between three and nine months later (Students from my 131 class were sent the survey almost nine months after the class was over; one 110 class received it about six months later; two other 110 classes received it right after the class ended). I attempted to collect surveys from all students from my genre awareness classes, and received 33 responses out of a total of 67 students, so this is 49% of the students. The purpose of the survey was to get a broad understanding of what students remembered and could articulate about the genre awareness they were taught in my class, and also to discover the extent to which students believed they had used that genre

awareness in subsequent classes. So, while I do discuss the following survey result in order to show, in general, what students are saying about the class, the ultimate goal is to assess the extent to which students have gained genre awareness and the extent to which they put that genre awareness to use when writing papers for other classes.

The major goals of my class, as previously discussed are to teach students how to approach new genres, to understand genres as more than just a classification of text types, to be able to perceive the purpose behind the form, and to be able to assess the similarities and differences in situations so that they can more appropriately respond to those situations. When attempting to assess whether students have indeed gained genre awareness, we must look at whether students understand the disciplinarity of writing, whether they understand that different situations require different genres, whether they know that they need to figure out how to respond appropriately, and whether they know the steps they need to go through to figure that out. The survey results, though only one partial look at students' genre awareness, do give a picture of what students can say about genres and what they believe to have been the most useful aspects of the course (i.e. what they believe they will or have already put to use in writing for other classes).

Some of the students took the survey right after taking my class; others took it one or two quarters later. The survey was sent out three times. The first time was to one section of 131 and one section of 110. This was sent right after that particular 110 course had just ended; it was 3 months after that 131 course had ended. The second time I sent it was 6 months later, right after another 110 course had ended. This time it was sent to all three of these courses. I also sent it to the 110 course I taught the following quarter right after that class had ended. The main question was "What was the most important thing that you learned in my class that is going to be or has

already been helpful to you in writing papers for other classes?” Of the 33 responses I got on the survey, 32 mentioned genre and 31 said that some aspect of genre awareness was the most important thing they learned (see table 2 for some responses).

Table 2. Example Survey Responses

What was the most useful thing you learned in my class that is going to be or has already been helpful to you in writing papers for other classes?

“Writing for different audience – genre awareness – because I would know the steps I need to do in order to write/choose an appropriate genre. In short, ‘professional genre’ assignment.”

“Look at different writings because not every profession has the same writing, they all have different tone and style depending on your audience.”

“I think what will be the most useful for me that I will take away from this class is knowing how the different genres are created based on what the discipline believes (sic) are. Knowing how they are structured without having to be an expert in that field. This will mainly help me on my confidence whenever I start writing a new genre.”

“The most important thing I learned in class is genre and rhetoric, particularly the purpose of writing to a specific group.”

To say that students have genre awareness is to say that they understand the disciplinarity of writing, they understand genres as more than just classifications based on form, they understand that they need to figure out the appropriate genre conventions for each new situation, and they know how to figure those out. It’s difficult from a survey to see whether students know these things. However, we can see that students know some things about genres and they mention different aspects of a complex definition of genres and processes of figuring out how to write new genres. I broke down the survey responses into four categories as to what aspect of genre awareness they were evoking. The categories I coded for were: comments that showed a complex understanding of genres, comments that showed an understanding of the disciplinarity of writing, comments that showed that students understood that they needed to figure out how to respond to new writing situations, and comments that showed that they know the steps they need

to go through to figure that out. Of the 31 responses that discussed genre (out 33 total responses), all of them understood that there were such things as genres and that they needed to figure out what genre was appropriate in new situations (see table 3 for example responses). Of these, 17 of them explicitly mentioned the disciplinarity of writing and needing to write appropriately for a particular community and situation. 13 mentioned the process they would go through to figure out how to appropriately respond, and 13 of them seemed to have a complex understanding of genres (as more than just a category of writing). These numbers, though, cannot be taken on face value because many of the answers on the survey were only one sentence long and some students skipped some questions. For example, those students who took the survey right after taking my class could not answer questions regarding writing they had done since and so did not answer questions regarding the process they went through to figure out that writing. Also, because many answers were quite short (e.g. “Learning about different genres and how to use the proper discourse for the genres.”) it is impossible to know whether these students actually have a more complex understanding of genre and whether they actually do understand the disciplinarity of writing and the steps to go through to figure out how to write for particular disciplines and in particular genres.

Table 3. Example Survey Responses

Complex understanding of genre

“I have learned about different ways to write in, to fit the purpose, audience and context in the most effective way ... we learned [about] genres and how everything has a set of rules and regulations (constraints) to its style of writing.”

"College writing is more than just lengthy papers. It has to be practical, pragmatic in a sense that it is fitted into a particular community. I also thought writings are monotonous; they all appeared to be the same. But after all the genre, I notice the variables among them are in fact very significant. It is important to discern the different category of the writing. The most important thing I learned was how to write in different genres.”

“We had to figure out what the normal formalities were, and how we wanted to change it to fit our needs. This also allowed us to prove to ourselves that you can be creative with genre, and that it’s not just a bunch of standard categories.”

Disciplinary of writing

“Not every profession has the same writing, they all have different tone and style depending on your audience.”

“The different genres are created based on what the discipline believes are (sic).”

“Researching different genres gives me a sense of what to do to create academic discourse throughout different communities inside and outside the university”

Assessment of new writing situations

“Now I learn that writing is not only for professional purpose, but also for everybody depending on their purpose. Some writing can be for professional, but some others are for public purposes. The audience also varies, not just people who are at high level of education. I think the most important thing I learned is how I use different genres to write for different purposes. I learned that there is not only some particular genres that we can use, but that we can also create new genres, depending on the useful information that we want to put in our writing. I learned how to flexibly use genre to achieve my personal purpose.”

“I remember looking at the genre that we were writing in and making sure that we wrote appropriately for our audience and subject matter. This was the main focus of the class. It was helpful because it helped me to practice my writing. It also helped me to focus on how to write for certain subjects and classes.”

Process

“I’ll assess the assignment and determine what genre would be best to write in. If it’s a new genre, then I’ll do a little research on the genre before working on the assignment.”

“The first step would require you to figure out the discourse community of the rhetorical situation. However, one would need to be a member of the discourse community and you would need to talk to that community and figure out how they write and respond. You would need to do some research and analyze what the members of the discourse community are writing. After looking through their work you can construct your writing around their ideas with the format or style of that community that is acceptable for the rhetorical situation.”

Of the two responses to the survey that did not mention genre awareness as the most important thing they learned, one did mention genre, but felt like other things were more important. She stated “genre was the focus of the reading... it just kept coming up again and again.” This is the only mention of genre and does not show any real awareness; it just shows

that she was paying attention to the topic of the readings. She then mentions cohesion, claims, and intertextuality as the most helpful things she learned. She goes on to state, “I ended up being interested in some of the materials we read and had to write papers on, but it would have been nice to have a little more variety of topic.” Although we can’t tell for sure from this response, it seems as though she didn’t really understand why we were doing all the readings on genre and how they were going to be helpful to her, so in the end said, “Honestly the things I remember best from the class were the analogies made about how conversation was like this ongoing thing that you listened, joined, learned and left ... I'm sure the writing has helped mine some, but I haven't had a class where I've really needed to write in since.” What this points to is Beaufort’s and Smit’s arguments that we need to be explicitly teaching for transfer – that students need to be taught how and why they need to transfer what we are teaching them. If students do not understand why they are doing what they are doing, they will not, as Beaufort argues, “automatically bridge, or bring forward, appropriate writing strategies and knowledge to new writing situations” (177). They must be given an “understanding of both the need to do so and the method for doing it” (177). Although I attempt to teach this to students and try to make sure students understand why they are doing what they are doing, it seems to have not come across clearly to this student. This could also be an example of a point Wardle (2007) makes that students need opportunities to transfer what they have learned. This student mentions that she hasn’t done any writing since my class, and therefore has not needed to use anything she may have learned. Because she hasn’t needed to use anything she learned, this could reinforce her opinion that the course really wasn’t that useful.

So, what do these survey results mean? It means that 94% of these respondents took some aspect of genre awareness away from the class and believed it to be very important. Many

of the students took the survey several quarters after my class and said that they had used genre awareness in their writing. Several of them gave concrete examples of their use of genre awareness to help them write papers for other classes. For example, one student from 110 wrote that the most important thing he had learned was “writing for different audience – genre awareness – because I would know the steps I would need to do in order to write/choose an appropriate genre.” He then goes on to elaborate by stating:

This knowledge will help when you're in a situation where you don't know how to write for a particular situation. The first step would require you to figure out the discourse community of the rhetorical situation. However, one would need to be a member of the discourse community and you would need to talk to that community and figure out how they write and respond. You would need to do some research and analyze what the members of the discourse community are writing. After looking through their work you can construct your writing around your ideas with the format or style of that community that is acceptable for the rhetorical situation. For example, in my Environmental Science class we were supposed to write a response to an issue, like consumer consumption, but I didn't know how to begin ... I decided to ask the professor how I should respond to the situation, and then I looked at other responses that dealt with consumer consumption to see how they were written, and used their form to respond to the issue of consumer consumption.

Here we see a student who seems to have all four aspects of genre awareness. He has a complex understanding of genres, he understands the disciplinarity of writing and that he needs to figure out how to appropriately respond to new situations, and he knows how to figure that out. He also gives a concrete example of the way he has used genre awareness to help him write for situations he was unfamiliar with. Although I can't be certain, based simply on this survey response, it seems as though this student is using genre awareness to help him write his papers. He understands how genres work, and says that he asks an expert for help and uses his sources as genre models to help him when writing the paper.

Although the detail in this particular student response is not typical of the responses,

overall student responses to the course evaluations and survey tell us that students find the course difficult, but useful, and that they report gaining some aspects of genre awareness from it. This implies that this course is an important first step in helping facilitate the development of genre awareness in these students. The case studies that follow will answer in more detail how much genre awareness students are actually putting to use when they write for other classes, to what extent that genre awareness helps them more successfully write those papers, and also what other experiences aid student in further developing their genre awareness.

Chapter 3: Awareness as a Means to Production?: One Student's Process of Learning to Write for Social Science

The previous chapter discussed my genre awareness courses, along with a discussion of what students say about what they had learned. Because my research questions ask about the extent to which students use the genre awareness they were taught when they write for other classes, it is important to do in-depth investigations of particular students to see them writing for other classes. Although the survey and course evaluations gave a general sense of what students had learned and what they thought was useful about the class, it does not show what students actually use when writing papers. Therefore, this chapter turns to a case study of one student who took my class. Through interviews with him and his teachers, analysis of written documents and course texts (syllabi, assignment prompts, etc), and class observations, this chapter investigates the extent to which this particular student uses what he learned in my class when he writes for other classes. Although this chapter shows this student doing some things that he learned in my class, it also shows that one course in genre awareness was not enough and he needed further prompting as to the need for genre awareness. This chapter shows Richard struggling to figure out disciplinary conventions of writing and only rarely thinking about genre awareness when writing papers. It also shows him developing a stronger sense of genre awareness through the experiences writing in various disciplines and classes.

The subject of this chapter is Richard, a student from my English 110 class. Richard had been an average student in high school, earning mostly Bs and Cs in his classes. He came from a low-income school district and was part of our Educational Opportunity Program which “promotes academic success and graduation for under-represented ethnic minorities, economically disadvantaged and first generation college students” (EOP website). The EOP

offers tutoring, advising and other academic support for these – typically under-prepared – students. At the start of this research, Richard was a sophomore, planning to major in Law, Societies, and Justice which is an interdisciplinary major consisting of faculty from Sociology, Anthropology, and Political Science. He had the ultimate goal of becoming a police officer or (ideally) an FBI agent. He had taken English 110 with me three quarters before joining this research study.

In our first interview Richard discussed his high school education, reporting that his high school writing instruction had been typical: he learned the five paragraph essay and wrote papers about literature, or research papers in which he read several sources and regurgitated what those sources told him. His high school instruction was very process-oriented and his teachers focused heavily on prewriting techniques such as outlining and he would spend the majority of time in class working on brainstorming and writing outlines. He later (in our final interview) stated that in high school he was given essay templates where he just had to plug in his information. He stated that “they would even sometimes give us like um, almost like sketches of it to make it exactly how they wanted it, so they’d have like a little box for a thesis or whatever, you know and you’d be expected to fill it out and then use that to build your essay” (interview #6).

In terms of grades, Richard was an average student. He received a 2.9 on his final portfolio in my class and had a cumulative GPA of 2.8. Richard struggled a lot in my class with using appropriate style, understanding and using course texts, and making complex arguments. In my experience, these are struggles that many students from the EOP program face, which is why they are given the chance to take English 109 and 110 to get more extensive and focused help on their writing. So, in this sense, Richard was a fairly typical 110 student. In terms of the genre awareness he learned, Richard never really showed that he had a strong understanding of

the texts that we read and he was not able to define genre in even a moderately complex way. However, one of his strengths was his thinking about his own writing. He was able to reflect critically on his own work in ways that I believed would be beneficial to him in his future writing. And because metacognition is such an important aspect to knowledge transfer, I believed that this strength in Richard would aid him in transferring what he had learned in my class to the writing he later did in other classes.

The perceptions about writing that Richard got from his High School writing experiences changed a lot when he came to college. Richard self-selected into the two-course introductory composition sequence (English 109 and 110) rather than taking the one quarter course that most first-year students take (English 131). When asked why he decided to take the two course sequence, he stated that he saw that it was a class specifically for those in the Educational Opportunity Program and he thought it might be better than taking our one quarter composition class. He had heard mixed reviews from friends of his that had taken English 131 and so thought English 109/110 might be better. He was also a little bit nervous about writing for college. He stated that he had been able, in high school, to write his papers the night before they were due and get mostly Bs, but he knew that writing in college was going to be harder and that he probably wasn't going to be able to get away with that, and so wanted the extra help.

Richard took English 109 with another instructor, and learned that the five paragraph essay was not going to work in college. Before taking 109, the five paragraph essay was all he knew, but the instructor for 109 really stressed that essays could be as many paragraphs as you needed as long as you could make them connect and the paper made sense. Richard stated that “she really, at least for me, helped me with that, to break that habit” (interview #1). Another issue that Richard worked on in 109 was: “I'd always try and sound academic, you know, use big

words and stuff, but it wouldn't make sense." The instructor in 109 helped him with this as well, telling him that he didn't need to worry about sounding smart, that he needed to "not care about that and just really write what you think ... And so after that, I finally kind of caught on what she was trying to do. It helped me a lot" (interview #1). In that class, Richard was also introduced to more complex arguments based on claims rather than simple thesis statements. He also learned that "organization is huge, and by organization I mean your ideas, like your thesis and then your subclaims to that like even when you're writing like your rough draft, if you have to like reorganize you subclaims to make it sound better" (interview #1). The concepts of claims, subclaims, and counterclaims that he was introduced to in his English 109 class were reinforced in my class. In the first class, the teacher "really pounded it out of me, and then after taking your class, it kind of sharpened it up a little bit to where I could really take advantage of what I learned from her class. You kind of made me use that and put it into writing" (interview #1).

Based on his grade in 109 and early drafts of writing he did in my class, when Richard came to my class, he was an average writer, and as the course progressed, he didn't improve much in the typical ways that improvement is assessed. He had received a 2.9 on his final portfolio in English 109 and received the same 110. Although we don't give grades on papers throughout the quarter, I use a rubric that assesses where the students stand on particular criteria. Richard's marks on his papers were the equivalent of the 2.5-2.8 range and only improved minimally by the end of the quarter. Although he stated that he learned a lot about using claims, subclaims, counterclaims, and organization, I didn't see a lot of improvement in these areas throughout my class. He struggled the most with creating complex claims and with using academic style and tone. He often used very informal tone and his papers often lacked claims altogether. For example, in one of our main papers, the Genre Conversation, he began the paper

with:

Throughout history, people have been using genres whether they intentionally do it or not. But the fascinating thing about genres is that it's almost natural when writing. People do become confused at times when trying to write for certain situations or exigencies because they're programmed from a certain perspective from the past. That is why I wanted to discuss genre awareness in my essay because I believe that this is key in understanding the ways to interpret and use genre in the correct setting and situations and erasing that confusion from students thought processes. Additionally, I will be using Amy Devitt, Anis Bawarshi and Stanley E. Fish to help support my claim in how genre awareness is extremely important for the concept of using genres in our discourse and that genre is simply a way of showing what the purpose and intertextuality is for the writer.

The purpose of this particular paper was to “come up with an extended definition of genre” (assignment prompt) that synthesized four of the readings we had done on genre: Amy Devitt, Anis Bawarshi, Stanley Fish, and at least one other (Lloyd Bitzer or the excerpt from *Scenes of Writing*). Students needed to make a claim that incorporated the ideas in these texts and that defined genre. What this paragraph shows is a writer who is struggling with understanding the concepts from the readings and understanding the prompt, struggling to use the appropriate style/tone, and to create complex claims. The claim for this paper should have been a definition of genre. In this paragraph, Richard claims that genre awareness is important. I had been preaching this to them the entire course (along with many of the readings), so to make this as a claim for his paper does not show any independence of thought. Also, his definition of genre, that it “is simply a way of showing what the purpose and intertextuality is for the writer” is unclear, seems to be a misunderstanding of the readings, and does not show a complex understanding of genre.

The problems that Richard showed in his Genre Conversation paper persisted in later papers as well. In a genre analysis of Sociology journal articles that he wrote near the end of the quarter, he was supposed to make a claim about the purpose of the genre. Instead he wrote,

“Even though people have preconceived thoughts about Sociology being a type of community that speaks on the behalf of themselves and throws out their opinions left and right. The thing is that the genre of Sociology will back up their claims with solid evidence and statistics that have been compiled in the upmost (sic) detail.” Again, this claim does not fulfill the prompt and is unclear. We spent a significant amount of time in class talking about how to create complex claims that bring in counter arguments, and we can see here that Richard is trying to account for counter arguments. However, the claim itself does not answer the counter argument and does not give the purpose of the genre as the assignment prompt asked for. This example also shows him still struggling with academic style and tone, using phrases like “throws out their opinion left and right” and “the thing is.” Both of these papers were marked between “acceptable” and “good” on the criteria on the rubric, which is somewhere around 2.6. Richard received similar grades on the rest of his papers.

The final portfolio for the class included revisions of three papers he had written during the quarter plus a cover letter that made an argument about how the chosen papers show his fulfillment of the four course outcomes. Although he was able to revise three of his papers, even after revision, his papers still only averaged a 2.8 on the final course outcomes. He raised his grade to a 2.9 because of receiving a 3.2 on the cover letter. Although Richard was still struggling with using appropriate style, understanding and using course texts, and making complex arguments, one of his strengths was his thinking about his own writing. He had a clear understanding of his own learning, and was able to accurately discuss his own work and assess his strengths and weaknesses in his cover letter. This speaks to one of the main goals of genre awareness and other pedagogies that seek to teach for transfer: metacognition. The goals of my class are not to teach students to write specific types of texts, but rather to teach students *about*

writing, to teach students the situation-specific and discipline-specific nature of genres, and to teach them how to figure out how to appropriately respond to new writing situations, all of which causes them to think about writing in new ways. So, although Richard's writing didn't necessarily improve that much in my class, he did learn a lot about writing and in his final cover letter showed that he was thinking about his writing differently and in ways that would potentially help him later. Although Richard had struggles (or actually because of these struggles) I chose Richard for this research because he was a fairly typical student in English 110. Also because I wanted to see how genre awareness transfers for different populations of students, I wanted to have students of different writing ability. Richard was a weaker writer who struggled a lot with academic writing conventions, as opposed to Anna (the subject of the next chapter) who was a strong writer and already tacitly good at assessing writing situations and preparing appropriate responses.

In the first interview I conducted with Richard at the beginning of this research, we talked about what he remembered from my class. In my class, Richard was exposed to whole new way of looking at writing. In this interview, he stated that he had never really heard of rhetoric and that he only knew the word genre when thinking about music and movies and had never even thought about there being different genres of writing. In my class he learned that "each genre has a certain type of writing ... So like, for a history paper and uh, engineering paper, there's two different genres there ... [and] you wouldn't write the same paper for each class. You would write differently for each of them" (interview #1). Although history papers and engineering papers may not be different genres (depending on the assignment), this does show that Richard has a grasp of the idea of the disciplinarity of writing. So while they may not be separate genres, the writing in history and the writing in engineering are not going to be exactly same, which is

what I understand Richard to have been saying here. One of the main goals of my genre awareness course, as discussed in previous chapters, is to help students to assess situations for their similarities and differences. This is not limited only to figuring out conventions of different genres, but also includes catching the subtle differences between the same genre used in different disciplines. Oftentimes students write in only one genre (especially in their first few years of college) and yet each discipline values different things for what is considered “good” writing in that genre for their particular department or class. So, this quote from Richard shows that he at least partially understands that the writing in history is different from the writing in engineering.

In our first interview, Richard stated that my class really “changed the way I thought about writing by giving me an awareness of the different genres in writing and showing me how rhetoric can have an active role in those genres” (interview #1). When asked to elaborate on what he meant by rhetoric and genre awareness, he stated, “I feel like rhetoric and genre awareness are kind of the same thing in a way, but I’m not sure to tell you the truth. I just know it’s like having an open mind on what you’re doing, like consciously knowing what you’re writing to, and how there’s a specific way of writing to that certain thing, and I’m not sure if that’s rhetoric or genre awareness, or both” (interview #1). This shows that even by the end of the course, Richard still wasn’t exactly clear on the concepts we had studied. However, on the survey which was given before we started our interviews, he stated that the most important thing he learned in my class was learning “about different ways to write in, to fit the purpose, audience and context in the most effective way; otherwise known as rhetoric. The other main thing we learned was genres and how everything has a set of rules and regulations (constraints) to its style of writing.” He believed this would be useful to him because “having the knowledge to write in different genres will give myself advantage over my competition for jobs and any future peers in

my field” (survey). So, although he may not have been able to accurately define the terms, he did understand the basic idea of genre awareness and why and how it could be helpful to his writing. In a later interview near the end of this research he stated that the most important thing he learned was “the overall thought process of attempting to write in a certain genre, that’s what I really took from your class, just because it’s nice to be able to know that you can write anything you want and like knowing certain ways to go about writing to that certain genre” (interview #6). So, he understood that what was important was learning the process of figuring out how to write in new genres. In that first interview he mentioned our professional genre project as the most important assignment, stating that “it really showed me what you meant about rhetoric and genre awareness” (interview #1). When asked how he would figure out how to write in a genre he’d never written before, he mentioned genre analysis. Along with asking the professor or TA about how they want the paper written, he would want to know “if there’s any examples too, that would be nice, so that you can kind of see the structure and everything” (interview #1). He also mentioned keeping in mind the audience and what they are expecting.

In that first interview, we also discussed the classes that Richard had taken since taking my class and prior to the start of the research. He mentioned two classes that required him to write papers: a history class and a sociology class. Writing in history was difficult for Richard because he wasn’t able to figure out what the teacher wanted. From Richard’s description of the papers, they seemed like they were similar to literary analysis papers, but different in significant ways. Richard stated that for the first paper, he had to use a “ballad and kind of take parts of it and then relate to how you think people would have lived back in the day, with like the forest being off limits, and not being able to hunt, and how people thought of that” (interview #1). On both papers in the history class, Richard’s grade was 2.8. He believed that this was due to his

papers not being concise enough. He stated that he pretty much just paraphrased the ballad, instead of actually relating it to history, and that he didn't use enough evidence. Although he believed that his grade was based mostly on his need to be more concise, the goal of the paper was to put the ballad in historical context and explain what the ballad tells us about that historical context (assignment prompt) which Richard didn't really do. Although after the fact Richard was able to articulate this goal and knew what the paper was supposed to do, his paper is much closer to a literary analysis in which he explains the ballad and what it means. There is very little history in the paper at all. Richard knew (afterwards) that the paper was supposed to have a thesis about what the ballad tells us about the history of the time, but Richard's paper does not have a thesis at all. Because Richard was unsuccessful in figuring out how to write for history, he began to understand that the type of writing he did in his history class was different from any other. He later stated, "My history class was different from what I've taken before just because they expect you to have a lot of facts, like heavy, driven papers, to kind of like support your papers, rather than like reasoning or logic" (interview #6). This implies that Richard was beginning to understand that Historians value historical (fact-based) evidence rather than textual interpretations. However, he didn't seem to have realized this while in the class, and really just wrote his paper like it was one of the literary analysis papers he had written in high school. Because Richard did not seem to see the differences between this situation and his previous writing situations, he did not use genre awareness to help him figure out how to write for the class, and so negatively transferred what he had learned in high school about literary analysis papers. However, this class seems to have prompted him to think more about disciplinary writing conventions in subsequent classes. What he realized because of this class was that he needed to spend more time figuring out the writing conventions of disciplines he was unfamiliar

with and really attempt to follow those if he wanted to be successful.

Richard also took a Sociology class that was his first introduction to social science. The main thing he took from this class was what Sociology was and more generally what social science was. He learned that Sociology and social science in general are “about, um, like the social nature, and like society and what it does, and how it ... acts.” He also began to see the relationship between Sociology and his intended major in Law, Societies, and Justice. He stated that the Sociology class “kind of that helped me too, because sociology is social science too. So, kind of like I took that class and discussed maybe what law does to society, how it acts on it, and so I kind of put those together” (interview #1). This class also seemed to concentrate a lot on writing for social science. Although I did not have the opportunity to visit this class and have not seen any writing from this class, according to Richard, he wrote one paper for that class that was very similar to his final paper in my class. He stated that he had to write a paper in the genre used by professional Sociology researchers. Because of the problems he had in History, he realized that he “had to really think of what certain characteristics made up a sociology paper and explicit ones that made it different like main concepts and themes used in sociology” (interview #1). However, because he had never taken a Sociology class before, he wasn’t able to figure out these writing conventions and so he went to the Sociology writing center for help. He stated that the tutor, “She really helped me a lot, actually. She was like ‘you are not doing this correct at all.’ It really, like flipped me around, telling me, like ‘this is what you need to do’” (interview #1). Through writing this paper and getting help from the tutor at the writing center, he learned that:

to write like a Sociologist, you would try and get as many experiments or one really in depth experiment to focus on your topic or um research, and you would write about it pretty much, and like explain what your results were, and whether it

was correct to your hypothesis, and ... [then] you would title it, and so you wouldn't have just like a regular academic essay, you would have sections, and you would boldly see that with like underlines or whatever and then uh, you'd have each section, and you'd explicitly write about that and nothing else ... It'd be like, hypothesis, I think, experiment, results, and then conclusions ... [and] discussion. (interview #1)

Although Richard struggled with this paper, part of what I try to teach in my genre awareness course is that students need to talk with an expert about the genre they are investigating, and as I argued in chapter 1, the active learning that genre awareness potentially creates may cause students to be more likely to actively seek expert advice for writing assignments. Also, we talk a lot about how getting expert advice can help if students are having trouble figuring out what is expected. Richard knew that he needed to figure out the conventions of writing for sociology and knew that he didn't know what those were, and so went to the writing center for help. That being said, it's quite possible that he would have done this anyway, without having learned genre awareness.

When we started this research, six months after taking my class, Richard was taking LSJ 200, an introductory course for those interesting in the major. His professor and his TA were both from the Sociology department, so this course was similar in many ways to Richard's previous course in Sociology. The main focus of the course, according to the syllabus, was how "law and legality are fundamental to the social order." It examined questions such as "What exactly is law, and what different forms does it take? What gives law its power? How does it shape our everyday lives and identities? What happens when laws conflict? [And] How does it relate to rights?" The main goal of the course was to "introduce students to the social scientific study of law, as well as some of the main foci of the Law, Societies, and Justice major" (course syllabus).

Richard had to write one paper for this class which was about Jonathan Herr's book A Civil Action. At the beginning of the course, Richard wasn't given a lot of information about the paper, but he assumed the paper would be:

more academic, like, where you just use a lot of jargon, like, you know, vocab from the course, 'cause what she's doing is, she'll go over what we're kind of learning about in the articles and kind of sum it up in a way, but she'll also throw in terms that she wants us to kind of know, and she, as we go along in the quarter, she starts using them to explain more stuff, so I pretty much expect her to expect us to be able to know that and use it in our paper, to help describe the book and what not. (interview #1)

So, although he hadn't been given a lot of information about the paper, it seems as though Richard was attempting to use his instructors as models for how to talk like a Sociologist, and he stated that he would attempt to use the same types of language when writing his paper.

Richard and I met again several weeks later, after he had received the prompt for the paper to talk about his process of writing the paper. The assignment prompt gave several topics to choose from, and Richard chose to write on one that stated: "Many actors exercised discretion in the cases against Grace and Beatrice. In what important ways did the exercise of legal discretion by particular actors shape the outcomes of these cases? In your assessment, were these discretionary decisions justified? Why or why not?" (assignment prompt). According to the prompt, the paper would be graded on five main criteria:

1. Whether you develop a thesis and a clear organizational structure for your essay
2. How well you develop and support a clear argument where appropriate
3. Whether you clearly define important terms and concepts
4. How well you draw on and integrate the relevant material from the readings, films, and lectures, including guest lectures
5. Whether you show independence of thought and creativity.

Richard stated that for him to be successful on this paper would mean getting a B plus or an A minus, which in UW's grading scale would be around a 3.0 (or between 88% and 90%).

Through his assessment of the situation, Richard believed that he had never written a paper exactly like this one that he was writing, but that it was sort of like the papers he wrote in my class, and sort of like the papers he wrote in history. And yet he knew that there was a difference, and knew that the community he was writing for was more similar to his sociology class than either of those other classes. Based on my class observations, there was not a lot of explicit teaching for this writing assignment. The professor only mentioned the paper once. The week before the paper was due, she reminded students that they needed to make an argument with a thesis that appears in the introduction, that they needed to support that argument, and that they needed to not ignore the other side of the argument. When it came to sources, she mentioned that more references were better, but to mostly rely on sources from in class rather than outside of it (field notes). The TA spent a little more time discussing the paper. She explained that the main source of evidence should be the book, but that students should also weave in other course texts. She explained that the most common mistakes that students make are vague definition, rather than straightforward and concise use of disciplinary vocabulary. She did not want eloquent, flowery language, but rather wanted them to get to the point as quickly and concisely as possible. She reminded students to always root claims in course material and to not make passing reference, meaning that use of course texts and disciplinary vocabulary needed to be explained. She wanted the paper written as if to a general audience that would not have disciplinary knowledge. She also wanted students to explain the counter argument in detail, use course themes, discuss the implication of the claims, and make conclusions that have a general assessment of the legal system. Student questions during the class focused on the specific prompts and getting a better understanding of what they were really asking (field notes). Richard did not ask any questions, but took notes on what others had asked (I did not see these notes, so

don't know specifically what he wrote).

I spoke with the TA about four weeks into the class, right after she had assigned and discussed the paper in class. She reiterated what she had said in class, and also added that organization and evidence were very important. She also wanted claims that were verifiable. For example, she did not want students to write things like "Most Americans believe ..." without having evidence (from polls, surveys, etc.) that most Americans do, in fact, believe that thing. (This is interesting because in my class, these are exactly the types of counterclaims I teach students to make. I have them start with "Although some people believe ..." and then counter that with their own claim. I never require them to have evidence that "some people [actually do] believe" whatever that is.). She stated that in Sociology, factual, primary evidence is valued more than textual interpretations or opinion. She also explained that the most common mistakes that students make are that they do not make a claim, they do not consider counter arguments, they do not use disciplinary vocabulary accurately, and they do not have any logical organization (interview). Another TA for this class (that I spoke to at the end of the course) stated that when he graded those papers he "was shocked by the lack of organization." Many of the papers had no clear direction, were hard to follow and seemed to just throw in points randomly without a logical connection between points. He stated that these issues were "things which I thought were a little more basic, um they really drilled into me at least in high school, you know with writing the five paragraph essay or five page paper or whatever it might be, making sure you have an outline." When it came to particular things that he would want students to do, he stated that he would want to know from the very beginning what the paper was going to be about, and that they needed to have a clearly stated claim that expressed the major points they were going to make in the rest of the paper. He would want them to be able to account for counter arguments, and "if I

were to just read the first couple of paragraphs and the last paragraph, I would be able to get a really good idea of what argument they were making and why.”

I spoke with Richard right after he had received the prompt for the paper, and he seemed to have picked up on most of this from his time in the class. When asked what LSJ as a department (or at least this class) valued in writing he said that they really valued organization and cohesion. He knew he needed a thesis and that the rest of the paper had to relate to that thesis and had to have sufficient evidence. When asked what kind of evidence they value the most, he stated: “My professor usually gives like a lot of specific details of what’s going on like criminal-wise, or whatever we’re talking about, so she’ll like usually have like a graph or table or something and back up kind of what she’s saying and trying to get across, and so I expect for us to do the same thing in our papers (interview #2). He understood that this was different than the types of evidence used in other disciplines. He said that in English, for example, “We were using different kinds of evidence in a way, meaning like we would try to get like a subclaim or some kind of like back up for either the thesis or subclaim and we would be using academic type of people to back up what we’re saying, while in social science or LSJ, we’re using you know, real life stuff” (interview #2). He believed that they would want more, hard, “scientific” data as evidence rather than text-based evidence. However, Richard also stated that the TA also told them “to really go back to the book and find specific, like, quotes even, or uh, passages in the book to help tell what we’re saying or trying to say, and she said that we can even go back to course materials and bring some of those into the paper and even uh, like course themes is really good to keep in mind when we talk about whatever” (interview #2). So, although in general they may have wanted more statistical or hard, factual evidence, for this particular paper, the evidence was supposed to mainly come from the book or other course materials, which makes it seem a lot

more like the papers written in English.

In terms of the process that Richard would use to write this paper, he stated:

First I'm going to the prompt that I want, um, and after that I'm going to break the question down and see what I really have to answer, and what they want us to, and especially what the TA said, explicitly for each question, what we want to bring out and uh, after that look in the book and see if I can't find anything, um, like quotes or um, kind of something that helps get the idea out of the prompt. After that, I'll make an outline and check that and see if it flows well or if it, like, my thesis isn't right. After that, I'll just like pump out a rough draft, whatever sucks, or whatever. I'll just make one, and let that chill for a little bit, and then go back to it, read it, kind of figure out what's going on, whether my thesis doesn't work well or body doesn't work well with my thesis, you know, vice versa, and um, let's see, after that I'll probably have my mom check it because she's good at grammar stuff, so let her kind of see if it even, like means anything, grammar-ly ... [The TA] said to really emphasize of what you're saying, so don't be writing to her who knows what's going on, but write to like a general reader ... so what I'm going to do is at least get a rough draft this week and then let my mom read it because she knows nothing about like law, and see if she understands it, and so if she does, then you, a general reader, quote unquote, should, you know, so I'm going to use her has a guinea pig ... and then after that I will, um, choose which way I want to go, whether if I need to bring in more evidence or if I need to take some out, um, if my thesis and body work together or if they don't, and then um, just kind of make that stronger either way, um, and then let's see, yeah, so after that, I'll leave it alone for a little bit too and come back to it, read it, maybe even out loud, and just see if it like, you know, hears ok, if you know what I mean, and then ... I'll just check it again, and um, yeah. (interview #2).

In this narrative of his writing process, we don't really see anything that points towards the use of genre awareness (he doesn't seem to assess the situation or use genre analysis to help him figure out writing conventions, etc.). However, he stated that genre awareness caused him to approach this paper differently than he would have before taking my class. He said:

I think genre awareness helped because I took this essay, not the same as any other essays, even like English, because I know that in English you need evidence, but not like stone cold evidence, like facts, um you know statistics and stuff like that, so taking on this LSJ paper and just kind of some ideas about what they wanted us to have, and just kind of thought about that a little bit and um, and like the way of writing the paper ... [The] class really focused on organization and explaining your thoughts about certain cases and issues that were the topic/prompt. This reminded me of the English classes that I took with you and

[my 109 teacher] because it seemed very similar in that way. Knowing what an academic essay was and what was expected to be it, I had a better idea of how to write the quarter paper in the LSJ class.

This seems to suggest that Richard was able to transfer some general writing skills from his English 109 and 110 classes, but that he also knew that he needed to be flexible with that genre in terms of the types of evidence used and other specifics of the particular prompt. He believed that this paper was sort of like the papers he wrote in history and sort of like the papers he wrote in English classes, but he knew that there was a difference and knew that the community he was writing for was more similar to his sociology class than either of those other communities. For example, he mentioned that the history paper was similar in that he had to analyze the ballad and use that to help him say something about the themes of the class, and that was similar to what he was asked to do in the LSJ paper. So, although he wasn't writing in a genre he had never written before, he did know that he needed to figure out the subtle differences in how to write this genre for this particular situation and department. In order to help him figure out some of those differences, he used his course readings as models. He didn't have access to (or didn't know how to access) previous students' papers for the class, but felt like it would have been very helpful if he would have been able to. Instead he was using "e-journals or something ... so we do have like a course packet, where we have to read articles every week, I mean, that's pretty close, I would say. You know, because it is academic essays that are written about certain topics." However, he also understands that those articles are written for "other academics" and his paper was supposed to be written (according to the TA) to a "general reader," and so he was also using "a New York Times article" as an example of what he was trying to write. Although he never did any genre analysis of these articles, he stated that he used this knowledge and these examples, combined with the example of the way his teacher talked in class, to give him ideas

about style and tone for his essay and the types of evidence to use.

The topic for the paper was legal discretion, and how it played out in Joseph Herr's book *A Civil Action*. When he was just beginning to work on the paper, he was pretty confused about what legal discretion was, and so he again went to the writing center for help. I was able to sit in on this tutoring session. The tutor (who was from the English department and so not an expert on law or writing for social science) asked him to define legal discretion. He stated that "legal discretion is like you have the authority to legally do something, but you have the choice to either do it or not." When discussing the case of Beatrice and Grace from the book, he stated that "they exercised legal discretion by knowing the law in the books and using it in a knowledgeable way. They really understood how the system works and were very confident in their abilities ... since they know the law, they could exercise it if they want to ... You have to know a background of what the law is in order to use it." The tutor then tried to explain what she understood legal discretion to mean. She stated,

If you're just looking at law on the books, you're not going to use legal discretion because you're going to say "this is what the law says." But if you're doing it more from a social point of view you're going to say "Ok, that is what the law says, but, in this situation, we need to kind of, you know, be flexible with the law" or "because I understand the circumstances in this social relationship or these social conditions, we need to be able to, yeah, there's a law, but we need to be flexible with it or only use it in certain times or else, ok, maybe you guys are in trouble for breaking the law, but we're only going to give you this little tiny sentencing because we understand why you did it," those kinds of things. So, that's what I got from what legal discretion means ... The people that would be using legal discretion would be more the judges maybe and the jury maybe or um, it probably wouldn't be so much the lawyers. It would be the judges and the jury or if there were any cops involved. Those are the people who have the power to use that kind of legal discretion, to say, "ok, yes. The law does say this thing, but we're going to do this other thing instead." (recorded field notes)

When it came to the discussion of legal discretion in his paper, he was advised by this writing tutor that he should "go back to [the] course readings. And looking for what has been said about

legal discretion is going to be important,” and that those definitions “should be in the introduction, like the introduction should be ‘here is what scholars are saying about legal discretion’ or [the] course notes or those kinds of things and then go into the book.” When Richard asked whether he should try to tie in the book in the first paragraph, he was told, “Yeah, so you could be like ‘According to blah, blah scholars, legal discretion is defined as this thing. In so-and-so’s book *A Civil Action*, it shows how the use of legal discretion has big influences on the outcomes of cases’” (recorded field notes).

Although he was advised to do these things, he really didn’t take this advice, and one of the major criticisms that the TA had for the paper was that he “need[ed] a clear definition of legal discretion.” Instead of beginning with a discussion of the scholarly definitions and discussions of legal discretion and then bringing in the book, as the tutor advised, he began with a plot summary of the book. When asked why he did not take the advice to the tutor, he stated “I really took the thought of how [the TA] said that you need to write to a general reader. So, I thought a general reader wouldn’t know what the book’s about, so I just kind of gave a quick description of what it was” (interview #3). He began to discuss legal discretion in the second paragraph where he states that the Judge and both of the lawyers “were key people that used the law to their advantage but didn’t act on certain parts of the law because of their choice. This type of action is called legal discretion.” His TA underlined these sentences and put a question mark in the margin, and later explained to me that this was an unclear definition of legal discretion and did not show that he really understood the what legal discretion was. So, it seems as though there was a tension between the disciplinary demands of LSJ and the instruction to write for a general audience. After the course was over, the TA explained to me that she wanted to know in the first paragraph what Richard was claiming, and so she would have needed to

know the definition of legal discretion he was drawing on so that his claim about the use of legal discretion would make sense. Although the Professor for this course did mention that the claim should come in the first paragraph, Richard seemed to focus more on the instruction to write to a general reader, hence he sent the paper to his mom to make sure a “general reader” could understand it, and began the paper with a plot summary. His claim didn’t come until the end of the second paragraph.

In general there seemed to be a disconnect between what the instructors for this course said and implied to the students and what they were actually looking for in the paper. There was a disconnect between the disciplinary conventions of writing and what they explicitly taught students to do. The Professor and TA used facts, statistics, and other verifiable evidence when discussing the law in class, and the TA explained to me that they valued those kinds of evidence and didn’t want student to use more subjective evidence such as textual interpretations. And yet, the assignment asked them to read a novel (although based on a true story) and make a claim based on their interpretation, which seems to be similar to the types of papers assigned in English classes. Also, although they told students to write as if to a general reader, it doesn’t actually seem like this is really what they wanted. The imposition to write to a so-called “general reader” implies that there is such a thing as a “general reader” that would care about these particular assignments. Although they might be asked to write to a general reader, students aren’t actually writing to a general reader; they are writing to a very specific reader from a very specific disciplinary background, and I think telling students to write to a general reader is actually doing them a disservice because when instructors are reading the paper, they are actually looking for disciplinary conventions that students need to be made aware of. The idea of writing for a general reader also implies that there are general writing skills that work everywhere when in

fact writing skills are context-specific and audience-specific. These disconnects would make it especially difficult for students to figure out what was actually expected on the paper. Mary Soliday also discusses the issue of advising “students to write about specialized material to someone who knows nothing about it” (38). This often becomes confusing for students, according to Soliday, because not only is the imaginary reader vaguely defined, but students understand “that their actual reader does not resemble this imaginary reader, often a teacher with definite disciplinary expertise and generic preferences” (57-58). Another problem with asking student to write to a general reader, according to Janet Giltrow, is that it denies the disciplinary differences in writing; it implies that a general reader would value writing in the same way that an expert reader in a discipline would, rather than giving students access to the disciplinary differences that they need to know about (“Meta-Genre” 188). Being asked to write for a general reader seemed to confuse Richard because he wasn’t sure how to proceed, and instead of listening to the writing tutor, he gave a plot summary (which wasn’t needed at all) because a general reader wouldn’t know what the book was about.

Although Richard had this confusion, he was still successful in many ways on this paper. His main claim for this paper was that “Legal discretion greatly impacted the outcome of the case and only some of these discretionary decisions were justified because of the way some actors used legal discretion to their benefit, warping their explanations to the jury, other attorneys and their tactics in questioning witnesses” (1). This claim shows marked improvement from the claims he wrote in my class in that it shows a clear understanding of the question asked in the assignment and makes a clear argument. It also shows a definite improvement in the use of academic style and tone. Richard felt like that was one of the best parts of the paper, stating “it’s not broad, but it’s really defined, and I think that’s a good characteristic of a claim.” His TA

agreed that this was a strong claim. Richard also thought that he had done a good job of explaining his argument, focusing his paper on that argument, and not straying from it. He also thought he had done a good job of transitioning between paragraphs and using evidence to back up his claim. He had worked hard on organization and hoped that he had done well on that, especially since the TA really emphasized that.

Richard's grade for the paper was 88%, which for him meant that he was successful. This was actually a higher grade than he expected on the paper, because he felt like the teacher was going to be a hard grader because "she talks really sophisticated, you know big words and stuff ... [and] I would expect her to like expect me to write the same way" (interview #3). He also felt like he really didn't have enough time to finish the paper. He had a lot of other things going on, and so didn't spend the time that he would have wanted to. Although he didn't think he had had enough time to successfully complete the paper, his TA's comments on the paper were mostly positive. The margin comments asked for a clearer definition of legal discretion, asked him to explain things in more detail, and asked for more context or evidence in some places. They also show Richard misunderstanding some parts of the book. However, the margins are also full of check marks and his final end comment states: "Well done – good description of these exercises in discretion and discussion of whether they were justified. Some points could be expanded/further substantiated (see notes) and you could use more discussion of legal discretion in general, but otherwise nice work." When talking with the TA, she agreed with most of Richard's self assessment, stating that he had a fairly strong claim and that in general he used evidence well and had a clear organization. The major things missing from Richard's paper were a clear definition of legal discretion, in-depth explanation of some points, and a discussion of possible oppositions to his claim. The lack of any clear addressing of the counter argument

was one of the major genre conventions that Richard did not have in his paper. He stated that at the time he “didn’t even think of it.” Later though, he believed that the counter claim could have been that legal discretion didn’t impact the case at all, but that it wasn’t likely that anyone would actually argue that if they knew what legal discretion was and if they had read the book carefully. However, “it depends on how you look at the case ... I mean, it gets really technical to say no, they didn’t use legal discretion” (interview #3). Overall, Richard was successful in completing this paper, and following most of the genre conventions expected by his TA. Besides the lack of counter argument, according to the TA the problems with the paper didn’t really have anything to do with genre, and she believed that for the most part Richard wrote within the conventions of the academic essay fairly well.

When asked what helped him the most in successfully writing this paper, Richard stated:

really knowing what the question was asking. I have huge problems with reading the question and then answering it, like answering some other question that I made up in my head or something, like I think I know what it means and then I’ll kind of write about it and I’ll go back to the question like when I turn in the paper and I didn’t even write about it, what it was even asking me, so I really broke down the question and like outlined it, and I thought what could contribute to parts of it, and really broke it down which helped me a lot. And just like mapping out the essay and organizing. (interview #3)

When Richard was in my class and classes after mine (like his history class), he did often have trouble writing about what the prompt was actually asking, and as he accurately assess here, he did do much better in answering the prompt and sticking to it in this paper. Although he mentions these as his reasons for success, I believe there were also other things that accounted for Richard’s success on this paper. For the most part, he was able to accurately assess the similarities and differences in this situation and writing situations he had been in before, and draw on that knowledge to help him write the paper. He understood that LSJ was going to value

and expect different things from his writing, and in most cases he was able to figure those things out. For example, he stated he “took this essay, not the same as any other essays, even like English, because I know that in English you need evidence, but not like stone cold evidence, like facts, um you know statistics and stuff like that, so taking on this LSJ paper and just kind of some ideas about what they wanted us to have, and just kind of thought about that a little bit.” But he also knew that there were many similarities to what he had learned in English and stated that the

class really focused on organization and explaining your thoughts about certain cases and issues that were the topic/prompt. This reminded me of the English classes that I took with you and [my 109 teacher] because it seemed very similar in that way. Knowing what an academic essay was and what was expected to be it, I had a better idea of how to write the quarter paper in the LSJ class. (interview #3)

He knew that the paper needed to be “more academic, like, where you just use a lot of jargon, like, you know, vocab from the course,” and he paid attention to how his teachers spoke, stating that “she’ll also throw in terms that she wants us to kind of know, and she, as we go along in the quarter, she starts using them to explain more stuff, so I pretty much expect her to expect us to be able to know that and use it in our paper.” He used this information along with how his course materials were written and attempted to use similar style and tone in his own writing, including using disciplinary vocabulary. He was able to perform much of this knowledge in his paper, using organization and a much more formal style throughout the paper.

The following quarter Richard was taking one course that required writing – Drama 101: Introduction to Theatre – which had one short paper assignment. This class was “a course primarily designed for students who are interested in theatre and performance but do not necessarily have prior experience in the art form” (course syllabus). The lectures explored

“some of the key periods and playwrights in the Western tradition of the theatre, as well as key aspects of theatre production,” and the quiz sections discussed and practiced “these fundamental and historical concepts” (course syllabus). The main objectives of the course were:

- 1 To understand how theatre productions work
- 2 To build knowledge of theatre vocabulary
- 3 To see and read plays
- 4 To practice your newly acquired knowledge of theatre history and production in your own small productions
- 5 To express your newly acquired knowledge of theatre history and production in your own analytical writing. (syllabus)

Although one of the course objectives was learning to write about theatre, the class only required one short paper, and neither the TA nor the professor spent any significant time teaching students how to write that paper.

After seeing two plays at two different theatres, the paper assignment asked students to assess the plays and make a suggestion as to which one they believed their friend should see.

The prompt stated:

Your friend will be visiting you in Seattle. As part of the overall activities, you've agreed that you must see a play. Because you are such a good friend, you've begun to see plays all over the city to determine which theatre you will go to with your friend. You've narrowed it down to two choices. Will it be a play at the UW school of Drama or a touring musical at the 5th Avenue Theatre?

The prompt asked them to assess the plays based on an analysis using Aristotle's six elements of drama. Although she didn't say much about the paper in class, according to the TA (in an interview with me near the beginning of the quarter), the paper was supposed to be a “bare bones, argumentative essay” that is “clearly arguing for one play or the other. Um, in terms of supporting their views, are they using specific examples from the play that relate back to what their argument is? We're looking for very kind of, since writing isn't a core, not necessarily core to this class in terms of how the department sees it,” they weren't really particular about the

genre as long as they had a clear argument. In terms of specifics of what she was looking for, she said that they “need to have striking images, so in terms of your evidence, we want them to actually talk about the production, not just the plot of the story ... So, they need to say ‘I want my friend to go see 9-5’ or ‘I want my friend to go see *A Secret in the Wings*’ and they need to give sufficient evidence on Aristotle and the play to support that view.” She said the main difference between a paper that would get a C and a paper that would get an A is “a clear argument, [that] would clearly pick out which of Aristotle’s terms, clearly define them, clearly connect specific examples from the play to them.” The biggest problems that she assumed students would have would be “generalizations, not specific enough examples, not clear on Aristotle, and what points Aristotle is trying to make in the *Poetics*.” The evidence needed to be specific. So, for example, if they were talking about characters, “I need to know what that character is doing. If you’re more concerned about lighting, I need to know what’s going on in the play, what’s going on with the lighting and why it’s important ... so not making a generalization, but a specific moment in the play and justify why this moment supports your point of view.”

This assignment was not necessarily typical of those assigned in most Drama classes.

According to the TA:

It’s not necessarily typical to the major ... I think I’m expecting them to write an argumentative essay. It’s the assumption that they come to the class with some idea of what an argumentative essay is and that they’ll be able to write an argumentative essay for the class, but not in a specific genre for Drama classes. I think in terms of some of the upper level classes, they’re definitely, depending on the instructor of the class, there’s definitely a specific idea about what those assignments are, that we try to convey in those classes, but in terms of this class, it’s not a Drama genre.

The assumption was that students would have some experience with literary analysis from high

school or from their first-year composition class, and that they would be able to use that to help them write this paper. As the TA stated, referring to literary analysis, “I would say those are similar, and we actually refer to those sorts of methodologies, assuming they have some experience with that in high school, if not in college, with literary analysis, except they don’t have experience with theatre, but the types of questions you’re asking are very similar.”

When talking with Richard about how he was going about writing this paper, he had decided that he would be arguing for his friend to see *9-5*, because all six of Aristotle’s elements of drama were clearly seen in *9-5*. The biggest issue Richard had with *A Secret in the Wings* was that it was difficult to understand. Although he personally liked it a lot, he didn’t think any of his friends would really like it because it was so complex, whereas *9-5* was a pretty straightforward comedy. When asked if he had ever written a paper like this one before, Richard said, “I think it’d be more kind of like English where you have an introduction with a thesis, a body and a conclusion, I mean because you have Aristotle’s six elements that you need to use to compare the two plays and you also need those six elements to strengthen your thesis, you know make your argument” (interview #5). In terms of how he was actually going to write it, Richard said, “I’d have an introduction with my thesis at the end of the paragraph, and then I would, I would try and maybe put in one or two elements in each paragraph and then explain why I picked that play for those, and then if I could, ideally I would have a paragraph for each element, um, and then I would have a conclusion to wrap it up” (interview #5). However, because the paper was only 2-3 pages long, he was going to “have to make my body a lot shorter, concise, so like I said I’d either have to put two elements in each paragraph or just like together, kind of like pair them up to talk about them.” After talking about it, though, he decided that he might not have to talk about all six of Aristotle’s elements of Drama for each play because it would take up

way too much space. Instead, he could focus on just two or three of the elements, and “then I could actually explain what I’m saying instead of being somewhat broad and just mention it really” (interview #5).

When asked what kinds of evidence they would want, he said, “definitely my experience of the plays, or of the play, um, maybe just what I’ve learned in lecture ... images and sounds and stuff [from the play].” When discussing how he would use Aristotle, he said, “So, he’s kind of like the random fact guy. He just gives me like the foundation and then I just go off of that.” This paper, he said was very similar to papers he wrote in English in high school, where he would use a theory to help him analyze a piece of literature. Richard was able to accurately draw on his knowledge of literary analysis papers to help him write this paper. He ended up receiving a 56 or 65 (86% or around 2.9) on the paper and finishing with a 3.3 grade in the class. According to the TA, Richard had used the argument genre well; he had a clearly stated claim, and the paper was well organized, but that he had not used enough specific evidence from the plays to support the claim.

Discussion

At the end of this research Richard defined genre awareness as “being aware of what you’re writing, knowing that there’s different types of writing and that each one has specific formats to it, knowing that each one’s different, but some things are going to be similar, but there should be parts of the format that are different from the other one” (interview #6). He also understood (after the fact) that writing for history was significantly different from other writing he had done, stating “my history class was different from what I’ve taken before just because they expect you to have a lot of facts, like heavy, driven papers, to kind of like support your papers, rather than like reasoning or logic” (interview #6). In general, by the time Richard got to

his LSJ class and then later in Drama 101, he had become fairly adept at assessing the similarities and differences in situations and was able to draw on previous knowledge appropriately to help him write his papers. He had gained a significant amount of knowledge about what it means to write for social science and used that knowledge in successive classes. However, he didn't seem to possess or use very much of this knowledge right after he had taken my class, and needed more time and prompting to realize the need for genre awareness. Also, it is unclear based on this data whether he figured these things out because he had learned genre awareness, or whether he would have developed this knowledge anyway just through the experience of having written papers for several different departments. It is also unclear whether this knowledge actually helped him to write more successfully. He received a 2.9 on his final portfolio in both English 109 and 110. His papers in History both received 2.8. His paper in LSJ received 3.0, and his paper in Drama received 2.9. So, his paper grades do not seem to show any significant improvement, and there is no way of knowing whether his grades would have been lower, had he not learned genre awareness. When it comes to the amount of genre awareness possessed and used, going back to the factors used to assess student answers to the survey in the previous chapter, by the time we started this research Richard seemed to understand the disciplinarity of writing (although he seems to not have had a strong understanding of it when he took history), he understood that he needed to assess each writing situations in order to figure out what genre conventions were expected (again only after taking history), and he was able to state the steps needed to figure out how to write for new situations, although he never really went through those steps when writing his papers. Although he had some trouble defining genre, he did seem to understand how genres work throughout the university. As for his use of genre awareness, although he never really did any genre analysis, he did look to his course readings

and think about the way his teachers talked for examples of style and tone (Glitrow discusses “teacher talk” as an important meta-genre that students use to help them understand disciplinary conventions in writing), and attempted to use disciplinary vocabulary. Though he did state that he tried to “aim at the specific audience for whatever class I’m taking” (interview #6), this was mainly seen in his knowledge of the types of evidence that were valued, the types of topics discussed, and the types of claims made.

Although transfer is triggered when people recognize the similarities between the task they need to perform and previous tasks they have done, genre awareness is only needed when students are faced with writing situations that are *different*. When students see the writing situations as being the same or similar, they won’t see the need for genre awareness. A basic rhetorical awareness will be enough to help them transfer previous knowledge. It is only when the situation seems different, when they understand that what a particular teacher or discipline wants out of their writing is different from the writing they had done before, that they need to use genre awareness. In this case, Richard believed that this paper in history was like the literary analysis papers he had written in his high school English classes which caused negative transfer of those writing skills. Richard never wrote any papers that were not “academic argument essays,” and most of his teachers didn’t seem to care about genre conventions, but expected students to have general essay writing skills. However, there were subtle differences between the expectations for those papers in different departments. Richard didn’t seem to realize this at the beginning even though this was an important focus of our English 110 class. Only after being unsuccessful on his history papers did he remember that even when situations seem the same as others, there may be subtle differences, and after that History class was over, he was able to articulate the differences between literary analysis papers (which he originally thought he

was writing) and what the history teacher was actually asking for.

This goes to another point. As Devitt explains, students will use whatever genre they have in their repertoire that seems the closest to the one that's needed for the task at hand. Richard believed that the paper in history was like a literary analysis paper and so used that genre, when in fact the paper was only *sort of* like a literary analysis paper. Because of the genre awareness Richard had learned just before taking this History class, he should have been able to assess the differences in this situation and know that because he was in a history class and not an English class, he probably couldn't just use literary analysis. However, he didn't figure that out. He became better at this as he went along. He believed that his LSJ paper was sort of like papers he wrote in English and in History, but he also saw the difference and figured out that he had to use different kinds of claims, different types of evidence, and he tried to copy the style, tone, and vocabulary use of his teachers and his course texts. And when he still wasn't sure about his use of those conventions, he went looking for help from the writing center. He also accurately assessed the similarities between his Drama paper and the literary analysis papers he wrote in English classes.

Now, the question remains whether he did any of this because he was taught genre awareness in my class or whether he would have been able to figure this out anyway. It's really hard to say. Richard believed that my class was helpful to him, and stated that he used genre awareness, but when he actually wrote his papers, I didn't really see him using genre awareness. At the end of this research, he stated that what he gained most from my class was "the overall thought process of attempting to write in a certain genre, that's what I really took from your class" (interview #6). A thought process is something that is difficult to see. He seems to have used some things that he learned in my class, some of which we may be able to call genre

awareness, some of which are more general writing skills. Whether any of this caused him to write more successfully is not something that can be answered because there's really no way of knowing whether he would have written less successful papers had he not taken my class. Because Richard only ever wrote in one genre, we can't know from this data whether he may have used genre awareness more, had he actually been asked to write in a genre he had never written before.

The answer to the question of how to support high-road transfer seems to rest, according to Nowacek (and supported by this case study), primarily on helping students see the need for transfer. High-road transfer depends on the students putting in the work of transferring what they have learned. Teachers can help by teaching students to assess situations for their similarities, teaching them when and how to transfer what they have learned, and asking them to reflect on their learning, but when it comes right down to it, it is primarily up to the students to actually use what they have learned, which is facilitated by motivation and an active disposition towards learning. As Wardle claims, "Students cannot be forced to be mindful about their own work" ("Mutt Genres" 771). If they are not cued to the need for transfer or aren't motivated enough to draw on previous knowledge, they are not likely to transfer knowledge in new situations. And because of this, students may not see the need for transfer until after they have been unsuccessful in accomplishing a new task. They may, on reflection, see that they could have used previous knowledge, but they didn't see it at the time. This may then cause them to be more mindful in the future and begin to more actively draw on previous knowledge that might be helpful to them. Sometimes an instance of negative transfer or an unsuccessful attempt at a task will be the cue students need to transfer more in the future. For Richard, his writing for History seems to have been an example of this. He stated that when he writes, "I try and think of

everything that I should do and then maybe like after I turn it in, I might forget, er, remember something and be like “oh man, I should have done that” (interview #6). In the case of his history class, it wasn’t until after he had been less successful than he had hoped to be that he remembered that he should have used his genre awareness to help him figure out how to write for that situation.

There are several conclusions that can be made from all of this. First, students can learn all the genre awareness in the world, but if they never see the need for it, then they will never use it. Therefore, we need to figure out a ways to help students see the need for transfer. Studies have shown that students are more likely to transfer knowledge when they are prompted (James 2008), but this may depend more on the teachers at the site of transfer rather than the teachers who originally taught the knowledge. Meta-awareness can help students to do their own prompting, but in Richard’s case, he didn’t seem to have that meta-awareness. I believe that Richard could have been helped a lot if he had seen the need for genre awareness in his History class and attempted to figure out how the papers his teacher was asking for were different from literary analysis papers. If he had considered the differences in what historians are and do compared to what literary scholars are and do, he may have been able to assess these differences and figure out how to more successfully write like a historian. What this may mean is a focus less on genre theory and more on discussions of discourse communities, to help students think more about the community of historians, etc. rather than just thinking about genre, especially when instructors are asking students to write papers that are all called the same thing (i.e. “academic essay”). In my course, we talk about discourse communities, but maybe not enough. Because students don’t seem to often write in genres they are unfamiliar with, at least in their first few years of college, the focus on genre is maybe not as necessary. Students do need to

learn to adapt their genre knowledge for the particular situations they are writing for, but it seems often to be less about genre and more about more subtle differences in convention within a the same genre (or at least what their teachers are calling by the same name).

A second conclusion that can be made from Richard's case is that genre awareness is not something that can just be learned once and then students know it and can use it everywhere they go. Richard took this history class right after taking my class, and it took an unsuccessful attempt at writing to make him think about disciplinary differences. Whether Richard really had a deep enough initial learning of genre awareness to be able to transfer that knowledge may be debatable, but even so, what this shows is that genre awareness is something that must be developed over time. Richard did not seem to have a strong sense of genre awareness after taking my class. It seems to take some time and prompting for students to realize the need for genre awareness and to see how it might be helpful to them. An unsuccessful attempt at figuring out what a teacher is asking for may be one way of prompting it, but probably not the least painful way. Students need to learn to prompt themselves before they start writing, when they are in the invention process. They need to think about what the appropriate conventions are for that particular department while they are writing and if they don't know what they are (or aren't sure), they need to know where to go to get those answers (i.e. genre analysis and asking expert users of the genre for advice). Richard seems to have developed this more as he went along, and was more adept at assessing the situation and asking for expert advice. It is my feeling that Richard will continue to develop his genre awareness as he is asked to write for more situations and especially if he is asked to write in other genres, but it seems like he would have been able to develop it more quickly and fuller if he had seen the need to use it earlier or if he actually had the chance to write in different genres.

Chapter 4: An Essay is an Essay is an Essay: When Tacit Knowledge Makes Genre Awareness Unnecessary

The previous chapter discussed the ways that Richard used the genre awareness he learned in his composition course as he attempted to learn how to write for various courses throughout the university. Because it is important to see how different students use genre awareness, this chapter discusses Anna, who, in January of 2011 was a sophomore planning to major in business. Anna had taken English 131 with me in the winter of 2010, almost a full year before starting this research. I followed Anna for two quarters, beginning in the winter of 2011. I conducted a total of seven interviews with her – four in winter 2011 and three in spring 2011. At the time of our first interview, she had not declared her major yet, but was planning to apply to the business school in the following spring. She had begun college with the intent of majoring in Biology and pursuing a career in the medical field, but had recently changed her mind. She was not sure what job she was hoping to get with her business major. Anna came from a family of college graduates and had been successful in her high school career gaining mostly A's in her classes. She had received a final grade of 3.9 in her English 131 class, with a final portfolio grade of 3.8. Throughout this research study, her cumulative GPA remained at 3.85, so she was, so far, a highly successful student.

Anna's discussion of her high school writing instruction (in our first interview) was very similar to Richard's. She "was taught the 5 paragraph format. Introduction, three topic paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph," and "wrote essays on books, research topics, and class material. Teachers generally expected a focus on analysis of materials. They wanted a thesis, and a refute somewhere in the paper. I usually did well on them. I think what I was taught is pretty

similar to most public school students” (interview #1). She received high grades on all of her writing assignments both before and after taking English 131 with me. She came to my class already seeming to be good at interpreting writing prompts and figuring out what exactly the teacher was asking for. Without needing a lot of extra explanation, she fulfilled all assignments in English 131 very successfully. Although a very quiet student, Anna produced superior work on all aspects of the writing assignments in English 131. She understood the course texts well and was able to create original claims based on those texts. She was also able to accurately assess her own writing and reflect critically about her work. Of my three research participants, Anna seemed to have the highest level of understanding of the concepts of my course and of her own learning in the course – she was also an active and motivated learner – which are all aspects that contribute to the ability to transfer knowledge. Based on the quality of her work in my class, I believed that she had a high level of genre awareness when she left my class.⁴

The first interview I conducted with Anna was almost a full year after she had taken English 131 with me. We began that interview by discussing what Anna remembered about the things she was taught in my class. She remembered that “the major focus was, like, genre awareness, I think, and we looked at, kind of, the purpose, like when we were writing all the papers ... the audience, the purpose, the format, that kind of stuff. And making sure that our writing applied to whatever we were looking to do” (interview #1). When asked to elaborate on what she meant by genre awareness she stated, “being aware of the genre, maybe of what you’re reading, but mostly of what you’re writing, of like, how you are going to format it, to who you’re writing it for.” She stated that if someone was using genre awareness it would mean that

⁴ I do not have specific details from Anna’s work in my class because she picked up her portfolio from me after the class was over and had misplaced it by the time this research started. My explanation here comes from my memory of her work.

“they’re aware of who’s going to be reading the paper so that they can put it into the format so that that person can read it and understand it, and that it fits what they are looking for” (interview #1). She believed that one of the more important things she learned was “format, and how, like, you should look and see what the format is for that particular whatever it is you’re looking to do, and following that. Like, not everything has the same essay format.” And she knew that if she thought the assignment was asking for a genre she wasn’t familiar with, she would “probably go online and google what I think like I would have to write, and read other kinds of papers that would be in that kind of format and learn how to write in that” (interview #1). So although she focuses on format, she remembered a lot of what she had learned in English 131 and understood how it could be helpful. She had some understanding of the purpose of doing a genre analysis, and how that could help her when she wasn’t familiar with the genre she was supposed to be writing in. However, she never mentions the ideology or the social work that genres perform, and so her understanding seems to be of a limited nature, focusing mostly on form. She does mention purpose, though, and seems to have at least a limited understanding that writing *does* something and that she would need to think about what she was trying to do with the writing and make sure she wrote appropriately to accomplish that.

Although she found the topic of genre interesting and believed that it would probably be helpful to her future writing, what she really found useful from my class was learning to integrate multiple sources, the fact that it was "like really text-based, like we read texts all the time and then wrote on those." She believed that this would be the most helpful in her future writing. In an interview a few weeks later she stated:

I don’t think before your class I used other texts so much, it was just kind of like what you learned in class. Like in high school, like what you learned and then you wrote about it and you maybe you would quote it a little bit, but yours was a

lot more, and using several different texts, not just like [pause] and how to mix in all of them, all the articles in to one paper, so it's definitely more, just using the texts more. I probably wouldn't, I didn't do that before your class. I didn't go through and highlight and that kind of stuff. (interview #2)

Anna mentioned the ability to integrate multiple sources several times throughout the research, which seems to be the thing that she transferred the most from my class.

At the start of this research Anna was taking only one class that had writing assignments: International Studies 150: Israel: Dynamic Society and Global Flashpoint. This course was an interdisciplinary course that was team-taught by instructors from several different departments including history, political science, linguistics, and anthropology. The course focused on Israel as “a focal point for key global processes that have shaped the 20th century and the outset of the 21st century” (course syllabus). The course introduced students to the “histories, people, institutions, social forces, politics, regime, economics, law and culture” of Israel, and aimed to accomplish three main goals: to “teach students about key aspects shaping the international arena through the lens of a single country,” to “introduce students in depth to a country that has been a flashpoint in world affairs for the last half century,” and to “give students an interdisciplinary cutting edge knowledge of Israel in comparative, regional and international context” (syllabus).

This was the first class that Anna had taken in International studies. She took this class as an elective and because she had thought that it would count for a W (writing) credit (although it actually didn't). There was a writing link attached to the course, but Anna was not enrolled in that course. When asked about the class, she stated that it was “just basically about [Israel], how it came to be, what's going on right now ... You'll get, like, from all different sides, like military ... language, history, ... like they combine it, and just all about Israel” (interview #1). When asked if International studies was a class in the humanities or social science, Anna stated that she

didn't know the difference between humanities and social science, and when those were explained to her, she believed that it was both because "they're looking at it from history, all that stuff, the culture for sure, and then they're also looking at, like, the people and how they, I feel like a soc[iology] kind of thing, like how just the people come ... I just feel like it's everything." Although she was able to tell me this when asked, she had not thought about it beforehand.

According to the syllabus, the course required two, four-page "response papers" that were together worth 25% of the final grade. At the beginning of the course, Anna did not have a lot of information about these papers. She did not think that she had ever written a response paper before, but assumed that it would require "responding to a certain question or prompt that they're going to give us." In terms of what she believed they would expect on those papers, she stated that "they're just going to look to see that I, like, get the concepts and can apply it to something, and really like, uh, let them know that I know what's going on, and whatever that prompt is, that I'm able to apply, like, other knowledge, to that one, whatever subject that they ask me about" (interview #1). She wasn't sure, but thought "that it might be ... I feel like they might ask for my opinion, so it'd be like, I don't know ... first person, so, like 'I' ... maybe" (interview #1).

Once Anna had received the first paper prompt (about four weeks into the course), we met again to discuss her process of writing the paper. The assignment prompt asked the students to:

Describe how conflicting tendencies toward continuity and rebellion manifest themselves in modern Zionism, Hebrew culture, and pre-state institutions. Make an argument about the role of Zionism in Jewish history. In what ways do the texts we have read and discussed illustrate efforts to recover aspects of the Jewish past (whether real or imagined)? In what ways do they demonstrate a rebellion against the Jewish past and an embrace of European theories of nationalism and imperialism?

The paper required that students cite at least three of the course readings. The prompt was

accompanied by the grading guidelines that stated that an A paper (in the range of 3.6-4.0) would include: “a substantive thesis and essay fully addresses the topic; the thesis is defensible, clearly explained, and supported in the body of the essay.” It would also be an essay that analyzes the course texts and “shows substantial depth, fullness and complexity of thought” and that “expresses ideas clearly and commands the reader’s attention.” It needed to be clearly structured, “demonstrate[ing] clear, unified and coherent organization” and needed to be “fully developed and detailed with arguments supported by persuasive reasoning and references to texts or films under study; there is an appropriate balance between providing evidence and analyzing that evidence.” Lastly, it needed to have “a sophisticated style (remarkable variety of sentence pattern, smooth transitions between ideas, superior control of diction)” and “few, if any, minor errors in grammar, usage or mechanics” (grading guidelines). The grading guideline calls the paper an essay (even though the syllabus calls it a “response paper”) and asks students for an argument based on a thesis that is supported by evidence. So, there seems to be a bit of genre confusion here as to what the instructors for this course were really asking for. This genre confusion should have prompted Anna to get clarification as to what they were asking for (because she should have understood that the genre would make a big difference). However, Anna didn’t even seem to notice the genre confusion.

When asked what about the prompt told her something about how she was going to write the paper Anna said, “definitely using the readings that we get in class, just basically citing the readings and coming up with a thesis based on those readings” (interview #2). In terms of how she would organize the papers she said it is was “just, like, essay. Like, essay format. Like, you know, intro, a few paragraphs that describe like all the stuff, and then a concluding paragraph.” So, while the name “response paper” had tripped her up earlier, because the grading guidelines

call it an essay, this seems to have caused her to default back to an essay. She may have not remembered that in the syllabus it said “response paper” or maybe she thought that a response paper was just another name for an essay. In any case, she believed that this paper was similar to the papers she had written in my classes because they were both “really text-based, like we read texts all the time and then wrote on those. It’s probably really similar.” The instructors in the lecture never said anything about the paper, but the TA in the quiz section took some time to try to explain the prompt. She answered questions about the content of the prompt, but never said anything about writing issues such as how the paper should be organized or how it was going to be graded (field notes).

When Anna first got the prompt, she was nervous because she thought that the prompt was really overwhelming. She stated, “First I was like ‘oh no!’ cause I feel like ... I’m definitely going to have to go over the texts again, and read the texts, find the ones that relate to this ... [and] try to get the main point and then put it together, but I don’t really have too much of an idea right now. You know, I have to go back and read the texts, I feel like, cause I have no idea what I’m going to write” (interview #2). At this point she had not begun writing the paper, but when I asked her about the process she would go through to write the paper she stated,

well, for this kind, where you actually have to like read, like do it on the texts, I would read it, and then go through, probably go through the texts and highlight, make sure to pick out points, maybe take quotes and put them in a word document, kind of the different quotes or pieces that I would want to use in the paper, and then I might do a little outline. I usually don’t outline, or if I start an outline, I usually don’t follow the outline, so I might try to do the outline just because this is the first paper I’ve written in a while, but then I’m probably just going to jump into it and write a draft. (interview #2)

I asked her if this was the same process she had used in high school or whether she thought her process had changed since coming to college. She stated that the process was probably the same

but that the use of sources was different. She believed that this paper was similar to most of the papers she had written before in other classes, including my class, but she knew that there were specifics for this particular class. She paid close attention to what her TA said about the paper because she was the one that was “going to be reading it, and she knows and she actually told us, you know, ‘you don’t have to quote the lecture’ cause, like we know what she knows ... so we don’t have to explain things to her in a way ... So I can just, kind of, more go on what I think and my opinions, and the evidence of that, and I don’t have to explain everything so much” (interview #2).

She stated that for her to feel like she had been successful on this paper, she would need to receive at least a 3.5 on the paper. And she was pretty confident at this point that she should be able to get that grade. When I asked her whether she would be likely to go to the writing center, she said she didn’t know. She had never used any writing center before because she really didn’t feel like she had needed it. She thought that it would probably be helpful because they would go over the paper and give her advice on how to improve it, but she didn’t think she would actually go. She thought that if she did end up going “they could look at [the paper], make sure that I’m, um, that I develop my thesis, that it’s like maintained throughout it, and I’m not, cause sometimes I get, I go off my thesis sometimes, and um just make sure it’s what they’re looking for, that I include everything that I should be including, and that it’s just a cohesive, good paper” (interview #2). But, on the other hand, “if I feel good about my paper, then I might not want to go, cause I feel like the improvement would be best, like, if I was totally confused with the paper, but, which I don’t know yet because I haven’t started writing it, so I might end up going” (interview #2). She was fairly confident at this point because she didn’t think there was anything too different about what they would be expecting. The grading rubric for this paper seemed

pretty typical to Anna: “I’m not seeing anything crazy. Just good thesis, everything’s analyzed, it’s well-structured, backed by evidence, not many errors in grammar, or you know, sentence structure and that kind of stuff.” These were all terms that prompted Anna to use the essay genre she was familiar with. “Well-structure” to her meant “that you have a thesis and that you like, make your points in a clear way, in an effective way, and that you put it all together in a way, the best way to like help understand what you’re trying to say, and it’s not kind of all over the place” (interview #2). This seemed to her to be similar to most of the papers she had written before.

When I met with Anna’s professor (the main professor for the course) about this paper (about three weeks into the class, and before the paper had been assigned), she had just met with her TAs to discuss the paper. She stated that they:

talked about the formal apparatus of references, footnotes, etc. and agreed that ... students do not need to concentrate on scholarly apparatus; they do need to attribute effectively - to use citations to make their points and to clearly indicate who they are citing. Issues of format simply are not a priority though; I’ll accept anything that’s reasonably clear. We also talked about audience: we agreed that the assumed audience is a “high-achieving classmate” - in other words, the papers should not assume a clueless random audience that needs definitions of every glossary word; the papers should be geared toward or work toward creating dialogue within the context of this course, preferably high-level dialogue within the parameters of everyone’s current knowledge base. In their classes, [the TAs] will present the prompt and ask students for examples of rupture and continuity - that will provide a preliminary opportunity for students to organize their thoughts about what they will write and to raise questions about the prompt and our expectations.

When I spoke with an instructor from a writing class that was linked with this class about how she taught writing for this class, she stated that she basically taught this class the same way she taught previous writing classes in the English department (e.g. English 131). She really didn’t feel like she was teaching “writing for social science” even though, technically that was the title of her course. According to this instructor, because this class was a 100 level class that is largely

taken by non majors, and because the instructors and TAs were all from different departments, they were not expecting writing that necessarily followed any specific disciplinary conventions. For example, she was asking her students to use MLA format for their papers, but the Professor stated that she didn't care what citation system they used as long as they "indicate who they are citing." For the most part, it seems as if the purpose of this assignment was just for students to show what they had learned in the class.

Although Anna seemed confident about writing this paper, when she actually started writing it, she realized that she was very confused by what the prompt was asking. We spoke after she had already turned in the paper and she stated that she thought the prompt "was just kind of all over the place, like it just had a lot of things that it wanted to include, and I don't even ... it was just a lot of stuff ... I just didn't know what to do with that" (interview #3). Because she was having trouble figuring out how to write this paper, she attempted to make an appointment with the International Studies writing center, but they were full, so instead she contacted her TA and made an appointment to talk with her. According to Anna, they talked:

about what was going on with the paper. I had, I tried several like, I was kind of like all over the place, I felt like, I took her like some kind of half draft of what, like I wanted to know if I was like even in the right realm of like what this was supposed to be and she was like "yeah," like I didn't even have to even talk about everything, which is weird because it didn't say choose it just said discuss all these things, but we didn't have to discuss all of them, and I, and she said, yeah so she looked over it, and told me that, and so yeah, that was helpful. (interview #3)

Anna was not alone in having trouble with this paper. I spoke with the director of the International Studies writing center, and she told me that they were completely booked up with students from Anna's class, and that everyone was confused by what the teacher was asking on this paper. According to the writing center director, the problem was with the prompt, not with the students. She stated that "they're struggling with how to answer that prompt. And so part of

it is, I think ... in thinking about how to write a strong paper, there needs to be a research question ... and if you write a prompt where they can't really respond to a research question with a thesis statement, then the problem isn't with them, the problem is with the person who wrote the prompt." The problem with this particular prompt, according to the writing center director, was that:

it's not actually asking for an argument. That's my critique of it. What it's asking for is a list: here are ways that it's a rupture, here are the ways that it's a continuation. Well, what kind of an argument are you asking for, are you wanting them to make a larger argument, like on balance: "Although both ruptures and continuities exist in modern Zionism, on balance it is a rupture" or it is a continuation, but that's not what the prompt is asking for. And then they're going to be dinged because they're not making an argument in the paper, but that's not what the prompt asked them to do. So, and that's a larger problem. But generally, in my ... opinion, the goal of good social science is to make an argument and when instructors write prompts like that it doesn't help.

So, according to her, Anna's confusion with that particular prompt was completely justified. The syllabus asked for a "response paper," the assignment prompt itself never asked for an argument, but the grading guidelines called the assignment an essay and told students they needed a thesis and to back up their arguments with persuasive evidence. Because of Anna's genre awareness, she should have known that the genre would matter, and in order to clear up this confusion, she should have known to ask questions about the genre. However, she did not ask these questions. Instead she defaulted to a known genre (a five paragraph essay). When she went to the TA for help she only asked questions about the content of the paper. Her confusion led to Anna receiving a grade of 90 out of 100 on this paper, which according to their scoring rubric was a 3.2. This grade was lower than what Anna was originally hoping for, but was pretty close to what she expected to get after actually writing the paper. She stated that she "wasn't surprised" by the grade "because I didn't really know what was going on. I think it was a really unclear

prompt and I really had no idea how to go about doing it, and I like tried a couple times and then I just like typed something up that I thought would kind of be [indistinguishable] and I was actually really sick of it” (interview #3). Genre awareness could have helped Anna to figure out what her instructors were really expecting on that paper, had she remembered to use it. Instead she tried to figure it out based on the assignment prompt, but because the prompt was confusing, she was unable to figure it out and so ended up getting a lower grade than she had originally hoped for.

The paper had no marginal comments on it other than several check marks on each page. The end comment simply said “good. Need to clarify some of your points/information mentioned.” The first check mark was on the bottom of the first paragraph and I assumed that meant that the TA like Anna’s claim. Anna agreed, stating, “Um, my thesis is in there. Yeah, it’s probably the thesis, the check for the thesis.” She stated that she wrote that particular thesis because, “I think when I was starting it, I just found a lot of stuff pointing towards European influence and stuff, and it’s probably I just thought I could write the paper on that, so ...” (interview #3). When Anna went to talk with the TA about her paper, she didn’t specifically ask her about the thesis of the paper. She “just kind of asked her ‘is this on the right track?’ I don’t remember what my original thesis was at that point. I think it was a lot ... I was trying to include everything. It’s just I couldn’t. I think I narrowed it down a little. I don’t think I included everything” (interview #3). Anna agreed with my assessment that it seemed like what they cared about the most is that students get the content correct, stating, “Yeah, that probably is accurate. It’s not like a writing class, I guess. They just want to see what you know, I feel like, in a written form.” She also believed (based on the grading guidelines and her prior knowledge of how essays are usually graded) that the paper was being assessed on “making sure there’s a good

thesis that makes sense and is carried through and every, and all the information in it relates to the thesis, and you know, accurate knowledge that builds up to whatever point I'm trying to make, good analysis that makes sense, you know, all that kind of stuff" (interview #3).

Because the assessment really seemed to be more about whether students got the content correct and the fact that the second paper prompt (discussed below) was so much different, Anna stated that comments from the instructor "would not necessarily have been that helpful as, like if the prompt was similar to this [last one] I might have wanted more comments on how to do it better but since this is like, I'm going to approach it from a totally different way, I don't really feel like I need her help or her comments on that one" (interview #3). The prompt for the second paper (which was also called a "response paper" in the syllabus, but wasn't called anything on the prompt itself) stated:

The implications of Ben Gurion's decision have led to a rift in Israeli society between secular and religious populations. Construct a debate between Yuval, a secular Israeli who feels fed up with Israel's "religious coercion," and Yaacov, an Orthodox Jew and supporter of Israel's current religious establishment. Discuss at least three different reasons why Yuval might resent the way Ben Gurion's compromise has played out in Israeli society today. How might Yaacov respond to each of Yuval's complaints/challenges? In your conclusion, discuss whether or not you think Ben Gurion made the right decision to maintain the status quo in 1953, and why.

Anna's thoughts on this assignment were that "this prompt is so much clearer, like I feel like I'm going to do better on it" (interview #3). She thought that it was "way better in my opinion ... This one's just pretty, I think it's really straightforward. It's just like, choose three arguments and just argue about [indistinguishable], 'cause the other one was just really confusing, and this one's really clear to me." And even though "I'm not, like I'm not up-to-date on the information, like I don't actually know like too much of what I'm going to write, but I know that I can write that because it's really clear like what they want" (interview #3). In terms of how she was going

to write the paper, she stated, “I think I’m just gonna do like a five paragraph essay where you know there’s an introduction and one kind of point and then you have both sides of that point and then the next point both sides of the point, and then the next point and both sides of the point.” She believed that this was a good strategy for this paper because “you’re supposed to just discuss both sides and then at the end, in the conclusion, decide where you stand on that” (interview #3).

The biggest difference between this paper and the previous one, according to Anna, was that, “I don’t even have to come up with a thesis, I don’t even think, Yeah, I don’t even need a thesis, it’s just like choose three points and just ... hit up the pros and the cons of it in a debate kind of thing ... I don’t think it needs to be as cohesive.” She didn’t really think that there needed to be an argument in the beginning: “at the beginning no, but not ‘til the end, I feel like they don’t really want you to. You’re just kind of discussing both sides of each point and at the end just an overall, how do you feel about it. And so I guess then I would say, then there would be an argument there.” So, although she had at first said she would write it like a five paragraph essay, the word “debate” seems to have prompted her to the fact that this was a different genre and that she wouldn’t need to have a thesis and wouldn’t even need to have an argument until the end.

Anna hadn’t really thought about how she was going to write this paper, but thought that she would probably use the introduction to set up the “background maybe on the secular Israeli and the, and Yaacov and how they live, maybe. Like, Yaacov lives in this area with this kind of lifestyle, and Yuval lives here and this is how he lives and then this I why they feel differently kind of. So, their backgrounds and what exactly their differences are on each point.” From what I gathered from my class observations, the professors never said anything about the paper, except to remind students that the prompt had been uploaded to the web site. The TA talked about the

paper once (a day I was not able to observe), and according to Anna,

she just was asking us what we think we would write about it, just asking the class, and we were giving ideas and like how we would write it, what we would write, that stuff ... Um, an interesting thing is that she said there's a lot more freedom on this one, and a guy was like "well, can I write it as a dialogue? Can I write it like that?" and she's like "yeah." Like you could write it, like you don't even have to write an essay, like you could just dialogue. Like you have to have an intro and a conclusion, but then the rest of it could just be these two guys talking, which is kind of interesting. Um, and then people were just throwing out points, and a lot of people were just talking about how they, a lot of people, like we all kind of feel more like the secular side, like we understand that more, like, what the points of the secular side would say, and a lot of people, all of us were kind of having issues with the counterpoints of the religious guy, the orthodox guy, like why he, like why he feels the way he does kind of, or why he thinks it's ok for those laws to apply to everybody. (interview #3).

So, it seemed, from Anna's perspective, as if the TA cared even less about the genre of writing in this paper, and didn't even care if it was written as an essay or if they just wrote it as a dialogue between the two characters.

Although Anna seemed to have understood that writing up a "debate" was a different genre, what she ended up writing was a five paragraph essay that describes the different sides of the argument and then concludes with her opinion on the issues. Anna ended up getting 90 on this paper as well. However, the paper was supposed to be 4 pages long and Anna only wrote three. Although there really weren't any comments on this paper either, according to her TA (in an interview after the course was over), she would have gotten a much higher grade had she written a full four pages. Her information was all good and the paper was well-written, but just didn't meet the page requirement. Anna's choice of a five paragraph essay may have been the reason that she was unable to reach the page limit. Limiting herself to five paragraphs would have made it difficult for her to write more than she did. The body paragraphs that she has are already fairly long. In this case, her choice of genre may have caused her to be unable to reach

the page limit and thus caused her to get a lower grade than she should have, had she understood that they were actually asking for a different genre. She knew that it was acceptable to write it in a different genre, but opted to write it in a genre that she was familiar with which may have actually hindered her ability to produce what the TA expected and so she received a 3.2 on this paper as well. Because she had received high grades on the tests in the class and had a high participation grade for the quiz section, she ended the course with a 3.8. From this class, Anna's impression of the International Studies department (or at least this class) was that they used writing "to make sure the information ... making sure you have the facts" (interview #4). For example, she stated: "I had an essay portion on the test which I thought I totally bombed ... I was like 'wow, I butchered that and it's like half the test.' And I think I got like 100% on that part, and it's because I filled it with facts, so it seems like, it's like 'well she's knowledgeable of it,' even though I don't think it was a good paper at all" (interview #4).

Anna did not seem to use genre awareness at all in writing the papers for this class, it seems to be mostly because she didn't think she needed to. Although, the papers were called "response papers" in the syllabus, that doesn't seem to be what the instructors actually wanted. The grading guidelines caused Anna to believe (and I think she was correct in her assessment, at least of the first paper) that what was wanted in both of the papers was an argumentative essay and she chose to write a five paragraph essay for both papers (the first paper actually had seven paragraphs, but only because she spend two paragraphs discussing two of her points. It was still very similar to a five paragraph essay). Her teachers didn't seem to be focused on the writing, but just seemed to care that students got the content correct. Anna used the five paragraph essay format for both of her papers (even when she knew that one of them was supposed to be a debate) and didn't seem to think about how she might need to adapt that genre. She didn't seem

to explicitly think about previous genres until prompted and possibly wouldn't even have thought about the fact that she was using the five paragraph essay if she hadn't been prompted by me. Although the task for these papers was actually quite different (especially the second paper), to Anna they seemed similar to previous writing assignments she had completed (mostly because the grading rubric asked for a thesis that is supported by evidence, logical organization, etc.) which caused low road transfer of writing skills she had learned in high school. However, she did state that for the first paper she drew on what she learned about integrating course texts from her English 131 class, stating that she learned about "using several different texts ... and how to mix in all of them, all the articles into one paper, so it's definitely more, just using the texts more. I probably wouldn't, I didn't do that before your class. I didn't go through and highlight and that kind of stuff." So, she transferred the five paragraph essay from high school and transferred text integration from my class, but doesn't seem to have transferred genre awareness at all.

The following quarter, Anna was taking two classes that had writing assignments: Environmental History of the United States, and Management 200: Intro to Law. Anna's Environmental History class was a W (writing) credit and had one 7-10 page research paper that was going to focus on the environmental history of a place. This class, according to Anna, was "History slash Environmental Science" (interview #5). Students could get credit for either one of those departments depending on how they registered for the class. Anna had registered for it as a History class and was taking it as an elective. This class, according to the syllabus, went "beyond traditional historical frameworks that consider human actions and human society to ask how Americans have transformed the natural environments of North America and how those environments have influenced American history." The course focused on "how the history of

politics, society, and culture has been connected to history of disease, weeds, forests, fields, rivers, and air.” Through this course, students would learn “what it means to think historically about place, nature, and environment; (2) learn techniques for effectively reading and analyzing primary historical sources and secondary monographs; (3) gain experience researching, writing, and revising an original environmental history essay” (syllabus). So while the course goals included learning the content of the course, because it was a writing credit, it was also a focus for students to learn how to critically read and write historical texts about the environment.

Three weeks into the course I met with Anna when she was in the process of writing the paper for the Environmental History class. At this point she had not started drafting the paper, but had been thinking a lot about what she would write about and how she was going to write it. She had seen the assignment prompt and knew that the paper would be about the environmental history of a place, and she had already turned in a topic proposal. The topic that Anna chose to write about for this paper was:

the difference between the Denny Hall building and Paccar Building and why they're different ... why they were built the way they were built and that kind of stuff ... like why they were built, like Paccar, 'cause it's obvious different, it's big and glassy, why did they built it that way, and then relate it to the environment because like, yeah in this class their like 'everything relates to the environment. Everything is the environment,' so this, the glass probably lets in the sun, they use environmentally friendly architectural plans and there's like, and what's different back then in that time period, like why did they choose this style at that time period. (interview #6)

She thought that this paper was going to be “really hard because I don't know anything about architecture.”

When I asked Anna about the community that she was writing for in this paper, she didn't know. She wasn't sure whether her teachers were from the history department or from the environmental science department. She wondered if it was “possible that they're from

Environmental History? Is that a major? I feel like more environmental. I think my TA is probably more environmental, and my, the other teacher I think she's an environmental historian, so she does history of the environment. So, a historian." But she wasn't sure about this. When asked if she thought that it would make a difference to the way they would want her to write the paper, she stated, "Yeah, they, probably on the topic. If they are environmental science, it would be more science-y, more scientific, like the science, ecology, that kind of stuff behind, whereas the history is just kind of looking at the past and it's just like people, past, you know, not science-y, just more general history. So they're probably history actually" (interview #6). She focused on the content of the paper, and only after being prompted to think about this, did she decide that they must be from history. She did mention that they might want the paper to be "more technical and concise if it was Environmental science or whatever and history it would just be more open ended probably," but in general she focused on the differences in content and may have not even thought explicitly about this difference if she had not been prompted by me. She thought that she would "probably be using sources that outline like what was here before, but a lot of it could be just like speculating probably and relating stuff and like what I think happened here" (interview #6).

Because this course counted as a writing credit, Anna was required to do a proposal and also turn in a first draft of this paper, and she received feedback on both of these. The assignment prompt was extensive (9 pages long) and stated that the goal of the paper was to give students "an opportunity to *do* environmental history ... as a way of synthesizing what" they were learning in the course. For this paper, students had to choose a place that they knew well and "write an essay which interprets some aspects of its history, **using materials and ideas we've studies in the class.**" (assignment prompt, emphasis in original). Although the prompt

asked students to participate in environmental history through the writing of this paper, it also stated that “we fully understand that you don’t know enough environmental history to construct a complete or fully accurate narrative of the environmental or social changes that have shaped your chosen place. What we’re looking for instead is evidence that you have taken a long and careful look at the place and tried to see it with unfamiliar eyes, taking nothing for granted.” Students were advised to ask questions about how the things that are present in the place have come to be there and then answer those questions through their research. They were advised to “tell a story that will explain to the reader how this place came to have the shape and particular qualities it has today” (assignment prompt). They were to “think of this paper as an exercise in historical, geographical, and environmental interpretation, in which you read a small patch of landscape as a historical document of past environmental and social contexts.” The assignment prompt had 8 examples of locations that could be possible topics for papers, but in the end stated that “it really doesn’t matter what place you pick. You could literally go anywhere.” The assignment prompt also gave explicit instructions as to how the paper should be structured, what kind of thesis, analysis, and evidence to use, and the type of style that was appropriate. So, although earlier in the prompt it stated that the paper should tell a story, here it discusses the argument that should be made and what kinds of evidence would be most persuasive, etc. The paper was going to be graded on structure, analysis, style, and originality. Students were encouraged to come to the professor or TA or to use one of the campus writing centers (especially the History Writing Center) if they needed additional help.

During in class discussions about the paper, the professor mentioned the paper only once, to say that the prompt had been posted on the website. The TA discussed some example topics and talked about how to make persuasive historical argument about those topics, and told

students to email her or come talk to her in her office hours if they wanted to discuss possible ideas or questions about the paper. Also, the day that students' paper proposals were due, they spent class time sharing their proposals and getting oral feedback from their classmates and TA. In her original proposal Anna wrote that she was "interested in the differences between the two buildings [Paccar and Denny]. I am curious about the structural differences, the material differences, and historical differences, and how they relate to or utilize the environment that they are located in." She also stated that she wanted "to look at the changes and try to think about what new buildings on campus might look like in a hundred years." Her TA liked these ideas, but suggested that she:

Try and develop a more focused question that your paper can answer and explore. Do you want to ask why Paccar was designed in this particular style as opposed to designing older-looking buildings? Do you want to ask broader questions about how designers and campus planners see the visual landscape of the university – and do you want to compare their vision to the daily usage of students, faculty, and staff, and see if they match up? Do you want to look at the history of new building construction on campus and changing ideas of how it will physically and visually work? Or do you want to focus most closely on Paccar and look into the materials it was built with and explore where they came from and why they were chosen? Once you develop a more specific question, you can start locating archival materials (architectural plans, articles in the Daily, old photos, etc).

Although this feedback from the TA gives a lot of instruction relating to writing in the genre of research paper, Anna mainly took the feedback as concerning the content of her paper. Because of this feedback, she decided to focus her paper on the history of architecture and what influenced the changing styles of the buildings on campus.

Anna's process for completing this paper was similar to other papers she had written previously. Her proposal basically became her first draft. She took what she had written and after doing research on her chosen place, started adding information. There were examples of great student place papers on the course website, but Anna did not read any of them. She stated

that if she had decided to look at them “it would’ve simply been a glance. The essay was pretty open ended with a lot of variability in topic choices and I didn’t want to be tied down by another paper’s formatting. I wanted to formulate my own structure for my topic” (follow up email after interview #7). She was required to turn in a first draft of the paper and received some feedback from her TA which mostly focused on getting Anna to write more historically. She stated, for example, “In your final draft, I would like you to more clearly state the ways in which your history is an environmental history ... Right now it sounds as if your paper is about architecture” rather than being about history. After getting feedback on her first draft, Anna revised her thesis to state:

The reliance of architecture on the environment increased continuously from the establishment of campus, to the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition, to the acceptance of collegiate Gothic style for campus architecture, and changing world events that lead to a new “contextualist” style of architecture requiring cohesion with the surrounding environment. These changing aesthetic and functional values of architecture and their varying degrees of reliance on the landscape have led campus from Denny Hall to the modern Paccar Hall.

Her TA commented that this was an “excellent thesis,” and gave the paper a 4.0, A+. The only comments throughout the paper are grammatical corrections, and the final end comment states, “You have turned your initial question into a very nicely researched and well-written study of the UW landscape. The refinements you’ve made since your rough draft move the essay from one about architecture to a historical essay that explores the way builders and architects have envisioned and understood landscapes and social activity. Lovely work.” Throughout Anna’s process of writing this paper, I did not see any evidence of genre awareness. The assignment prompt had extensive, explicit information about what was expected on the paper, and Anna started the process with a good idea and used the feedback given to her by her TA to revise her work. She was able to give the TA exactly what she expected and get a 4.0 on the paper without

ever having used genre awareness (at least not explicitly).

At the same time that she was taking the Environmental History class, she was taking Management 200: Intro to Law. Because Anna was going to be writing these two research papers at the same time, I asked her what the difference was between what they call a “research paper” in history and what they call a “research paper” in business. At first she didn’t really think there was a difference, but after thinking about it, she said that she thought the history paper was “probably more detailed and like, I guess you’re thinking more about the past and what has happened, and I guess you could bring that into its impact on today, but business papers probably more like projected, on how it’s like affecting us now and in the future” (interview #6). In further explaining how the Environmental History paper differed from the Management paper, she stated about the History paper, “I think that it will be different in that I won’t have to be as brief and concise, like I think I can make it, just add more stuff to it. Like I guess it could be more flowery, but it doesn’t have to be just straight to the point. It’ll be just general idea, what I think, that kind of stuff, whereas [the management paper] is just a lot more concise” (interview #6). She believed this to be the case because “it’s history and it’s about like environment and how we think of it, and it’s very open, it’s a very open-ended kind of what you think, and they make it so that anything is relevant, so it’s kind of more open, I think, than [the management] one.” Although she said that she thought the history paper might be more detailed, again she mostly focuses on the content of the paper and doesn’t seem to understand that form and content cannot be separated. She believed that the form of the papers would be exactly the same and stated that she “would probably just do the standard, like introductory paragraph, then a few paragraphs, body paragraphs, and then a conclusion” (interview #6). The distinctions she made about what they would expect in each of these courses seems to have come from a general idea

about what it means to be a historian versus a person in business and also by what was listed in the syllabus for the business class (it stated, “brevity is a virtue . . . be brief, be concise, be thorough”), but I’m not sure that she would have really thought about these distinctions if I hadn’t asked her about them.

The Management class was the first class that Anna had taken in the business school and was her final prerequisite for the major. She had already taken two accounting classes, a statistics class, and two economics classes, and was planning on applying for the major the next week. This course introduced “students to the basic structures and principles of the American legal system, and provide[d] an overview of emerging business and global legal systems,” and covered “a number of legal subjects which might affect students’ business careers” (syllabus). The class had two paper assignments: a two-page summary of a courtroom observation, and a 5-7 page research paper. The paper assignment prompts were in the syllabus. All that it said was:

Paper Topics: Choose your paper topic from one of the following: 1. Affirmative Action: current status, pros and cons. 2. Product Liability: current state of the law, pros and cons. Should punitive damages be capped? 3. The U.S. Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision: a good decision or a bad decision? 4. Corporate Social Responsibility: is legal compliance sufficient? 5. Consumer Protection in Washington. (syllabus)

On the back page of the syllabus was a paper grading checklist. It stated that the paper would be graded on “Structure and Content (40 points).” This category included: the strength of the argument, the logic of the essay, quote integration and analysis, transitions, strength of the introduction and conclusions, and the strength and appropriateness of the research. Next it stated that the papers would be graded on “Organization and Development (25 points).” This category included: development of ideas, clarity of the thesis, paragraph organization, logical sequence of paragraphs, and clarity as a whole. The papers would also be graded on “Style (20 points)”

(grammar, spelling, sentence length, and author's voice), and "Bibliography (15 points)" (syllabus).

Because this was Anna's first class in the business school, she didn't really know very much about writing for business. In the second week of class Anna asked the teacher "for like the outlines for this paper," and found out "that he likes, like to the point, like you don't need to fluff it, um, and this is a research paper, so it's probably going to similar to other research, you know, choose a topic, learn about, and just give a concise paper about the important parts" (interview #6). The syllabus stated, as Anna noticed, that "brevity is a virtue, as long as you have covered the subject adequately." The professor suggested that the paper be 5-7 pages, but that was not necessarily required. The syllabus reminded students to "please work on your writing mechanics (grammar, spelling, word choice, punctuation) as well as your paper's substance, clarity and organization."

The professor talked about writing only once during class. He stated that he wanted students to use clear, concise language and not use long paragraphs with rambling sentences. He wanted them to get straight to the point as concisely as possible. The intended reader was supposed to be someone who knows nothing about the topic and the students were supposed to think of themselves as educating the reader on their topic. He reminded them that he would be paying attention to style and grammar (field notes). I spoke with the instructor the following week (about 5 weeks into the quarter) and he stated, "As you probably noticed in the class you were in last week, I did take some time to talk about writing. I just wanted to give them some ideas of what my thoughts were, and convey to the students what some of my thoughts are." When asked what he was expecting for the paper he stated:

I want them to research. I want them to use outside sources, get information from

sources, and write the paper, and accurately cite those sources ... I think the rubric sets out what I'm looking for, but it depends on the topic, but I really have four different categories. I've got structure basically, um you know, is it logically organized, do I understand the direction that the paper is going, are they clear in what they're trying to tell me, um and I have, oh let me just take a look at this. Structure and content, and the content basically is if they're making an argument or point, are they making that point, are they, if it's going to be an argument are they making a good argument, a logical argument, are they anticipating the counter arguments and answering those arguments, so that's the content issue. I mentioned organization and that is, is it logically organized, are the paragraphs, do they lead to a point, can you see where the person is going, and just from a style standpoint, are the paragraphs short and crisp, is the language crisp, is it clear, can they write clearly? Style is grammar and spelling, how are they doing on grammar and spelling. And then research, how much research have they done and what kind of sources have they checked, have they accurately cited what they have referred to in their paper? So, those are the criteria that I use.

Although this was a class in law, it was also a business class. According to the Professor, "It's really geared towards business and the text basically is focused on business. Um we used to use, it used to be a very general course. It was the only introductory law course on campus, so we used to be very general, and we didn't really relate it to business at all, but now it's really more business focused." So although it was a law class, most of the students were trying to be business majors and so needed to learn what it means to write like a business major, which according to the professor means "clear, direct, concise, brief, um and yet thorough discussions." This professor was a lawyer and because of this, he stated, "I like to have statements as clear as possible, not a lot of extra language, and secondly, I don't want them to write like lawyers, because that's too much language, too many big words that don't really make much sense, so it's kind of a combination of those two." The most common mistakes that students made on papers for this class were: "not focused, not clear in the direction they're going, too many words, long paragraphs, uh, and then in a lot of cases just a lot of grammar issues that get in the way of the clarity." He stated that these problems were worse in his 200 level classes and much of it

seemed to be fixed by the time they got to his 300 level classes. He stated, “I teach Management 320 also, which is ‘Business, Government and Society,’ and I find the general quality of those papers is higher, very clearly higher, so whether they picked up those skills somewhere here in school, I don’t know, but maybe it’s just a weeding out process.” The biggest difference between the papers in the 200 level and those at the 300 level was “just much better use of language, various language,” more precise and concise language use. At the lower level, the students use long, rambling sentences that don’t seem to ever get to the point. Also, “They’re using run-on sentences and um, making grammatical mistakes, spelling mistakes, and those will get in the way of the quality of the paper.” The Professor believed that “there’s not many skills that are more important than writing. It’s actually critical in the business world and legal world, in almost any world.” And so he claimed that he tried to stress the importance of it in most of his classes. However, from my observation, he only talked about writing once and for only a few minutes.

Anna chose to write her paper on affirmative action. The prompt was very short and not at all informative. It merely said: “Affirmative Action: current status, pros and cons.” This paper was a research paper which to Anna meant “that you research the topic and then write about it based on research” (interview #6). Mostly what she had done was “researched online. Looked at websites, used those websites to find like court cases and used those” (interview #6). The main sources she had used were “both like websites that talked kind of generally about affirmative action, but also used the actual court cases that were relevant to like form laws on affirmative action.” She decided that these were appropriate kinds of evidence “because it’s a law class, so I figured A) it’s a law class so the law cases are important and they are also relevant to affirmative action, because there aren’t that many laws in place, they’re all based on the court

cases, so that's where it comes from. So a lot of information about what it is and where it's coming from is from cases." She believed that the paper would mostly be graded "on content, I think, mainly. Like he has a rubric on the back, yeah so like 40 points, 40 percent is on structure and content, 25 percent on organization and development, and then 35 percent on style and bibliography. So mainly just content" (interview #6). Although she says "mainly just content," it was *structure* and content that was worth 40 percent, so really "style and bibliography" was worth more than content alone. And organization was worth 25 percent. In terms of how she would organize the paper, Anna said, "Like logical, easy to read, like easy to follow essay that's basically logical and clear and relevant." Again, she uses "essay" as her default genre and doesn't really seem to understand that a research paper is different than any other kinds of essays. At this point (at our second interview of the quarter, about halfway through the class), she had written a draft of the paper, but believed that:

it still needs to be reorganized, because I started just my intro paragraph talking about what I was going to do, well actually I did that a little later, because I started the essay then went back, did the intro and as I continued writing the paper I realized where it should be going when I was like on the second half, I had to re-like completely reorganize it, because the first two paragraphs were kind of like background on how affirmative action came to become what it is today, so I used like the cases in the first few paragraphs and then moved onto where it is now and the pros and cons and I feel like there was probably too much, and then a conclusion that brought it all together, but I think that there's too much on where, like the past and where the court cases have brought it, and I should probably like reintegrate the court cases into the rest, because on here, you get five topics and the one that says affirmative action just says "Affirmative Action: current status, pros and cons," so he probably doesn't want too much on like where, he knows where it came from, so he probably wants more on like our view and pros and cons and that kind of stuff. And he also wants, like he said "brevity is a virtue," like he wants to be like to the point. (interview #6)

Anna believed that this paper was "like the papers I've written in your class, like papers that require outside sources mainly, 'cause one of the things he wrote [on the rubric] was about

quotes, and are they integrated, are they analyzed, and we definitely, that's probably one of the most important things I learned in your class was like how to use outside resources, and use them well, and integrate them" (interview #6).

Anna was a little bit nervous about this paper because although she stated "I think I'll do ok. I think I'll be kind of successful, but I don't know if I'm going to like Ace it, but I hope it will be well, that I'll do well," she worried about whether she could "make it brief, because I have trouble knowing what he thinks is too, you know, extra" (interview #6). Because she was unfamiliar with writing for business, she wasn't sure how concise they really wanted it to be. However, even with this bit of worry, she still felt that she would be alright "because by the time I got to the second half of the paper, I think I realized what he actually wants, and so I'm going to take the first part and just tear it apart and put maybe some of that back in, but try and just kind of make sure it's only the important points and like analysis of those points." She stated that she would hope for at least a 3.5, but wasn't sure whether she would be able to get any higher than that. She thought that the best part of the paper was the sources she used "because I went straight to the cases and was quoting like cases and think that's relevant and important," and that at this point the weakest part was "probably just the way that the paper is, the organization. I need to make sure that it's organized, flowing, like from like the points are in sequence, like the order is good, kind of re-do them, reorganize, change the conclusion a little bit, and then the introduction probably, to work with the new structure" (interview #6).

In terms of the process she went through to write this paper, she stated that because she didn't know that much about affirmative action, she began by just looking up information about it. Once she got that information she just started writing. She did a little bit of an outline, "like very brief, just literally just like a couple of sentences like, this is what I want to write about,

then I start writing” (interview #6). After doing the short outline, she stated, “I started adding which basically ended up ignoring what I had previously written which was just like a page, so I rewrote that and kept going and now I have to go back and rework it.” She believed that this paper had been harder than others she had written “because the subject I chose is really broad, that’s why I have to, like I don’t normally go back this many times and re-fix it, ‘cause there were other subjects that might have been easier for me to like, like it’s easier to kind of pin point exactly what they want, because ... affirmative action is huge, so I have to narrow what I think he wants” (interview #6). Because Anna was a little worried about this paper, and wasn’t really sure exactly what her teacher was expecting, she later (at our final interview, after she had turned the paper in) stated that she did end up thinking a little bit about genre, stating “I actually did focus on the genre for my Law class one, because I knew that they wanted it concise, so I spent a lot of time trying to chop it down and make it as concise as I thought that they would want, so I was using that: who am I writing for, and how do I write for my audience appropriately?” (interview #7). She also felt that for this paper, it would have been helpful if there had been examples of good papers to look at so that she could see how concise and brief the professor wanted the papers to be. Anna said this after the paper was turned in and in response to a question about things she had previously learned that had helped her to write this paper successfully. She may have not mentioned genre had she not thought that was probably what I was looking for.

Anna’s Management paper received a 94 out of 100, which on UW’s grading scale is a 3.8. According to the Professor’s comments, “this paper is a good examination of affirmative action. It would be even better with a thesis that makes a real argument of some sort.” Anna does not have a thesis at all in this paper. She writes, “Evaluating past and current programs, as

well as the pros and cons leads one to speculate about its future in our society,” but does not actually make an argument about affirmative action. Throughout the paper, the professor’s comments ask for more explanation on some points and point out some minor misunderstandings of court cases that Anna cites. There are also quite a few positive comments throughout, such as “these are good points. A lot of people missed this.” When talking with the professor later, he stated that the only thing that kept Anna from getting a 4.0 on this paper was the lack of a real argument. Although the prompt did not explicitly ask for an argument, the professor stated that he assumed students would know that a research paper was supposed to make an argument. Anna mentioned that she usually used the prompt to help her figure out what the teacher really wanted, but “the law one was like a three word prompt, ‘Affirmative Action: Pros and Cons’ and that was the prompt, and so I was like ‘I have no idea what to say.’ So, I usually like to use the prompt, but then if there’s nothing there, then I just have to make my best guess for what they want which is hard” (interview #7). So, although the professor assumed students would know they needed to make an argument, because it wasn’t actually stated in the prompt, Anna didn’t do it.

Discussion

Although I hadn’t seen a lot of use of genre awareness throughout Anna’s process of writing her papers, when I spoke with Anna at the end of the research, she said a lot more about her knowledge of how genres work and how she used that knowledge when writing papers. Anna was able to take things she had previously learned and generalize them and apply them in other situations, and figure out what teachers were asking and what they were expecting. Anna is similar to the successful writer that Soliday discusses who “consistently earn[ed] the high regard of readers across general-education courses” for her ability to apply “general strategy to

new situations” (7). For Anna, much of this seemed to be low-road transfer that happened automatically and didn’t seem to be aided by genre awareness. She was able to say a lot about what genre awareness is, but never really seemed to explicitly use it when writing papers. However, Anna was very quiet and it was difficult to know what was actually going on in her head while she was writing. She wrote “academic essays” that were either based on course readings or other sources that she had to research and find, and she came to see all of these papers as similar genres to ones she had written in the past. Although there is definitely some distinction between a response paper, an essay, and a research paper, Anna didn’t really seem to realize these distinctions and mostly spoke about these papers as if they were all the same exact genre, a genre that she originally learned in high school and was able to build on when she came to my class and then had to write for other courses. She had low-road transfer of those genres and then figured out the subtle differences between what each individual teacher wanted by analyzing the assignment prompt or asking the professor or TA for advice. The one thing that seems to have transferred from English 131 to the writing Anna did in other classes was how to integrate multiple sources into the paper. The biggest difference between writing she did in high school and writing she did in college was “using different sources more, like research papers, or any papers where you’re using sources, like integrating them all into the paper” (interview #7).

Anna showed some characteristics of Reiff and Bawarshi’s “boundary crossers.” She was able to take rhetorical strategies and apply them in new situations, and yet she also drew on whole genres she had previously learned. She discussed rhetorical strategies that she had learned that were useful to her which included, integration and analysis of multiple sources, “flow, [and] ... making sure the thesis, while I’m not really very good at this, but I know that it’s important to make the thesis tie into everything. So, it has to relate in the organization, and then it makes

sense in the way you organize it, in the order in which it builds off of it and makes the concepts or ideas clearer because of the way that you put it together” (interview #7). As to where she learned most of this, she stated that “high school is where it started, but I’m continuously learning that the thesis is important.” In general her papers were always “good, my essay[s are] good, but my thesis is, I always have problems with my thesis, it not necessarily aligning with the paper, and just not being a good thesis” (interview #7). Along with these rhetorical strategies, she also often automatically transferred genres that she had written before without consciously knowing that she was making subtle adaptations to her use of the genre. This speaks to a point made by Reiff and Bawarshi that “students are often not conscious of how they use prior resources” (316) and that “students are not always able to consciously understand and articulate the knowledge and skills that transfer” (317). Anna was very adept at adapting her genre knowledge to particular situations and assignments, but she wasn’t always aware of the adaptations she was making and often discussed writing as if a paper is the same no matter what the context.

One strategy Anna typically used was a thorough analysis of the assignment prompt to help her figure out what the teacher wanted. Although she stated that she didn’t “necessarily look at who’s reading it,” she would “look at the prompt, which tied into whose reading it, because they are writing ‘this is what I want’” (interview #7). The paper she did the best on was the Environmental History paper where she was given a nine page assignment prompt that had detailed instructions about what was expected on the paper. The times when she had difficulty in writing were times when there wasn’t much information on the prompt like the Law paper which, according to Anna, “was like a three word prompt, ‘Affirmative Action: Pros and Cons’ and that was the prompt.” These types of prompts made writing difficult for Anna because, as

she stated, “I was like ‘I have no idea what to say,’ [because] I usually like to use the prompt, but then if there’s nothing there, then I just have to make my best guess for what they want which is hard.” Because of the genre awareness she had learned, she should have been able to figure out more about what the teacher was expecting without having to just guess. She also had trouble (like she did for the first International Studies paper) “when there’s a complicated prompt. That’s even worse than the no prompt, when you can’t even understand what they want from you, then it’s really hard to write a paper if you don’t know that” (interview #7). Anna’s default setting when trying to figure out what the instructors were expecting in the papers was to look at the prompt for clues as to what they wanted. If she found the prompt confusing or if it was uninformative, her next step was to get advice from the TA or instructor. It seems like only after that also didn’t help, would she begin to think about genre, if at all (which was only once). This is basically backwards of what she was taught in English 131, where we talked about analyzing from the genre first and then going to the instructor for help if needed.

Even though she did state that she didn’t think about who was going to be reading it, she had come to realize that what most teachers were looking for when they assessed papers “depends on the teacher, depends on the class. Sometimes it’s writing, how you write, sometimes it’s like what you’re saying. I feel like [indistinguishable] it’s what you’re saying, but they also weigh how you’re saying it in different ways depending on the department and the teacher” (interview #7). And when asked how she would know what the teacher was expecting, she stated, “I go by like the perceptions of that department ... Also going by the readings that you’ve done in that class, academic, well depending on the class, academic articles that are related to that subject.” However, she never referred to this when she was writing her papers nor did she seem to act on it, at least not in what she reported to me about her writing. Oftentimes

she did not know or even think about what department her instructors were from until prompted by me. She stated that in general she wanted to always “make good points and have good ideas, I mean, that’s the basis I guess, but that’s it. What you’re saying, make it as intelligent as you can make it, and then write it in a way that is appropriate for the audience” (interview #7). She also stated that if they were asking for a genre that she had never written before, she would google it and try to find examples to analyze. However, because she was never asked to write a genre that seemed unfamiliar to her, she never did any genre analysis.

In terms of what she found to be the differences between writing in different departments, she stated, “Well I think you could find relationships between all kinds of writing, it depends like on what [indistinguishable]. There are some that are similar and some that are different, but I mean you are going to find similarities ... I don’t think I ever wrote a paper that I didn’t think I would ever use that type of style again” (interview #7). She seemed to be constantly making connections between things she learned and things she might be able to use in the future. The paper that was the most different in terms of her teacher’s expectations was her “law class, like the cutting it down and making it concise,” but even there she was “sure there are other classes or other times that I would use that” (interview #7). But again she knew that “it depends on what class that you’re taking, like if I’m taking classes in public health, that would probably be more common in that kind of thing than in my US Environmental History paper which is more about how you say it, you know you put in more info, not just, not as concise as the Law paper, but so public health papers would be more scientific like papers which are more concise” (interview #7). She also stated that what made a paper sound professional is “not using the passive voice. That was important in most of the classes I’ve taken.” When asked if she thought that was universal, at first she said yes, but after thinking about it stated that it “depends on the genre.

Um, what makes it sound professional would be writing for that profession, um gearing it towards what they want and are looking for. That would probably be the most professional because you're not going to want to use different techniques or information that they don't want, extra or not enough." To elaborate on this point, she stated that you need to make sure:

that you're writing relevant information in a way that they understand it and are used to seeing it in the genre, they know it's professional because they know what they're talking about and they're writing to me, you know, if someone was writing in engineering and they wrote a five paragraph essay for a memo, obviously that's not professional because that's not what they're used to seeing and you're not conveying the necessary information in the normal way. (interview #7)

In retrospect, Anna seems to think about genre a lot more than when she was actually writing her papers. She seemed to have a high level of genre awareness, but she didn't seem to use it, at least not explicitly. It is possible that she subconsciously used it, but that's impossible to know. She said so much at the end of the research about what genre awareness is and how it's helpful, that it seems like she would have used it when writing her paper, but I never saw it.

In this final interview, Anna shows a good grasp of how writing works in the university and strong sense of genre awareness. However, in most of the papers she wrote, she did not show any explicit use of that genre awareness. Not until she got into a situation where what the teacher expected seemed different enough that she wasn't sure what to do, did she consciously think about genre. Similarly, in Mark Andrew James' "Transfer of learning from a University Content-Based EAP Course" he found that students were prompted to transfer knowledge when they encountered a challenging problem that previous learning could help them with. This seems to be the case with Anna. In all of her classes (including my class), the essays were similar enough to her (and easy enough for her to figure out) to prompt low road transfer of the essay writing skills she originally learned in high school and got more practice with in college. But

when she found herself in a situation where the essay seemed significantly different (and challenging), she did draw on some aspects of her genre awareness to help her figure out what was expected on that paper: She began to think about who her audience was, what the department expected, and how to appropriately respond to that particular audience. Although I didn't see her doing any of this, she was still in the process of writing her paper when we spoke about it, and she revised the paper quite a bit after that particular interview, so I can't be sure what she actually did. When prompted, she was able to articulate the differences between what different departments or teachers wanted on the writing, and for the most part she was able to perform those differences and get high grades on all of her writing assignments, but it's unclear whether she would have thought about these differences without explicit prompting by me.

I believed that Anna had a high initial level of learning of genre awareness based on her work in my class. She was also a highly motivated and active learner and was able to abstract and generalize previous learning. It is possible that she had learned genre awareness so well that it transferred automatically (low-road transfer) without consciously thinking about it. However, it is equally likely (or even more likely) that she was tacitly good at adapting her knowledge to specific situations and so didn't think she needed genre awareness until she was asked to write a paper she felt was difficult and that was for a department that used writing conventions that she was unfamiliar with. Because Anna believed that all of her papers were genres she was familiar with, in most of her classes, she didn't see the need for explicitly using genre awareness. She analyzed the assignment prompt to help her figure out what the instructor wanted and went to the instructor for additional explanation of the assignment when she was confused. Although she had opportunities to use genre awareness, her grades on her papers were usually good even without the use of genre awareness.

Anna's case implies that at least in the first few years of college, students that are already good at figuring out what is expected on assignment prompts, may not need genre awareness in order to receive the grades that they are hoping for. Genre awareness, as I mentioned in the last chapter, is something that is needed when the writing situation is different from what students have experienced previously. Students only see the need for it, when they see the differences in situations. Although there were differences between the writing expectations between many of the papers Anna wrote, she was able to figure out many of those differences without genre awareness. She may have been more successful on some of those papers had she seen the need for genre awareness, but I can't be certain of that. At the end of this research, Anna was able to articulate a complex understanding of writing across university classes and remembered a lot of what we had discussed in English 131, but in most cases she didn't think explicitly about any of that while she was writing her papers. Although she was worried about the paper in her Law class, and did begin to think about genre, she was still writing in a genre she had written before and was able to figure out most of the conventions that were required for that paper without doing genre analysis or otherwise really using genre awareness.

Chapter 5: Reinforcing Genre Awareness through Experience with New Genres

This final case study is of Pedro, a Mexican-American student who was born in a small town in Eastern Washington State. In April of 2011, Pedro was a freshman, planning on majoring in Sociology, but with the intent to then go on to medical school. He had the eventual goal of becoming a pediatrician. He had taken English 109 with me in the fall of 2010, and had taken 110 with me in the winter of 2011. His final grade for the sequence was 3.0. However, his portfolio grade for 110 was 2.4. His cumulative GPA at the beginning of the research was 3.1. Pedro is an interesting case in comparison to the others because he was the only one of the three that ever wrote in genres other than “academic essay” or “research paper,” genres that he did not know existed before he was asked to write them. Because Pedro had to write memos and project reports in his engineering class the quarter right after he took English 110, he was able to see firsthand how particular communities use genres to reach particular purposes. Because of this experience, Pedro seemed to develop a much stronger sense of genre awareness than the others in my study.

I interviewed Pedro a total of 4 times, three times in the spring of 2011 (the quarter right after he took English 110), and only once in the fall of 2011 because he decided that he didn’t want to continue with the research. Also, throughout the research, I was unable to gain a lot of information that I would have liked to gather from him. He failed to give me syllabi for the courses until they were nearly over and so I was unable to get in touch with instructors until late in the quarter; he never gave me copies of assignment prompts or final papers that I needed to see (etc.), and eventually dropped out of the research altogether. Because of this, I was unable to observe his classes as much as I wanted to, and therefore his case study is incomplete in many

ways. However, even with the incomplete nature of this case study, what I did gather from my time with Pedro still gives us some insight into the ways that students use genre awareness and how genre awareness can be further cultivated.

In our first interview, I learned a lot about Pedro's educational and family background. Both of his parents were Mexican immigrants, neither of whom had finished high school, although his mom had gotten her GED when she came to the U.S. Pedro explained that his father dropped out of school when he was very young in order to get a job and help support the family. His father, "only went up to the eighth grade in school and stuff and so he fixes cars and stuff like that, and when he's not fixing cars he does agricultural work, so he picks and prunes" (interview #1). Pedro's father had come to the U.S. when he was 18 years old in order to find a better job. Here he met and eventually married Pedro's mom. Pedro was born in the U.S., in the Yakima Valley of Washington state, and attended elementary school there. His first language was Spanish, and no one in his immediate family spoke English. He learned to speak English because he would spend time playing with some of the children of his uncle's employer. As he explained, "I would always be at my uncle's house, and his boss, he had little kids too, so we'd always be at their house playing, and we'd always be talking to them ... I think my parents might have done that on purpose just so that, 'cause I think I was like four or five, yeah because you start kindergarten at like five or six, so like before I started school, I was speaking English" (interview #1). Because Pedro could already speak English before he started school, he was not required to take ESL classes. He stated, "I didn't have to take ESL classes, English as a Second Language classes, but my little brother did, but that was because at home he didn't have anybody talking English, whereas I would always spend the summers over there, so I had a little bit more." When Pedro was in third grade his parents divorced and because of this he changed

schools several times throughout the next few years as he went from living with one parent to the other and back again. He also spent some time in another state when his mom moved. However, his mom wanted him to graduate from the high school that he had started in, so they moved back to Washington.

When discussing the writing instruction that he received in school, Pedro stated that he had never liked writing. The first thing he could remember about learning to write was learning the five paragraph essay. As he explained, “so like there was three things, so yeah, five paragraphs, so there was an introduction and then your three topics and then your conclusions, so that’s what I always, and I always think like why isn’t it that same form” (interview #1). He stated that “there’s probably something else that they taught me,” but that is what stuck with him the most from elementary school. In middle school, Pedro began to be taught using the Jane Schaffer curriculum⁵. As he recalls, “I remember in middle school we got to CDCMCMCDCMCM, so it’s topic sentence, concrete detail, commentary, commentary, concrete detail, commentary, commentary, and then concluding sentence” (interview #1). Although he remembers learning this writing method, he stated that “I never really kind of used that. I know for the WASL [Washington Assessment of Student Learning test] that they told us we should use that for it and stuff, but I don’t remember using that on the WASL, it was too confusing. I couldn’t think of commentary” (interview #1). He later understood that commentary was like analyzing quotes and stated that “it makes more sense now,” but at the time he wasn’t sure exactly what those terms meant or how to use them. The most difficult part

⁵ Jane Schaffer’s curriculum is a formulaic high school writing curriculum that gives students templates for every sentence of the paper. It tells students the number of sentences to have in each paragraph and exactly what should go in each sentence. For example, body paragraphs include a minimum of 5 sentences: 1) topic sentence, 2) concrete detail, beginning with *for example*, 3) and 4) commentary about the concrete detail, 5) conclusion and transition to the next paragraph. See appendix 4 for example Schaffer paper worksheet.

of the writing, though, was expanding on it and coming up with more ideas. In speaking about his middle and high school writing, he stated, “I always try to stick with the five paragraph thing, but I would get in trouble and stuff, because they said that you can’t just have five sentences in a paragraph, you had to expand and like you know, do more than five sentences. Like, it couldn’t just be your topic sentence and then say like three sentences and then conclude it.” He was taught that each paragraph “can have a minimum of three [sentences] ... My introduction and my concluding paragraphs would have three sentences. Yeah, ‘cause I would try to make it as short as possible. I wasn’t a very big fan of writing” (interview #1). He began learning most of this in middle school. Once he got to high school “they kind of reinforced that and stuff, but then like brought in the idea you know of expanding your sentences and ... making them a little more complex, so then like, I guess that kind of helped a little bit, transferring to college because the more complex your sentences are, the better they are and stuff” (interview #1).

In high school, Pedro wrote papers that required library research. He remembers writing papers “about the Greek gods and mythology, [and] ... on mummies” (interview #1). For his paper on mummies, he “just got a bunch of books and you know the steps on how mummies are made and all that stuff.” In his senior year he had to write a paper that “was only an era from a certain point in like life, to another point, and only stuff that were created during that time you could use or people during that time ... so I chose to do it on ice cream, ‘cause ice cream came during that time” (interview #1). According to Pedro, these papers were more like history papers, “‘cause during that time we were talking about the gods and stuff and so it was like back then.” He stated for his paper on ice cream, “I remember that I had to do a lot of research like on Asia because they started ice cream in Asia, but they also said that the Italians started ice cream, so I had to figure out which one came first and the process they used in making ice cream and

stuff like that” (interview #1). In terms of the grades he normally got in these English classes, he stated that he mostly got As and Bs but that it wasn’t solely based on his writing ability. He stated that they had to read a lot and “since we had to read pages, like that was a good portion of our grade, but if we read more pages than that, like that was extra credit and stuff,” so he would read extra pages if he wanted “to make up for like what I didn’t do good in my papers so I think overall in English I averaged like an A minus” (interview #1). When talking about his high school writing experience, Pedro focused only on the writing he did in English classes. However, later (in the same interview) he mentioned that he was also required to write lab reports in his science classes. He never mentioned writing for any other classes in high school.

After talking about his high school experience, we turned to his college writing experience. Pedro had taken English 109 and 110 with me beginning six months prior to the start of this research and ending just before we started the research. Those were his first two quarters of college. He stated that he liked English 109, and although he had not enjoyed writing in high school, in English 109 he didn’t mind that “we had to write papers and stuff.” However, he felt like he struggled “writing papers, so that’s what made it difficult, but I think overall, like the readings, some of the readings were a little difficult, but I think they were hard too because I don’t think my reading level is that great either ... but I think overall like I didn’t really like the rhetorical stuff. I mean that was like the whole purpose of the class, but I don’t know, I had a hard time with that” (interview #1). Our English 109 course used Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstien’s *They Say, I Say* as the textbook, and we focused a lot of our discussions on what it meant to create an academic conversation. We also talked a lot about rhetoric. Although Pedro remembered that the focus of the course was, as he stated, “the rhetorical stuff,” he didn’t really remember it very well. He stated, “We talked a lot about that, um, it’s a little hard to remember,

I keep wanting to bring in genre,” which was the focus of English 110. After I asked if he remembered the Academic Argument paper we wrote in 109, he stated, “No, well, I kind of do. So like the Academic Argument, that was the one where we, what did we do in that paper? So they had, so we had um, so I know one of them was talking about rhetoric, and then the other person was talking about the response or something. It’s too far for me to remember, I’m sorry.” When I asked him what rhetoric was, there was silence, and then laughing he said “we did a paper on that,” but he wasn’t able to define the term at all. He also wasn’t able to say much of anything about what he had learned about writing in English 109. Pedro finished English 109 with a grade of 3.1. His final portfolio grade was 2.7. His highest mark on his final portfolio was for the claims in his papers although he didn’t make any claims that were not created with a group in class (no original claims). His weakest point was on his reflection. He struggled to effectively assess his own strengths and weaknesses and to reflect on his own learning.

Because Pedro had just finished English 110, he could remember more of that class, although he seemed to find English 110 very difficult. In a later interview he asked me about the content of other sections of English 110 and then stated, “I bet the other ones are easier” (interview #2). Pedro did have difficulties in the class; the biggest one was his ability to show his understanding of the goals of the course. At the end of our 110 class, I really didn’t think that he truly understood what genres were or how he was going to be able to use the concepts from our class in later writing. He had a lot of trouble understanding the readings, and so was unable to explain them well in his papers, which made it seem as though he really didn’t understand the content of the course. Although his claim for his genre conversation paper was a good claim – “Genres are the typical rhetorical ways of responding to any situation that constantly occurs within the scene, and are defined by the audience interpretation, author’s purpose based on prior

knowledge, and discourse community” – this claim is exactly word-for-word a claim that we had discussed in class (and also pretty close to being word-for-word how genres are defined in *Scenes of Writing*), which made me doubt that he had internalized or really understood what genres are or how they work. Also, because he was not really able to elaborate on this claim throughout the paper, I wasn’t sure that he even knew what this claim was actually saying. Throughout the paper, his use of the texts and his explanations of them received comments such as “this is not really what he means.” My end comment for this paper was:

based on your claim, your paper should have been about: genres as responses to recurring situations (via Bitzer), audience interpretation (via Fish), author’s purpose (via Devitt and Bawarshi), and community (via Fish, Bawarshi, and Devitt). This is not what your paper is about. Try to focus on your claim and connect everything back to that. And work to really understand what these texts are saying.

The marks that Pedro received on this paper were the equivalent of about 2.2. His other papers received similar grades, and even with the revisions he did for his final portfolio, he was only able to raise that grade to a 2.4. Because transfer cannot happen if the knowledge is not adequately learned in the first place, my assumption with Pedro was that genre awareness would not be likely to transfer because I honestly did not think that he had really learned very much genre awareness. I didn’t think that he had understood what we were learning in the class enough to be able to take it with him and use it later.

Although at the end of our 110 course I didn’t think Pedro had learned very much about genres and that he wasn’t likely to transfer genre awareness, in our first interview, he actually showed a much more in-depth understanding than I thought he had gained in English 110. He remembered that “we talked about the different genres,” and that they had to write in several different genres: “there was a magazine article, a public genre, and then we did a professional

genre” (interview #1). He stated that the purpose of writing in these different genres was, “so like we had to tell the difference between them and the reading level that it was, so like a newspaper articles it’s at a reading level where it’s open to the public and everybody understands it, but someone out on the street would grab a journal article from a professor or something like that, they wouldn’t be able to understand it.” The reason for this was “because that’s only for a specific person, specific audience, and there’s a reason why they write it to that specific audience” (interview #1). He also remembered the genre analysis paper he wrote, stating, “Before we wrote the professional genre, we wrote the one like about, like the major or certain subject that you were trying to do, and so then like, mine was sociology” (interview #1). He spoke about the interview that he did with a graduate student teaching assistant in Sociology, stating that she had explained to them that “only the people that are writing those papers, that they’re writing to the same audience that have written other papers and for that reason they’re trying to come up with new result and stuff about, about what people are doing and the way people are doing stuff, so that’s what my genre was about” (interview #1).

From his experience in English 110, Pedro reported that he came to believe that the main goal of the course was to “learn how to distinguish the difference between [genres].” To elaborate on this point, he stated:

in my engineering class I have to write those memos up and so I, from my understanding, I don’t think I’ve ever written something like that before where you know you don’t have to compare and contrast like back in grade school, or short essays where you have to respond back to something, that’s really different from what I’m going to be doing in engineering, so being able to know how to take the right step into writing those and stuff like that, or like writing a sports article or news article if those are ever brought in or writing a write-up for chemistry or any of your other classes that, you know as long as you have that right approach, and like knowing to ask the questions and stuff like that, then you won’t be able to get lost as much as if you don’t have that information. (interview #1)

When asked what those steps were to figuring out how to write those papers, he stated the first step would be figuring out what genre the teacher was asking for. From the assignment prompt he thought he would be able to figure out “if it’s an academic argument that you’re trying to bring up or you’re trying to write, or a persuasive paper or whatever type of paper you’re doing and then from there you can go ahead and ‘hey, you know, I’m not sure how to write this, so I need some more help’ or ‘I’ve done academic argument papers before’ and just go from there” (interview #1). If he believed the genre was something he had never written before and he felt like he needed more help to figure it out, he stated that he would learn that genre “just um by asking the teacher” (interview #1). This shows an understanding of the need to figure out what genre the assignment is asking for, and the need to get help if it was an unfamiliar genre, but not necessarily an understanding of how to use genre awareness to figure out how to write an unfamiliar genre (through situation assessment, genre analysis, etc.). Still, though, this shows an increased genre awareness than Pedro seemed to have at the end of English 110.

When I asked Pedro to define the term genre, he stated: “like there are different genres and stuff and so like we did a professional and a public genre, and for the professional well you could have chose, well not a major exactly, but so like sociology or business or like the sort of writing that’s going on for a specific audience” (interview #1). When I pointed out that “sociology” is not a genre, he explained that he meant “like a Sociology paper. A professional sociology paper is not going to be anything like a business paper or like a paper that you’re going to see in a English class or like a Chicano Studies or something like that.” Although he had trouble with the readings in English 110, and at the time didn’t seem to really get what genre awareness was really about, he seems to have gotten a better understanding than appeared

through his performance in 110. He had some understanding of the disciplinarity of writing and a rhetorical awareness of audience, etc.

At the beginning of this research, Pedro was taking only one class that required writing: an engineering class. Engineering 100 is an introduction to engineering that taught students about the different fields of engineering that they could go into, and had students do projects such as building a tower out of straws or building a bridge out of Popsicle sticks. The main goals of the course were for students “to learn the design process and associated skills (teamwork, communication, and computing), to recognize the role of fundamentals in design and problem solving, and to be exposed to different examples of engineering (projects, disciplines, and careers)” (course website). One of the major learning objectives for the course is for students to “demonstrate appropriate forms of written, oral, and graphical communication and recognize the importance of good communication skills,” and the course “grade is based on the quality of the engineering projects and on the quality of the written, oral, and graphical communication of design presentations” (course website).

There were four projects, each of which required a written project report at the end of the project. When discussing the projects, Pedro explained, “We’re building a bridge right now, so there’s going to be weight added on the bridge and see how the cheapest bridge you can make and weighs the least because ... like you’re trying to get the cheapest bridge that weighs less to hold the most weight, so that’s what we’re trying to do right now, and then towards the end we’re going to do a Lego robot” (interview #1). Pedro’s interpretation of the purpose of the course was: “to those people who want to be engineers it opens their eyes to what kind of engineering they want to do. So, it’s kind of like a starting point.” Pedro was taking the course as an elective. When describing the writing assignments, he already knew that he was going to

be writing in a different genre than he had written before. At this point (in the second week of class), he couldn't remember what his teacher had called them, but knew that after he had finished his projects, he would need to write a paper. He explained that these papers were "like in science how they do an experiment and then they talk about it afterwards. So we're building bridges right now and once we're done we're going to talk about what caused it to, like the bridge to break and how many Popsicle sticks we used and all that stuff. So it's kind of like a write up, a report."

Some of the earlier projects also asked students to write informal papers that they called memos. According to the instructor of this course (in an interview with me), the memos were done before the project was completed in order to help students to know what they needed to work on while finishing their projects. Memos, according to the instructor, are often used by engineers to give project updates to supervisors and other team members. When explaining the memos, Pedro stated, "Wednesday we have a tower memo, so we did, we built a tower with um straws, and ... so we had to see how much water we can put on top of the foam, so wherever the straw broke, that's what we have to write in that paper." He had not written this memo yet, but he had seen the assignment prompt which stated:

- We want you reflect on the performance of your water tower and learn from it. This experience will be useful to your bridge project. Write a memo about your water tower and its performance with some engineering details. The details include:
1. A quick hand sketch or photo along with remarks about your water tower
 2. What did you do to make it strong?
 3. Where did it start to fail?
 4. What is the amount of water it successfully held? What are the highest and lowest amounts held by other towers in class?
 5. What are the possible modifications you would try if you ever build an improved model?

When explaining more about his impression of the memo, Pedro thought they were similar to a write-up done after experiments in science: “So, like we did this experiment, and this is how much water could go on there before it would break, and then you’re writing that up ... what place we took, and if I was satisfied with that, and stuff like that” (interview #1). Although this particular memo was written after the project was completed, professional engineers usually write memos in the middle of completing a project.

At the beginning of the course, I asked Pedro what he knew about writing for engineering, and he stated, “I don’t know anything.” However, he believed that the papers would “be like a write-up” in science. He had written lab reports in high school, and although he couldn’t remember a lot about them, he stated that he believed these memos were similar. He believed that he would need to start the paper with an introduction that explained “what did you guys start doing, what went wrong, how did you guys fix that, and you know what were the results after you guys fixed it, and could anything have been done better, and then like a conclusion.” He didn’t think that these papers would be that difficult, and that he was “just going to have to um get things together in the right spot so it makes sense” (interview #1)” In terms of what he thought would be the expectations about writing, he stated:

I think just so that it flows together because you know if I talk about the things that we’re doing, so for example if I talk about our bridge and what we started doing at the beginning but then at the end I say “Oh and I forgot that we did this also to the bridge,” stuff like that, I think it’s going to be, it’s going to get our instructor a little worried, and be like “so why didn’t you mention that at the beginning,” and stuff like that, and so just like making sure that everything is organized and it flows good throughout the memo. (interview #1)

Along with the memos, students were also required to write more formal project reports for each of the major projects. Several weeks later, I met with Pedro while he was in the process of writing one of his project reports for engineering. The project reports were much more

extensive and formal papers than the earlier memos. According to the instructor, project reports are a professional genre used by engineers. Pedro had already written the project report for his bridge project. Before beginning the project, he “had to write a memo about that and which glue will stick and which structure we thought was going to be better for our bridge and then we had to apply it onto our bridge” (interview #2). And then at the end of the project he had to write a final project report. The assignment prompt was a detailed guideline for how to write the project reports. It told students exactly what needed to go in each section of the report and explained the purpose of each section. The instructor never spent any class time teaching students how to write these reports, but referred students to the guidelines on the assignment prompt. The prompt stated that the main purpose of the report was to describe “in detail your bridge design. The audience of this report is the instructor and TA, and the tone should be formal. The purpose for writing this report is to document the design and performance of your prototype and final bridge” (assignment prompt). It then went on to detail every section and what students should write in those sections (see appendix 4). Pedro stated that he used these guidelines to help him write his reports and found them very helpful. He believed that he had written papers before (in high school science classes) that were somewhat similar to these, but that “it wasn’t like as in detail as this one, because like before it was just like a wrap up. So this is kind of like a wrap up.” He described a “wrap up” as a paper where “you just put down your strengths, your weakness, what you could have done better.” He had to write wrap ups “like when we did like labs in high school and stuff like that, you’d do wrap ups of the labs, so like what did you do and stuff like that, but it wasn’t as in depth.” He again compared the project report to a lab report stating that they were “kind of like that, but um, but not in that same format. Yeah, so there’s some bullet points that we have to follow, and we have to put figures or sketches of our bridge

and the dimension and why we chose to do it that way” (interview #2). This is information Pedro received through the guidelines for the genre on the course website. These guidelines, according to Pedro, “told us like in the first paragraph you’re supposed to have this and then there’s another bullet point, strengths, what were strengths in your bridge, and um did that improve from the first prototype that you did, and then the weaknesses, did you change anything and stuff like that.”

On his first report, Pedro received a score of 95 out of 100, but the teacher “didn’t correct it or anything, he just put the score on it. We send it to him and he just puts the score on there.” However, although there were no comments on the writing, through reading the grading guidelines, Pedro believed that the teacher was grading on whether students followed the genre correctly and had all of the information in the correct places. As he stated, they were “grading on whether you had all the bullet points” from the report guidelines. For example, they “had to label figure 1, and then discuss about it in our, you know if that was a strength or a weakness, and our conclusion or intro.” He had lost points on the bridge report because they were supposed “to label your figures and discuss them, and I didn’t label figure 1 and figure 2, like I just slapped a sketch onto my word document and I called it good, and so that’s where I lost the five points” (interview #2). Pedro found the writing of these reports to be “pretty simple [because] like he tells you the bullets you have to talk about, strengths, and so you know, he has a couple questions like did you do anything different to make it a stronger bridge and stuff like that, and so I was answering the questions and I was putting more stuff that I thought was important about the strength that our bridge had” (interview #2). Because the report guidelines were very specific about how these papers should be written and gave examples of how they should be

structured, it made them easy for Pedro to figure out how to write and he only lost five points because he forgot to label his figures. Pedro knew that the teacher

wanted us to follow the way he had it [in the guidelines], so like you couldn't be putting your strengths and weaknesses together like that. Like he wanted it separate and he wanted a clear understanding of what you were talking about, so if you kind of just threw something together and just like expected him to know what you were talking about, then like you know, so that's kind of like why you had to go into detail and stuff about what you wanted to let him know you did in your bridge. (interview #2)

The format and organization seemed fairly strict. As Pedro stated, "just like the way he had like the example, so you couldn't just write it in any order you want, like and it made sense to do it in that order because um, it flows better together in the way that he had the example, like a template." The format was so strict that Pedro even began referring to it as a template where he just had to plug in his information.

Although at the beginning of the quarter Pedro stated that he didn't know anything about writing for engineering, by the middle of the quarter he had learned that in engineering:

Like everything is your idea, like you're not taking anybody's idea, so like when you're um, I kind of see like you're not trying to prove to anybody anything. You're talking about like our bridge, we're talking about it and I was talking about like the stuff that we had done, and so it's going to be different from like anybody else's, and so like it's going to have that same format, but it's going to be different just because we didn't do the same bridge and like ... Engineers like when they write and stuff, like even though they're talking about the same thing, like it's going to still be different, like it will have the same format, but I could, like it'll be like if they did two different bridges just because of the way they're talking about it, and stuff, like they might bring up points that I didn't make, and so kind of like that. (interview #2)

The idea that Pedro seems to have been picking up on through writing the papers in engineering was that although each person was writing in the same genre, there was still room to be flexible within the genre (even a genre that was as strict as the engineering project report). The biggest difference between writing for English classes and writing for Engineering, according to Pedro is

“just the format that it’s written in, like there’s bullet points.” This was different from English because “when you’re writing in English you bring up a point and then you have to like back up that point with other statements and stuff like that, whereas when you’re writing a paper for engineering ... it’s all facts ... it’s all things that happened, so they’re all facts” (interview #2).

Although Pedro stated that “you’re not taking anybody’s idea” when writing for engineering, he later (in the same interview) referred to the social nature of writing that we had spent some time discussing in both English 109 and 110, and especially the social nature of genres. He stated that when writing for engineering, “you have to follow that format and stuff, so in other words, you’re kind of getting ideas from somebody else, if you really think about it, even though I’m saying that it’s all on my own, but like I’m really getting ideas from like templates that other people have used and stuff” (interview #2). To elaborate more on this idea, Pedro stated, “Everybody used that template. Like if he wouldn’t have told us to use that template, it would have just been a bunch of paragraphs that I wrote, whereas with that template, everybody, like all the students in our class have it in that format. So, you’re really kind of taking ideas from somebody else, so I was like, ‘really for an engineer this is the best way to write’” (interview #2). If Pedro had not seen the guidelines, he stated that he would have just “like gone fact after fact after fact and you know try to organize it a little bit, but it wouldn’t have been as organized as with the template” (interview #2).

Through writing these project reports, Pedro began to see the purpose behind the genre and why engineers use this particular genre. He stated that “it’s easier to understand and you’re not just like, if you’re looking for something specifically, like you want to know why this bridge is successful, you can look for weakness or strengths and then just go straight to strengths, instead of if I just wrote like a, like just a couple paragraph, then you would have to read the

whole thing in order to understand where I'm talking about the strengths" (interview #2). Pedro believed that project reports like these were "used like just for all types of engineering projects, just because like they, you have to write, so once you write it up it's used for other people so they know what's going on, like what did he do that I could do to improve, like if I was to do this again, and so yeah like I think that ... like it was just something that's been used for a while" (interview #2). He believed that the purpose of the genre was, "if they ever want to go back or if someone wants to look back and go 'what made the most successful bridges?' like they can look at the strengths and what type of material they used and stuff like that." If he had not been given the examples to look at, in order to figure out how to write these papers, he stated that he would have asked the teacher how he wanted the paper written, and "he would have given me a better idea of you know how to structure it, like instead of having like a first, middle, and end, break it down even more and be like intro and then weaknesses of both the prototype and then the final copy and then the weaknesses and you know the material that was used and stuff like that" (interview #2).

The assignment prompt, what Pedro was calling a template, wasn't actually what I would call a template (I think Pedro may have used that term because our 109 class used Graff and Birkentien's *They Say, I Say* as our textbook, which presents a number of templates). The document that the professor gave to the students was what has been referred to as a meta-genre (Giltrow 2002), a written guideline for the production of the project reports. This document was very detailed. However Pedro stated that:

like with the template, if you just did what the template said, you wouldn't have been like satisfactory, because like the template is pretty general, and so you need to be, you need to go into more detail, more like how many sticks did you use, the popsicle sticks, you know um, why did you use that glue, like on the thing it just said "the glue you used," but like why are you using that specific glue? Like the

wood glue would take forever to dry, whereas the hot glue like it's a lot faster, but the hot glue adds a lot more weight. That's stuff it doesn't tell us to put in there, but that's stuff that is important because like you know that you wouldn't, if that wouldn't have been a variable then like your bridge would have weighed that much more. (interview #2)

When asked how he knew that he needed to add that extra information, he stated that the audience would need it. Without that further information, the reader would wonder, "You know, why did you use the hot glue? Because it dries faster? 'Cause they're both going to glue the same thing you know, and so wood glue is a lot stronger because the popsicle sticks are wood ... and so that's stuff that is important, that whoever is reading ... is going to make more sense to, on why that bridge was successful or not successful." Pedro seemed to have a pretty clear understanding of who his audience was. He understood that "in our case it was our TA," but that the project report was also a genre used by professional engineers, and that they would write it so that if someone else was going to do a similar project, they could look at the report that they had written and "if they wanted to take one of our ideas or something like that, they'd want to know ... why was it successful? ... It's important that they need to know, you know, the hot glue is going to weigh more and stuff like that, you put it on the paper and stuff that so when they're reading it, they know that oh, the hot glue or the wood glue did make a difference." He also understood that if a professional engineer was writing a project report that:

he's gonna write it to the people who are going to be interested in like, you know, um, so like I think the townspeople, maybe the mayor, or people that it's going to, that have a word or a say in whether the bridge is going to be built or not, and so like we watched like a film on the Tacoma bridge, the one that crashed, like that came down, and that was poorly built, and that like, on that one it was telling us that when they wrote up the stuff ... that was going to be needed, like they didn't go into very much detail and stuff and so that's why when they were looking at it, they were like "oh yeah, this is going to look fine," and so then like it ended up being that there wasn't enough on the surface, there wasn't enough structure and so that's why it collapsed. (interview #2)

This film helped Pedro to understand the need for writing project reports, and why they were written the way that they were. Through this example, he was able to see that a report that was written without the needed detail (without going into depth about the materials and the strengths and weaknesses of the project) could be dangerous.

For the most part, Pedro found the papers in this course easy to write. He understood at the outset that it was a new genre he was dealing with and that it couldn't just be written in the same way he wrote papers for English classes. And so he knew that he needed to figure out how to write in this particular genre. His instructor helped him figure this out by giving explicit instruction in the genre through a meta-genre and through oral feedback. Pedro's first paper did not follow the genre exactly and he received 80 out of 100. He stated that "I got 80 out of 100, so I went to go back to ask the TA why that was, and I had forgotten one of the main bullet points to discuss" (interview #3). He was given explicit feedback on the section that he had not included, and so did much better on the next two papers. He received a grade of 95 on the second one (because he forgot to label his figures) and got 100 on both of the others. The only time that he felt like he had trouble with writing was when he found the content confusing. When talking about the engine project, he stated, "I was confused. Like we were working on that in class ... and [I] was talking about ... these things that put pressure into inside the engine so that like something, the valves or something like that turns or I don't know something, and I was like yeah, I don't know what to write" (interview #2). In this case, he relied heavily on his group members' knowledge of how the engine worked. This particular report was also written with a group and so he only wrote one section, and the group ended up getting 100.

Pedro seems to have learned some important things about writing both through learning genre awareness and through seeing how a particular genre gets used within a particular

community. In our third interview, at the end of that quarter, he explained that, for one thing, he knew that what counted as good writing depended on the community he was writing for. When I asked him, “If someone was going to ask you for the ‘secrets’ to good writing, what would you say?” He answered, “I look at who’s going to be reading it, and so then that just changes the way I’m going to write to that person or to the people who are going to be reading it” (interview #3). To elaborate on this point he stated, “for my engineering class, the grammar and punctuation isn’t a really big deal, like you know of course you can’t misspell simple words, but like when it comes to like actually getting your point across, if he understands what you’re saying, then he’s fine with it, but like if you forget to mention strong points then that’s where they dock you points” (interview #3). And although he stated that “if it’s organized, then the reader won’t get lost while they’re reading their paper, so like it will be easier for them to understand what you’re talking about,” and that it was important to make “sure that you’re writing what you’re asked to and not go off and write about other stuff that you might think might be important, because ... It kind of makes it harder for the reader to follow,” he knew that the type of organization that was appropriate would be different depending on the audience.

He stated that he had learned some things about writing for particular audiences in high school, but that he “didn’t really get in depth those until [English] 109” (interview #3). To elaborate on this point, in discussing the writing he did in English 109 and 110, he stated “like the papers I was writing there to the papers I’m writing now ... I’m writing papers for my engineering 100 class and like they are totally different, like the format’s different, um the audience is different, and like just the way it’s asked to be written is way different from what I was asked to do in my English classes, 109 and 110” (interview #3). Through these classes (English 109/110 and Engineering 100), Pedro had learned an important lesson about

“understanding who the audience is.” In addition to understanding that there were different genres, Pedro seemed to have an understanding of some of the subtle differences between writing essays for different departments. He understood that every paper he had to write, “there’s going to be some audience,” and that some audiences were “going to want to know more about what you’re talking about,” but that there would be other audiences “where if you go off and just keep going into depth about it, they’re going to be ‘get to the point.’ So, like there’s going to be papers that are more straight to the point and more papers that you’re going to have to go more in depth about what you’re talking about so that they really kind of get the idea of what’s going on” (interview #3).

To elaborate on his knowledge of the disciplinarity of writing, when I asked Pedro if he had learned anything about writing in any class that he “knew it was specific only to that class,” and that he knew he “could not use that somewhere else,” he talked about the format of the papers in his engineering class, stating, “It’s not an introduction, body paragraph, and conclusion. It’s more of a certain format, you know what you did first, what you did second, what you did last, things you can improve in, things you could do better for next time, and things you did wrong and stuff.” The reason these papers are written the way they are, according to Pedro, is because “it’s more an organized way so like if you just want to look at something and know like what he did wrong, you don’t have to look through the whole paper, because there’s a bullet point just for that, so that type of case, it’s a lot easier to get straight to what you’re looking for, instead of having to read the whole paper to make sense of what you want” (interview #3). In addition to the format, when discussing the difference between writing in different departments and what Pedro believed would count as being “professional” he stated:

it’s just the way that they’re getting their point across, so um the different

departments have different ways of getting their information that they want to get out there in different ways, so you know for like a chemistry or you know any science paper, it's not going to be the same as if you're writing a paper for a history class, which you're going to, in the history class they're going to be more concerned about you know the things that you've learned and the things you're saying in your paper, whereas in your science paper kind of like get to the point of what you're trying to tell me. (interview #3)

He also stated that it was important to be “able to um, you understand who you're writing to, whatever the assignment is or essay, and you're getting the points that they want across” (interview #3).

The next quarter, Pedro was taking Chemistry 142, Biology 106, Tagalog 101, and Education 402 which was a program where he would do tutoring in local area high schools and middle schools. The central focus of Chemistry 142, according to the Syllabus was for students “to develop quantitative problem-solving skills” by learning “to clearly define a problem and develop solutions for that problem including the use of central and auxiliary equations and conversion factors,” to “learn to acquire and analyze data and correctly report experimental results (e.g., using an appropriate number of significant figures) in solutions to problems,” to “develop a detailed understanding of the following fundamental chemistry topics: The atomic nature of matter; stoichiometry; gases; chemical equilibrium; Applications of aqueous equilibria to acid/base and solubility chemistry,” and to “conduct laboratory exercises that: Explore the concepts introduced in lectures; develop laboratory, data analysis, and scientific communication skills” (course syllabus). The course consisted of four total labs – with reports – that accounted for 15% of the final grade. For the lab reports, they needed to “record observations (what you see) and data (what you measure), perform all necessary calculations, and come to some conclusion based on your results” (syllabus).

When I talked to Pedro about writing lab reports at the beginning of this course he stated that he had written lab reports before, but that it was a long time ago, and he didn't remember them very well. Because of this he stated, "I have no idea how it's gonna be done. I kinda have an idea, but not really" (interview #4). He believed that he would probably have "to do pre-labs" and that he was "going to have to form a hypothesis, you know, what you think is gonna happen, and then like in your post lab, you're gonna be like were you correct, were you wrong, what did you get out of it, what did you learn out of it? So, that's kind of what I'm thinking, so I'll have to do that, but I'm not really sure what they expect out of labs" (interview #4). Other than that, he didn't know that much about writing for Chemistry, but he guessed that a defining characteristic was being very specific about vocabulary and procedures. He stated, "You can't say like 'that stuff that came out of the cylinder,' but then that can give you partial credit or no credit, but if you say like, you know, be specific about what you're talking about, like the more specific you are, the more points you're gonna get, so that's what they were talking about too. So, like, if you, you gotta talk in that language" (interview #4). To elaborate on this point he stated the "more exact and the more vocab words I use, like in our labs, like I feel like that's going to be, that's going to get whoever's grading my labs a better idea that I know what I'm talking about, whereas if I just say some stuff that sounds iffy, that could be one thing or another thing, that's not gonna get me as much points, as if I use the key vocabulary words or concepts or theories" (interview #4). He knew that he was going to have to write about "the experiment, so like if, because you're going to have to form a hypothesis, so then you're gonna have to figure out if, like what you thought was going to happen did happen and kind of writing about that and then like how come what happened happened, so like you would write that up with theories or like other stuff people had experimented already, like scientists" (interview #4). Pedro got some

of this information from what he remembered from high school, but according to Pedro, they had also talked about it in his Chemistry class. Because I did not observe this class, I'm not sure exactly what they talked about in class.

When asked if he believed that he had written any papers that were similar to lab reports before (besides having written them in high school), at first he said no, but as he talked he remembered that these lab reports were similar to the project reports he had written in engineering. He stated that in the lab reports they were "going to have data too and like tables, and so I don't remember ever writing like that. So like in my English class, and then in my engineering class, Oh! In my engineering class, we had to do tables, so it was kind of like that" (interview #4). However, he understood that project reports were specifically for engineers and that that genre could not be used elsewhere. So, although he thought that the purpose and some of the writing would be similar between those two genres, of the project reports he stated "it was more of like a report that um, like in my engineering class, the reports that we had to do, like they were like just strictly for engineers, so I don't know if that, so that wasn't really related to chemistry, like that was just for them" (interview #4). In order to help him figure out how to successfully write the lab reports for Chemistry, Pedro said that he would "probably visit the chemistry tutor session, and then like that way, so I can get an idea of what they expect out of the labs, because since it's been a while since I wrote one, then I'm not gonna have that much knowledge, if I go see what they expect to see out of the labs, then I'll have a better understanding of what to put in my lab reports" (interview #4). Because Pedro did not continue in the research after this interview, I was not able to follow him while he wrote these lab reports, so I don't know what he actually did when writing them.

During this quarter, Pedro was taking a Biology class that required writing. However, this was not a regular science class. It was a Biology Fellows Program course which was, according to Pedro, “kind of a recruitment to the Biology major.” It was “more than a class. They’re trying to convince you to become one of them” (interview #4). Pedro described the class as “more of like ‘get to know yourself,’ so like the way you work, so there’s going to be a lot of writing in that one too.” According to the course syllabus, the course was “designed to help [students] define and develop skills for success as a science student and introduce [them] to issues relevant to pursuing bioscience degrees and career paths.” The end goal was for students to be able to “contribute to a community of biologists” (syllabus). In order to reach this goal, the course had three major sub-goals: “(1) unpacking ‘thinking and writing like biologists,’ (2) evaluating your own understanding and work, (3) making the most of your academic and professional pathways” (syllabus). The syllabus reinforces that this course was “an atypical course and that its end goal is far more than earning a ‘good grade.’ Instead, emphasis for the course and the Biology Fellows Program overall is to help you maximize your undergraduate experience in positive and goal-oriented fashion so you can be as successful as possible” (syllabus).

The writing assignments for this class were going to be, according to Pedro:

just kind of like we’re going to have to reflect on what the stuff, like ‘cause we’re gonna have like quizzes and stuff so we’re gonna see our progress and see if like the study sessions and how we’re studying at home is showing improvement in our scores and if it isn’t, you know we’re gonna look at that and see you know well what can you do differently to increase your test scores or your understanding of the concepts in the book. So yeah, I think we’re gonna write about that and we’re gonna read that later and see if, did we improve on, did we do what we said we were gonna do or did we stop doing what was like going bad. (interview #4).

To elaborate on this point, Pedro explained that the papers were “kind of like for ourselves to um, you know, see what we need to work on and then compare that to like data, like exam scores and quiz scores, and, to see if what we said we were going to do, we did do, and if it effects the scores of the quizzes and tests” (interview #4). At this point (in the first week of class), Pedro had not been given very much information about the papers, but he believed that his instructor would be expecting them to “be specific about the things you’re going to do ... [and] what you’re going to do to increase your test scores.” For example, “if what you’re going to do is make flash cards, what are you going to put on your flash cards? That way when you see your test and you see the scores are low, did you really put what you said you were going to on the note cards? ... So it’s kind of just like for you, because they’re going to read it too, but it’s for you to know what you’re doing and not doing” (interview #4). I don’t know if Pedro was given assignment prompts for these papers, because he dropped out of the research right after this interview. He didn’t think he had ever written any papers like these before, mostly as to who the audience was. He stated that all the papers he wrote in the past had a specific audience, but that the audience for these papers was himself. He explained that the purpose of these papers were “for you to reflect like on what you’re doing. So, the person that’s going to be reading it, they’re just going to make sure that you’re doing the things you’re doing, but it’s more for yourself to kind of reflect back and see if you’re doing what you’re doing, and what you’re not doing right.” This was very different from other papers he had written in the past because “like the other papers were like in the past, it’s for somebody else to read so you gotta make sure it’s what they want and are like looking for, and so where like this paper, what you’re putting there, it’s stuff where you’re going to look back and see if you did do or not, so it’s kind of for yourself, the paper you’re writing is kind of for yourself whereas the other papers weren’t” (interview #4).

Because he believed that the papers were basically just for himself, he thought that would make them to easier write “just because the things you’re gonna put in there are the things you’re gonna work on and things you’re gonna be doing in the future to improve test scores or quiz scores” (interview #4). In terms of how he thought he was going to organize the papers and what content he would include, he thought that even though the papers were supposed to be written just for himself, it was likely that the professor was “not going to want just you know, stuff all over the place. They’re going to want the things that you’re gonna work on and then the things that ... you have questions on ... something that you don’t know and that’s something you’re going to want to work on, so that’s going to be two different sections.” The purpose of these papers was for students to be able to “look back, if you didn’t do good on that section on the test, you’re going to look back and see on your paper, ‘well I said was going to do this, but did I do this or did I not do this?’ Or like another example, if like you did bad on something, but that’s not something you had a question on, why wasn’t it there?” (interview #4).

The final class that Pedro was taking was an education class in which he was going to be doing tutoring in the high schools and middle school. He believed that he would “probably write like reflections about the mentoring and stuff like that, the tutoring.” He hadn’t been to class yet, but he said “I’m pretty sure the papers, if there’s any papers, which I’m pretty sure there should be, will just be, you know, what the topic, did you apply the topic there, that we’re doing in class, to your, with your students, or did you see what we were talking about. I don’t know, like teaching habits, and so did you observe that in your class and stuff like that” (interview #4).

At the end of this interview, we again discussed the differences between writing for these three classes. According to Pedro, the biggest difference:

would be the audience. So, in chemistry they're going to want more precise information and like it's going to be more data and graphs and stuff, where like in education, it could be that too but it's gonna be kind of more observation and kind of just like seeing if things work and like if you want to teach a certain way and if you're looking and you're seeing that the way it's being taught is not like, it's not working or it's not effective on students then you're gonna have to change and find a different way to teach. (interview #4)

Discussion

Although Pedro did not want to continue in the research after that fourth interview, his case still gives us some important information about how genre awareness influences students' ability to write for the university and how genre awareness is further developed. Of the students in this study, Pedro was the only one to write in a genre that he was unfamiliar with and because of this, he was able to see first-hand some of the things he had learned in English 110. His engineering memos and project reports were significantly different from papers he had written before and through writing these, Pedro learned a lot about how to write for a specific community and in a specific genre. Although Pedro seemed to not have a strong understanding of genre awareness when he finished English 110, the understanding he did have helped him – when he went to his engineering class – to understand that this was a new genre he was dealing with and that he would have to figure out how to write this genre. One of the major things that he seemed to have taken from English 110 was the need to assess the situation in order to figure out what genre was required. He knew that he would need to figure out “if it's an academic argument that you're trying to bring up or you're trying to write, or a persuasive paper or whatever type of paper you're doing” and once he had figured that out, “then you can go ahead and ‘hey, you know, I'm not sure how to write this, so I need some more help,’ or ‘I've done academic argument papers before’ and just go from there.” He was able to use this knowledge when assessing the assignment prompts in his engineering class. He stated:

In my engineering class I have to write those memos up and so I, from my understanding, I don't think I've ever written something like that before where you know you don't have to compare and contrast like back in grade school, or short essays where you have to respond back to something, that's really different from what I'm going to be doing in engineering. (interview #1)

In this case, the professor gave specific instruction through a meta-genre and oral feedback on the writing to help students learn to write in the genre. Pedro used the meta-genre to help him write the reports and when he didn't get the grade he was hoping for on the first one, he went to the instructor to get feedback. He incorporated this into his next papers and ended up getting 100% on the last two reports. Another thing that added to Pedro's understanding of the engineering genre was the film about the Tacoma Bridge collapse. This film re-enforced his knowledge of the purpose of the genre and why it is written the way it is. It showed him that, for this particular genre, it can actually be dangerous to not write with the needed details, etc. This film worked as a supplemental prompt to increase his understanding of the work that this genre does for this discourse community.

One of the main things we learn from Pedro's case is that when students are asked to write in other genres after learning genre awareness, it strengthens that genre awareness and helps students to remember it and draw on it even more. For example, Pedro knew that what counted as good writing depends on "who's going to be reading it" and that "different departments have different ways of getting their information that they want to get out there in different ways." Because genre awareness is something that develops more over time (and doesn't seem to be something that can be taught one time and then students take it with them and use it forever) it needs to be reinforced through continued use and practice. The more experience students get with genres, the more they move up the genre awareness continuum. Pedro's engineering class provided this experience for Pedro and his sense of genre awareness became

much stronger because of it. He realized, to a greater degree than the others in this study, how the community you are writing for influences the way you need to write. When I asked each of my case study participants for the “secrets” of good writing, Pedro was the only one to say that it depended on who you were writing for. The others answered with things like claims, organizations, etc. Although Pedro did tend to focus on the audience and not necessarily on the genre, his understanding of writing for specific situations does seem to have grown through his experience in Engineering 100, and that is knowledge he seems to have used when assessing the writing for his Chemistry and Biology classes the next quarter. Also, he seems to have gained a new approach to writing than he had had before, stating that “as long as you have the right approach, and like knowing to ask the questions and stuff like that, then you won’t be able to get lost as much as if you don’t have that information” (interview #1). As for the types of questions needing to be asked, he stated that he would need to know what genre he was supposed to write and if he didn’t know how to write that genre, he would ask his instructor or tutors for help. He seems to understand the need to figure out the genre he is writing in before starting the paper and the need to be able to figure out how to write in genres he hasn’t written before.

Although Pedro was the weakest writer of my three case study participants (and he didn’t seem to “get it” when he was actually in my course), because he saw genres at work right afterwards and had to use genre awareness right afterwards, he was able to continue developing genre awareness. And in his later classes, the next quarter, he answered most questions I asked him with comments about the community he would be writing for or the audience of his papers. He understood that these would be influences on how he needed to write his papers, and he understood that if he couldn’t figure out how he was supposed to write a certain paper that he would get help from his instructors or from tutors so that he could effectively write for that

particular community. Although Pedro never mentioned genre analysis, he does seem to have developed a rhetorical awareness of audience and the need to be flexible within his writing.

Although I wish I could have had more time with Pedro (that he would have continued with the research), there is reason to believe that he will continue to develop his genre awareness as he sees more genres and has to use them, and that the genre awareness he already possesses will be of service to him when he needs to figure out new genres that he has never written before.

Chapter 6: Conclusions, Implications, and Further Research

One of my very first quarters TAing, I had a student who was clearly *very* smart, came to class every day, clearly did all the readings, turned in his first paper in intro to political theory, and it was beautiful, it was to me what I think English papers look like, incredibly well-written, very evocative, really nice kind of text-driven questioning, and all of these things, but it wasn't a social science paper ... and I was like "this is the most beautiful paper I've ever read, and I'm really sorry it's a C ..." And so he, he came to my office hours, and was just like "Oh my god! What do I do?" and I was like "well, let's talk about what papers here look like" ... So, I gave him some examples, kind of talked it through, read his first draft for his second paper, and he ended up getting like a 3.9 on his final paper ... Clearly he figured out how to write in political science, because somebody sat down with him and told him it was different, and that was good for him.

-- Director of the Political Science Writing Center

The instances of negative transfer of the "English essay" (as exemplified by the above quote) along with a general lack of transfer from FYC to other courses in the university, has caused transfer to become a central concern for compositionists recently. The current study of three students who took a FYC course focused on genre awareness with the goal of explicitly teaching for transfer attempted to add to the discussion of transfer and FYC. FYC has historically placed value on the English essay as a *genre in general* (Wardle "Mutt Genres") and has assumed that this genre will automatically transfer to other writing situations. The problem with this approach is that because of the disciplinarity of writing, the "English essay" is not a universal genre and so when students learn it in FYC they are learning a discipline-specific version of a genre that won't work effectively if used wholesale in other courses. One extreme response to this critique of FYC is to call for the abolishing of FYC in favor of writing courses across the curriculum. Another reaction has been the call to reconfigure FYC as a course that does not propose to teach students to write for the university but instead teaches students *about* writing, a course that teaches students about the disciplinarity of writing, about how genres work

and how to use genre theory and analysis to help them learn the disciplinary writing conventions of the different disciplines they need to write for in the university. This was the intent of the genre awareness course described in chapter two. The case studies that followed attempted to demonstrate the extent to which that genre awareness course was able to accomplish those goals, by showing the extent to which, and how, students used that genre awareness when writing papers in subsequent courses.

The case studies presented had several significant findings, three of which I want to reiterate here along with some other conclusions and implications of those findings. These findings include: 1) genre awareness exists on a continuum and develops slowly, over time; 2) students may not need genre awareness until they are challenged to write in difficult papers in which they don't know what is expected; 3) genre awareness is further developed through experience writing in multiple contexts and in multiple genres. These findings will be explained in further detail below.

The first major finding is that writing instruction of any kind, be it genre awareness or anything else, is not a once and for all endeavor. All writing-related knowledge develops slowly over time and must be continually learned and re-learned. All three of the students in this study seemed to possess more genre awareness at the end of the study than they did at the beginning, even though the beginning of the study was, for some of them, right after they had taken their genre awareness course. The experience of writing across the disciplines enabled students to see the differences in how different disciplines valued and used writing and the expectations for writing in those disciplines, and thus they were able to build on the knowledge of the disciplinarity and contextuality of writing they had learned in FYC. For example, for Richard and Pedro, genre awareness seemed to help them to be able to understand their experiences in

other disciplines. It gave them a vocabulary for talking and thinking about their writing that they would not have had otherwise. Richard talked about approaching his paper in LSJ differently because he knew that the situation was different than he had been in before, and also spoke about how he used his course texts and the ways his teachers talked as models of the types of evidence that were valued and the types of style and tone to use in his paper. At the end of this research, both Richard and Pedro had taken further steps toward an understanding of what genre awareness is and how writing works throughout the university that they may not have been able to make, had they not had the vocabulary to explain their experiences. Richard, especially, may have been more discouraged after his History class had he not been able to explain the disciplinarity of writing and been able to explain the differences between writing in history and writing in other disciplines.

In addition, Pedro's experience in engineering allowed him to see first-hand many of the things we talked about in English 110, and so he was able to build on that knowledge. For example, right after taking my course he stated that he had learned that a specific genre was written “for a specific person, specific audience, and there’s a reason why they write it” the way they do (interview #1), and that the major things he learned in the course were: “how to distinguish the difference between [genres],” and the need to assess what genre was being asked for in assignments. He also stated that genre awareness helped him to “know how to take the right step into writing ... [and] have that right approach, and like knowing to ask the questions and stuff like that” (interview 1). Later he was able to specifically say about his engineering class that the papers “are totally different, like the format’s different, um the audience is different, and like just the way it’s asked to be written is way different from what I was asked to do in my English classes” (interview #3), and he was able to explain the purpose of that genre

and why they write them the way they do. Through this experience, Pedro learned that what counted as good writing depended on the community he was writing for. When I asked him, “If someone was going to ask you for the ‘secrets’ to good writing, what would you say?” He answered, “I look at who’s going to be reading it, and so then that just changes the way I’m going to write to that person or to the people who are going to be reading it” (interview #3). To elaborate on this point, he stated that “the different departments have different ways of getting their information that they want to get out there in different ways” (interview #3). These were all things that Pedro began to learn in English 110, and he was able to experience more fully through his Engineering course. Pedro’s and Richard’s experiences support Devitt’s claim that writers “can use the genre awareness they have learned to understand what they are doing more deeply, more purposely, and more rhetorically” (*Writing Genres* 202). Both Pedro and Richard seemed to use genre awareness in this way. Rather than using it to help them figure out how to write in different writing situations, they seemed to use it to help them more fully understand their experiences writing in different disciplines.

What the above discussion implies is that we must think of genre awareness as a continuum. One course in genre cannot teach students genre awareness. What it may be able to do is help facilitate the development of genre awareness, put students on a path that leads towards genre awareness. At the end of my course, students were able to say a lot about how genres work throughout the university; this at least allowed them to be able to explain to themselves the differences in disciplines (it gave them the vocabulary to talk about disciplinarity) even if they needed more prompting to develop genre awareness further. A first-year composition course in genre awareness, then, is just the first step towards developing genre awareness. What a FYC course focused on genre may be able to do is give students a rhetorical

awareness that is a precursor to developing genre awareness. For example, Richard was able to assess the situation in his LSJ course and knew that the assignment was similar to those he had in History and English, but knew that the community he was writing for was more similar to his Sociology class than either of the others. Pedro also was able to talk about being flexible in his writing depending on the audience, but had a much more complex understanding of the disciplinarity of writing after taking his engineering course. Gaining rhetorical awareness of audience and the need to write appropriately for your audience is a step toward genre awareness and seems to be something students need to learn first before they can gain an in-depth genre awareness.

Richard especially seemed to not possess any real understanding of how to figure out what was expected of his writing when he was in his History class. He took this history class in the quarter right after taking English 110 and either did not see the need to use genre awareness, or didn't know how to use it to help him write those papers. He drew on the genre of literary analysis without modifying that genre in any way even though he was in a History class rather than an English literature course, which to me implies that either he was still thinking about the literary analysis genre as a universal genre and had not learned to think about it as the discipline-specific genre that it is, or because the History paper asked him to write about a ballad, he saw the situation as similar to those in which he wrote literary analysis papers and so believed the genre should be the same. Reiff and Bawarshi explain that without “cuing, prompting, and guiding, students might easily resort to well-worn paths – routinized inclinations and default uptakes of genres” (331). This was the case with students in Artemeva and Fox's study, and seems to be the case with Richard as well. He used the literary analysis paper wholesale without modifying it at all even though he was in a History class and not a literature class. However,

after that class was over, he was able, upon reflection, to articulate the differences between what was expected for writing in History and what was expected in English classes and in his later social science courses, and seemed to understand why they were different even if he wasn't able to perform those differences at the time. This speaks further to the need for reflection to prompt transfer. Richard was able to speak to the differences between what was expected in History and what was expected in English when he was prompted by the interview questions I asked him, but without this prompting, he did not see this difference. This implies another point: if transfer needs to be prompted, then this puts some of the responsibility on the teachers at the transfer site. Students need to have the meta-cognitive ability to prompt themselves, but they may not always have this meta-cognition, and so teachers within the disciplines need to prompt students to make connections so that they will be more likely to transfer previously learned knowledge.

Through his experience writing for courses in several different departments (English, History, LSJ, Sociology, Drama) Richard became much more aware of the disciplinarity of writing and by the end of this research, he was able to articulate those differences much more fully than he did at the beginning. Although Richard needed time and further experience to really develop his genre awareness, I do believe that the English 110 course that he took was a significant first step. Although he didn't use what he had learned right away, his experience in his History class helped to reinforce what he had learned in English 110, and his frustration about not being able to figure out what was expected in History may have been worse had he not been able to explain it to himself afterwards (by remembering what he had learned in English 110). His unsuccessful attempts at writing for History prompted him to think in more depth about the community he was writing for and what they expected from his writing when he wrote for subsequent courses. However, the point here is that he needed more than just one course in

genre awareness to develop this knowledge; he needed the experience of having to write for courses in different departments.

Because rhetorical awareness and genre awareness exist on a continuum, students can move up and down on the continuum based on prompts, cues, etc. If students take a course in genre awareness and then never see the need to use it or never think about it again, they may forget what they have learned and fall on the continuum. For example, Anna never really saw much need for genre awareness because she seemed to see most papers as the same, which actually may have hindered a further development of genre awareness that she could have gotten had she attempted to use it earlier. Pedagogically we can hope to help students move up the continuum; we can hope a course in genre will facilitate more movement forward when they have experiences with different genres, but we have to be realistic with our expectation about what one class can do.

A second important finding of this research is that those who have learned to assess the similarities and differences in situations may not need to use genre awareness until they are challenged to write in genres they haven't written before or are given difficult assignments where they aren't sure how to proceed. Only then do they see a need for genre awareness. Those that are not as proficient in assessing situations may need genre awareness more, but they don't necessarily always see the need for it. For example, during her first few years of college, Anna never really used genre awareness. In most cases, she was able to analyze the assignment prompt in order to figure out what her teachers were asking for and through doing that was able to figure out the subtle differences in written conventions without ever drawing on genre awareness. Although she may have gotten better grades on her International Studies papers had she thought about genre, in most cases, her grades were very high without ever explicitly using

genre awareness. From her reported data, she only ever explicitly thought about genre when she got to her Law class and wasn't sure what exactly the instructor wanted on that paper (although she may have been using genre awareness unconsciously in other situations). When the assignment prompt did not give her the information she was used to finding there, she needed to go somewhere else to figure out what to do on that paper. And because she didn't know what was expected, she began to think about genre, about the community she was writing for, and the expectations of that community. Similarly, Wardle (2007) found that students were more likely to transfer writing-related knowledge when "the assignment is challenging, not easily within students' reach" (78). Anna found her law paper challenging, and so began to think about genre because she didn't know what else to do. She wasn't able to figure out what was expected on this paper in her usual way, so she looked to genre awareness to help her figure that out.

Anna seemed to see most papers as the same, mostly because the language that teachers used on the prompts and grading rubrics made them seem the same. As argued by Janet Giltrow, when writers read a meta-genre (assignment prompts, guidelines, etc.) they "will read the situation for familiar signs (finding inducement to compose a 'school essay' or an 'email message')" (198). Although some of Anna's papers were called something other than "essay" or "research paper" in the syllabus (response paper, etc.), the assignment prompts and grading rubrics spoke of the papers needing a clearly stated thesis, having logical organization, being supported with evidence, etc., all of which were familiar to Anna and caused her to see these papers as the same genre. The assignments that Anna (as well as Richard) was asked to write were all fairly generic. She was never asked to write in a genre she had never written before, and was never asked to write a disciplinary genre. And although I have argued that genre awareness should help students see the subtle differences between the same genre used in different

disciplines, if students are good at assessing those differences (through analyzing the assignment prompt or other means), they may not see the need to use genre awareness. Anna did have opportunities to use genre awareness that may have helped her get higher grades. For example, her choice of a five paragraph essay on one of her International studies papers caused her to not be able to reach the minimum page length. If she had thought about genre in that situation, she may have been able to assess that a five paragraph essay was not the best choice. But either way, her cumulative GPA throughout the study was 3.85, so even without the use of genre awareness, she was able to maintain high grades in all of her courses. Again, this is similar to the findings Wardle reports: students “did not generally feel the lessons and behaviors of FYC were needed in other courses during the first year. Rather, students were ordinarily able to complete their work in other classes to their satisfaction without the lessons and strategies of FYC” (82).

A third finding of this research, as suggested by the first and second findings, is that one major way of prompting further development of genre awareness is experience with multiple genres. Students who are asked to write in different genres right after learning genre awareness may strengthen their genre awareness and have a much stronger sense of the need for it than those that never write in genres other than “academic essays” or “research papers” (or other genres that they are already familiar with). For example, Pedro’s experience in his engineering class caused him to gain a much stronger sense of genre awareness than the other participants who didn’t see as much need for it. Although Pedro’s development of genre awareness in my course seemed to be the lowest of the three participants in this study, his genre awareness had developed further than either of the others by the end of the study. He was the only one of the three that seemed to really understand the influence the community has on the way someone writes. His experience in engineering helped him to see how one community uses writing for

particular purposes and why they write the way they do, and so he had a stronger sense of the ways that writing is used by different communities throughout the university and seemed to be able to continue to develop that knowledge in subsequent courses.

Implications for First-Year Composition

Results of this study support the notion that genre awareness is an important part of writing development. But it also sheds light on the ways that genre awareness is developed and what we can expect to accomplish in a first-year composition course. As previously mentioned, a FYC course focused on genre awareness can help facilitate the development of genre awareness, but genre awareness is something that develops slowly over time through experience with writing in multiple context and experience with genres. Because students rarely write in unfamiliar genres, especially in their first few years of college, it may be that a course focusing exclusively on genre is not what students need in their first year. A course such as the Writing about Writing course described by Downs and Wardle (and implemented through their textbook *Writing About Writing: A Course Reader*) may be more effective in the first year so that students can investigate some of the misconceptions they might have about writing and gain a more accurate and effective understanding of the way that writing works. Also, within the writing about writing course, there could be a focus on disciplinarity, on, as Nowacek argues, “the rhetorical domain of disciplines” (128). Although the students rarely wrote in unfamiliar genres, they often wrote in unfamiliar disciplines. Students may have benefitted from having more practice in assessing disciplines and disciplinary conventions. What this might mean is a course that discusses multiple disciplines, looks at assignment prompts from those disciplines, and discusses what might be expected on those assignments. These discussions could also focus on transfer, asking students to reflect on what knowledge they have that would be useful to them in

fulfilling those assignments. These discussions might help students to be able to assess those subtle differences between the ways that more generic essay assignments are used in different disciplines. This could all be achieved within the writing about writing pedagogy. A genre awareness course would make more sense as a second- or even third-year course, when students have declared their major and can do a more in-depth investigation of their major and the genres used by that community. They would be able to come to a better understanding of the values and ideologies of the community they are attempting to become part of, and how those values are imbedded within the genres used.

If I were to teach the genre awareness course described here (in chapter 2) in first-year composition again, it could be improved with less theory and more practical application. The abstract nature of many of the texts was difficult for students to apply to their own writing. In a first-year course, using texts that translate that theory into more accessible language for first year students (such as Devitt, Reiff and Bawashi's *Scenes of Writing*), rather than having students read genre theory, may help them more easily see how to apply those concepts to their writing. Also, although students were required to do genre analysis in the course, I believe there should have been more emphasis on this skill because none of the case study students ever used genre analysis afterwards and it was only ever mentioned twice (Robert mentioned once that he would have liked to have seen examples of the paper he was trying to write for LSJ, and Anna said that if she had to write in an unfamiliar genre, she would figure out how to write it by searching google to find examples to look at). Students in my course only do one really in-depth genre analysis. They looked at example magazine articles, but really only did a genre analysis of the professional genre they wrote for their final paper. It is possible that students did not have a high enough initial learning of how to perform genre analysis for them to be able to draw on that

knowledge. If students can see example texts of all papers they need to write, and learn to do genre analysis of all of those papers, they may be more likely to draw on the knowledge of genre analysis in future situations. If they begin to see the value of analyzing example texts, they may be more likely to ask to see example texts in future classes, even when those aren't necessarily offered.

Although the course that I described here meant to explicitly teach for transfer, the students rarely seemed to use what they learned. One problem with this course as I have described it is that while it meant to teach for transfer, it did not teach students enough *about* transfer for them to have a strong understanding of how to transfer what they had learned. Because high-road transfer often depends on the students' ability to see the need for transfer and know how to transfer what they have learned, more explicit instruction about transfer would likely be beneficial to students. Transfer is a complex process that rarely happens automatically. Therefore, students need to be taught about the problem of transfer, why it is difficult, and how to make that process happen more often if we expect them to be able to transfer what they learn. Because we hope that students will transfer writing-related knowledge to many vastly different contexts, it is important to teach them how to do that through explicit instruction about the concept of transfer and the process they will need to go through to accomplish it. In order to accomplish this goal, reflective writing should be utilized often. Transfer has been shown to be facilitated through the use of metacognitive reflection. Having students write often about how they will transfer their knowledge to new contexts will help them with the process of transferring that knowledge. These reflections can be done at several different times throughout the quarter. When handing out writing prompts, students should be asked to reflect on prior genre knowledge and other writing-related knowledge that they have that will be beneficial to completing the

assignment. This is supported by Reiff and Bawarshi who claim that when assigning papers we should “first ask students to tell us what they think the task is asking them to do, what it is reminding them of, and what prior resources they feel inclined to draw on in completing the task” (332). In this way, students will be put in positions where they need to engage in acts of transfer as they are reflecting on it. Students should be encouraged to look for connections and think about knowledge from diverse areas of their lives, not just school knowledge and especially not just knowledge gained in English courses (which is where students tend to focus when they discuss writing). As explained by Reiff and Bawarshi, we should “encourage students to draw from their full range of discursive knowledge” (331). Another place where reflection can and should be used is when students turn in their assignments. They should reflect on what they learned through the experience of writing that paper that will be useful to them in future situations. Again they should be encouraged to think about how they might be able to use that knowledge in diverse contexts both inside and outside of the university. These types of reflections should also occur at the end of the course in order for students to think about the course as a whole and what they will be able to take with them and use in later writing situations.

In the end, I would advocate for a first-year composition course that teaches students about writing, focuses on assessing disciplinary, teaches students about the problem of transfer, and utilizes reflection often to help students have more meta-cognitive awareness of their own learning so that they will be more likely to transfer what they learn. In addition, I would advocate for using genre awareness as an intermediate or advanced writing course or in WAC/WID courses.

Implications for WAC

Another implication of this study is that genre awareness cannot be taught in isolation. If

students take a course in genre awareness in their first year of college and then don't have to use it for another two years, they may forget what they learned, and it won't be helpful to them. Therefore, if genre awareness was taught in conjunction with WAC courses that also focus on genre, it would give students the added practice with disciplinary genres and writing conventions. A genre awareness course would feed perfectly into a WAC course such as the Engineering Communications course proposed by Natasha Artemeva et al.

As described in her "From Page to Stage: How Theories of Genre and Situated Learning Help introduce Engineering Students to Discipline-Specific Communication," Artemeva et al's Engineering Communications course is a discipline-specific communication course for engineering students that is based on rhetorical genre theory and theories of situated learning. The course makes clear to students that writing is discipline specific and that what counts as "good writing" differs depending on the department and the profession. The major goal of the course is "to facilitate the acquisition of rhetorical skills and strategies necessary for students to successfully integrate into their engineering school environments and to facilitate their transition to the workplace" (302). The course was designed to help students develop rhetorical awareness of the audience and purpose of the genres used in engineering. Those genres are taught through the use of written and oral feedback, genre analysis, and audience and context assessment. The course focuses on the rhetorical exigencies of writing situations in engineering and attempts to help students to integrate into the disciplinary discourse through helping them "acquire strategies that allow them to respond appropriately to the exigencies that arise in their engineering courses" (305).

In their course, Artemeva et al. direct their "students to real, recurrent, discipline-specific rhetorical situations which give them the opportunity" (306) to create authentic responses to

those situations. The assignments in this course give students experience with the recurrent situations that occur within the engineering discourse community and thus the genres that are conventionally used to respond to them which in turn helps students to “acquire rhetorical skills necessary to accomplish engineering-related tasks” (306). Through this experience, Artemeva et al. (in accordance with North American genre theory) make clear to their students that genres are not stable or formulaic, but that they are dynamic and adaptable to the individual purposes of the writer, and that “learning how to understand and manipulate the genres of written communication in one’s field is essential to professional success” (307). Similarly to the final project in my genre awareness courses, students in their course must investigate a particular engineering course, with the main goal being “for students to become familiar with disciplinary genres elicited in their engineering courses and to allow them to become more aware of their learning processes as well as of communicative and rhetorical strategies appropriate within the discipline” (308). In the end, the course is designed “to encourage the kind of learning situations common in the workplace. The course assignments reflect activities that take place in the context of both the engineering classroom and workplace ... The communication course assignments prepare students to write proposals, progress reports, and completion reports, all of which are integral parts of” (309) the engineering school curriculum as well as the workplace. Through this course, students gain transferable skills that can be used in other engineering courses and that can facilitate their transition to the workplace.

Although Artemeva et al.’s course is a course in engineering, the theories and pedagogical approaches can be used in WAC courses in any discipline. According to Artemeva et al., this “communication course provides a context in which students acquire rhetorical skills and strategies necessary to integrate into the community of university students in a particular

discipline and to facilitate their transition to the workplace” (312). This type of course would also give students the practice with genres and various writing situations that they would need in order to continue to develop their genre awareness after taking a FYC class that focused on genre and disciplinarity. Similarly, Mary Soliday, in *Everyday Genres: Writing Assignments across the Disciplines*, argues that WAC courses should give students “access to specialized genres” by giving “them access to the social situations from which genres draw their power and meaning” (xii). A course in writing about writing and/or genre awareness would feed perfectly into a course such as the one described by Artemeva et al.

It could be argued that a course such as Artemeva et al’s already does what a genre-based FYC course would do, and therefore they aren’t both needed. However, as seen through this research, genre awareness is not something that can be fully learned through one course. So one WAC or WID course focusing on genre likely wouldn’t be enough either. A FYC course in genre awareness can give students a foundation of rhetorical awareness and disciplinary awareness that they could build on in a WAC or WID course that also focuses on genre. This foundation would potentially give students the base of knowledge to help them more successfully complete a disciplinary writing course, and then the disciplinary writing course would give them the further practice and experience with disciplinary writing that is needed to facilitate the further development of genre awareness. FYC courses in genre awareness teach students about genres and disciplinarity without focusing on one particular discipline or writing situation and so what students learn there is more generally applicable to multiple writing situations that students encounter before they enter their major. Disciplinary writing courses are often taken when students are further along in their academic careers (just before or after they declare the major) when they are learning to integrate into that major. Because genre awareness

as I have discussed it attempts to teach students about disciplinary differences even within the same genre used in different disciplines, it has the potential of transferring to multiple different writing situations whereas a disciplinary writing course such as Artemeva et al.'s likely would only transfer to other courses within the same discipline. A FYC course focused on genre awareness would be a good first step towards developing genre awareness, and that knowledge could be further developed once they get to their disciplinary writing courses and begin to learn the specifics of writing for particular disciplinary writing situations. Both a FYC and a WAC/WID course focused on genre awareness can help students move forward on the genre awareness continuum, but because genre awareness develops slowly and needs practice and experience to facilitate its development, having students take both of these courses in succession would benefit them more than only taking one or the other.

Directions for Future Research

Although this study has given some insight into the effects of genre awareness pedagogy on student writing, more is still needed in order to fully comprehend the ways that genre awareness develops and the ways that students use the genre awareness they have learned. This dissertation conceptualizes genre awareness as a continuum in which students move up and down depending on prompts and cues. However, to more fully understand transfer and the prompts and cues that cause students to move forward on the continuum, additional studies need to be conducted on different populations of students and in different contexts. Future studies could include, for example:

- *Improvement on the current study.* There are several ways that the current study could have been improved. First, I was only able to follow students for two quarters. Future studies would benefit from having more time with each

participant. Also, because the students were in their first two years of college, none of them had declared their majors yet. Following students into their majors would give the benefit of seeing how genre awareness affects student's ability to learn and perform the written conventions of the genres of their disciplines. Additionally, this study could have resulted in different types of data had different data gathering methods been used (i.e. think aloud protocols, composing journals, more extensive surveys and quantitative methods, etc.)

- *Studies of different student populations.* Although I have attempted to use students for this study that differ on many characteristics, this is still a case study of three students, and hardly generalizable. In order to gain further understanding, more studies of this kind are needed. Studies could be conducted using honors students or other non-traditional students in order to see how they use and develop genre awareness. Also, this study was conducted at a large, urban, public university in the northwest United States. Other studies could be conducted at different types of universities with very different populations of students.
- *Studies of different types of genre awareness courses.* This study looked at the transferability of genre awareness from FYC to the writing students did in subsequent courses. Other studies could look at the effects of teaching genre awareness in intermediate or advanced composition courses or in WAC courses such as Artemeva et al.'s, or could look at the transfer of genre awareness from school to the workplace. In addition, my method of teaching

genre awareness may be very different from someone else's method.

Therefore, studies should be conducted that investigate different approaches to teaching genre awareness.

- *Studies that look into the types of genre knowledge that students bring with them into FYC.* Scholars such as Reiff and Bawarshi (2011) have begun to do this work, but a FYC course focusing on teaching genre awareness would likely influence students differently depending on the amount of genre knowledge and experience they already possessed. Future studies could investigate how prior genre knowledge affects the amount of genre awareness gained in a FYC course or how prior genre knowledge affected the extent to which students were able to transfer genre awareness. Also, students who have had positive experiences with writing the genres used in high school may have more trouble adapting that knowledge to new situations if they feel like those genres have always served them well. This experience could affect students' ability to learn genre awareness or their ability to use it in future situations.
- *Studies that look at other pedagogies that propose to teach for transfer.* Genre awareness is not the only pedagogy that is proposed to teach for transfer. Work has recently been started by Wardle (as well as others) that looks into the transferability of writing about writing pedagogy, but more work is needed in this area as well. In addition, other solutions to the problem of transfer may also be developing and those pedagogies will need to be studied to investigate their effectiveness as well.
- *Comparative studies between FYC courses and WAC courses.* Because of the studies showing the limited transferability of FYC courses, scholars are arguing that writing should be taught within the disciplines so that students can learn the disciplinary

genre conventions that they will need to use. However, studies are needed to investigate whether students would learn genre awareness more effectively through WAC courses focused on genre than they would in a FYC course focused on genre, and how the effects from each of those courses would differ.

Final Thoughts

In Elizabeth Wardle's "'Mutt Genres' and the Goal of FYC," she argues that because of the "difference in primary focus, the rhetorical situation of FYC courses around the country do not mirror the multiple, diverse, and complex rhetorical situations found across the university in even the most basic ways" (766). Because of this, Wardle argues that "we should no longer ask FYC to teach students *to write* in the university and instead construct FYC to teach students *about writing* in the university" (767). Through an explicit focus on genre awareness, this was the goal of my course described and studied here. The goal is for students to learn about genre conventions, to learn about the disciplinarity of writing, and to learn how to follow conventions so that they can take those skills with them and use them in other courses throughout the university. Although genres are context-specific and arise out of the purposes of disciplinary work, in FYC "teachers are asked to teach students about and prepare them for the genres of other disciplines when neither they nor their students are conducting the work that calls for and shapes those genres in other disciplinary classrooms" (Wardle 767). This is an impossible task. And so Wardle suggest a *writing about writing* course instead. The goals advocated for by Downs and Wardle and taught through their writing about writing curriculum are similar to those advocated for here. The overall goal is for students to learn to figure out the disciplinary conventions for writing in whatever disciplines they need to write for. However, Wardle makes clear in her "Continuing the Dialogue: Follow up comments on 'Teaching about Writing,

Righting Misconceptions” that their pedagogy “is only one possible curriculum among many” (176) that attempt to reach similar goals, and that “there are many pedagogical activities and processes teachers can use in working toward the goal we advocate” (176). I have offered one such possibility here. Composition instructors should continue to develop other possible pedagogies that may fulfill these goals even more effectively. Wardle concludes her response by stating that “meta-awareness about writing can be taught in many ways, and not only in the curriculum that Doug and I described, but at the end of this study I am more convinced than ever that teaching students to understand *how writing works* must be the central goal of our writing courses” (181). I wholeheartedly agree.

Appendix 1: Student and teacher survey and interview question

Survey questions: Students (all students from 131 and 110)

1. What do you remember about the writing strategies you were taught in your English 131/110 class? What was the major topic/focus of the class?
2. Do you think that your English 131/110 class has been helpful? Why/why not? What do you think you have used from that class? What has been helpful in other writing you have done since taking English 131/110?
3. What kinds of writing have you done in other classes since taking English 131/110? How were these writing assignments similar or different to the writing you had done before (in 131/110 or other places)?
4. How did you decide how to proceed when faced with these writing assignments?

Interview questions⁶: Faculty/TA

1. What can you tell me about the type of writing that gets done in your department? What genres do professionals typically write? What is the purpose of these writings? What do professionals in your field usually value when it comes to writing?
2. What genres of writing do you typically assign to students?
3. How would you describe the genre of this particular student assignment?
4. What are you looking for when you evaluate this type of student writing?
5. What do you think are the most common mistakes that students make?
6. What would you say about this particular student's ability to use the genre? Can you explain why this student received this grade/these comments.

Interview questions: Students (interview #1)

1. What do you remember about the writing strategies you were taught in your English 131/110 class? What was the major topic/focus of the class?

⁶ The teacher and student interviews were semi-structured. Although I went in with these questions prepared, the conversation often took a different turn.

2. Do you think that your English131/110 class has been helpful? Why/why not? What do you think you have used from that class? What has been helpful in other writing you have done?
3. What kinds of writing have you done in other classes since taking English 131/110?
4. What genres have you been asked to write? Are these genres similar to the genres of writing you had done before?
5. How did you decide how to proceed when faced with these writing assignments?
6. Tell me about this particular piece of writing. Did it respond to a prompt? What did your teacher tell you about the assignment? Who was the audience? What is the genre?
7. How was this paper evaluated? What do you know about what this discipline values in terms of writing? What do you know about what the discipline values in general? How do you know that? Did you know that before you wrote this paper? Did that knowledge help you to write this paper? Will it help you write future papers?
8. Why do you think you got this grade/these comments?
9. Tell me about the classes you are taking. What types of writing do you think you will be doing in these classes? What do you know about the genres required for these disciplines? What do you know about what these disciplines value in terms of writing?
10. Why do you think this discipline uses these genres? Why are they different genres than are used in other disciplines?
11. What do you know about the values and beliefs of these disciplines? Do you agree with these? What do you think would happen if you attempted to resist these in your writing? Do you think resistance is possible?

Interview script: Student (interview #2 -- middle of quarter, when student is in the process of writing an assignment for one of their classes)

1. Tell me about this assignment you are working on. What is the genre? What is the purpose of the genre? Who is the audience? What is the form?
2. What did your instructor tell you about this assignment? How did s/he explain this assignment to you?
3. Tell me about the process you have gone through to begin this writing project.
4. How did you attempt to figure out what was an appropriate response to this writing situation?

Interview script: Student (interview #3 -- end of quarter, when student has finished all assignments and has received grades/comments from instructors, 2-3 students - at least one from 131 and one from 110)

1. Did you get the grade that you expected on your writing assignments? How did you do on the writing assignment we talked about in our last meeting?

2. How was your work evaluated? Was this the type of evaluation you were expecting? Why do you think it was evaluated in that way? Why do you think you received this grade/these comments?

3. What have learned about writing for these disciplines that you didn't know when you began these classes? How did you learn those things?

Appendix 2

English 131 Course Syllabus

Course Description

Most of you are probably familiar with what many call the “academic argument” essay. In this class we will focus on different *genres* of writing and how we can use the genre of the “academic argument” essay as an *antecedent genre* that can help you when writing for new writing situations that you may encounter in school and out of it. Because our culture is very print-heavy, we come across and use different genres of writing every day. We read emails, send love notes, and read menus, but rarely do think about how we know what to do in the situation that calls for the writing. A major goal of this course is to look at writing in order to understand *why* people write, *how* people write, and *what* people write, in the many different situations that they write for. Through this course you will learn *genre awareness* which will help you be able to figure out what kind of writing is appropriate in each new situation that you are asked to write for. Every department in the university uses and requires different kinds of writing. Therefore, one of the main goals of this class is for you to understand the disciplinarity of writing and to understand the types of investigations you must undergo in order to figure out how to respond to writing assignments given to you in different disciplines in the university.

This is a class about writing, and more specifically genre, therefore the texts we read in this class will all be about writing. We will mostly be reading texts written by professional researchers and scholars in writing studies and genre theory. These texts will be difficult and will require you to read closely and carefully. These texts will help you to understand the concept of genre and how authors make rhetorical choices when writing in particular genres and for particular *discourse communities* and *rhetorical situations*.

As I have said, this is a class about writing, but just as importantly, English 131 a writing course in which you investigate and apply the ideas we are learning. The papers in this course will ask you to write for different purposes, with the ultimate goal being to be able to figure out how to produce appropriate texts for the situation that calls for them. Through this study, you will be more equipped to figure out the type of writing that is required in successive classes at the University.

Course Readings⁷

Bitzer, Lloyd. “The Rhetorical Situation.” Rhetoric: Concepts, Definitions, Boundaries. William A. Covino and David. A Jolliffe, Eds. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995.

Devitt, Amy, Mary Jo Reiff, and Anis Bawarshi. excerpt from Scenes of Writing: Strategies for Composing With Genres. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2004.

⁷ In English 110 students do not read the texts by Lisa Ede or Miller and Shepherd

Bawarshi, Anis. "Meditations on Beginnings." Genre and the Invention of the Writer: Reconsidering the Place of Invention in Composition. Logan: Utah University Press, 2003.

Devitt, Amy. "A Proposal for Teaching Genre Awareness and Antecedent Genres." Writing Genres. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004.

Fish, Stanley. "How to Recognize a Poem When You See One." Is There a Text in this Class? Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Ede, Lisa. "Understanding Writing Situations." Acts of Inquiry: A Guide to Reading, Research, and Writing at the University of Washington. Allison Gross, Annie Dwyer, David Holmberg, and Anis Bawarshi, Eds. New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2011.

Bazerman, Charles. "Speech Acts, Genres, and Activity Systems." What Writing Does and How it Does it: An Introduction to Analyzing Texts and Textual Practices. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004.

Miller, Carolyn and Dawn Shepherd. "Bogging as Social Action." Blogosphere: Rhetoric, Community, and Culture of Weblogs. http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/blogging_as_social_action_a_genre_analysis_of_the_weblog.html, 2004.

Writing Projects

All *rhetoric* is undertaken in light of the situations that call it into being. This means that there are as many different kinds (or genres) of writing as there are situations in which writing is used. Our reading will help understand what texts do and purposes they embody; the writing projects will give you the chance to practice accomplishing particular purposes with your writing and to try some of the moves and strategies professional writers make.

The course is divided into two sequences in which we will study and write three genres: "academic argument" genres, public genres, and professional genres.

Writing assignments⁸:

- What is rhetoric? – 1 page definition of rhetoric
- Scene analysis – 2 page scene analysis based on an assignment from *Scenes of Writing*
- Rhetoric and Genre – 3 page argument about the relationship between rhetoric and genre
- Genre Conversation – 4 page extended definition of genre
- Public genre – 1,000 word magazine article
- Genre Analysis – 3 page analysis of a professional genre
- Professional genre – 5 page professional genre

⁸ These assignments are from English 131. In 110, they do not write the Scene Analysis, and the Rhetoric and Genre and the Genre Conversation are both one page shorter.

Grading

Evaluation in a writing class really needs to be postponed until students have had time to experiment and rework their writing so it reflects their best effort. Logically, then, the main factor in your grade will be the portfolio, as it represents your learning over ten weeks. But other factors matter too. In order to give appropriate weight to the various components of the course, I will grade according to the following:

Writing Portfolio (70%)

In this course, you will complete two major assignment sequences, each of which is designed to help you fulfill the *course outcomes*. You will have a chance to revise significantly each of the papers using feedback generated by your instructor, peer review sessions, and writing conferences. Toward the end of the course, having completed the two sequences, you will be asked to compile and submit a portfolio of your work along with a critical reflection. The portfolio will include four⁹ revised papers and a critical reflection that explains how the selected portfolio demonstrates the four outcomes for the course. In addition to the materials you select as the basis for your portfolio grade, your portfolio must include all of the sequence-related writing you were assigned in the course (both major papers and all the shorter assignments from both sequences). A portfolio that does not include all the above will be considered "Incomplete" and will earn a grade of 0.0-0.9. The grade for complete portfolios will be based on the extent to which the pieces you select demonstrate the course outcomes.

Participation (30%)

“Participation” in this class is not solely based on your in-class participation. The following elements will be considered when assessing your grade at the end of the quarter: your willingness to contribute to class discussions by making comments and asking questions, your engagement in group work and peer workshops, your overall preparedness in completing all reading and writing assignments on time, and your conferences with me. Remember that class discussions and peer-review sessions cannot be made up if you miss class. If you know you are going to miss class, please let me know in advance. Also, find another student to get class notes from, etc. Remember as well that it is particularly important for you to arrive on time. If you come in after class has started, even by only a few minutes, you will be considered late. Attendance problems will negatively affect your participation grade. One last note on participation: I expect that you will come to class prepared to contribute to the work we are doing, but I realize that people have different styles of interaction and engagement, so while I do expect you to make yourself and your contribution visible, I will never penalize you for not being loud, however, you can make up negative participation by speaking in class. If you have any questions about where you stand in the class, please come see me.

⁹ In 110, they only revise 3 papers and one of those can be chosen from their 109 class.

Course Outcomes

1. To demonstrate an awareness of the strategies that writers use in different writing contexts.

- The writing employs style, tone, and conventions appropriate to the demands of a particular genre and situation.
- The writer is able to demonstrate the ability to write for different audiences and contexts, both within and outside the university classroom.
- The writing has a clear understanding of its audience, and various aspects of the writing (mode of inquiry, content, structure, appeals, tone, sentences, and word choice) address and are strategically pitched to that audience.
- The writer articulates and assesses the effects of his or her writing choices.

2. To read, analyze, and synthesize complex texts and incorporate multiple kinds of evidence purposefully in order to generate and support writing.

- The writing demonstrates an understanding of the course texts as necessary for the purpose at hand.
- Course texts are used in strategic, focused ways (for example: summarized, cited, applied, challenged, re-contextualized) to support the goals of the writing.
- The writing is intertextual, meaning that a "conversation" between texts and ideas is created in support of the writer's goals.
- The writer is able to utilize multiple kinds of evidence gathered from various sources (primary and secondary - for example, library research, interviews, questionnaires, observations, cultural artifacts) in order to support writing goals.
- The writing demonstrates responsible use of the MLA (or other appropriate) system of documenting sources.

3. To produce complex, analytic, persuasive arguments that matter in academic contexts.

- The argument is appropriately complex, based in a claim that emerges from and explores a line of inquiry.
- The stakes of the argument, why what is being argued matters, are articulated and persuasive.
- The argument involves analysis, which is the close scrutiny and examination of evidence and assumptions in support of a larger set of ideas.
- The argument is persuasive, taking into consideration counterclaims and multiple points of view as it generates its own perspective and position.
- The argument utilizes a clear organizational strategy and effective transitions that develop its line of inquiry.

4. To develop flexible strategies for revising, editing, and proofreading writing.

- The writing demonstrates substantial and successful revision.
- The writing responds to substantive issues raised by the instructor and peers.
- Errors of grammar, punctuation, and mechanics are proofread and edited so as not to interfere with reading and understanding the writing.

Course Calendar¹⁰

| <u>WEEK 1</u> | <u>IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES</u> | <u>HOMEWORK</u> |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Day 1 | Introductions, syllabus | <u>Act of Inquiry</u> xi-xii, What is Rhetoric? |
| Day 2 | Review of Rhetoric, Outcomes What is Rhetoric? due | Bitzer “The Rhetorical Situation” |
| Day 3 | Discussion of Bitzer | <u>Scenes of Writing</u> 3-23 |
| Day 4 | Scene/Situation analysis | <u>Scenes of Writing</u> 23-47 |
| <u>WEEK 2</u> | | |
| Day 1 | Scene, Situation, and Genre | Scene Analysis |
| Day 2 | Scene Analysis due | Bawarshi “A Meditation on Beginnings” |
| Day 3 | Discussion of Bawarshi | Devitt from <i>Writing Genres</i> |
| Day 4 | What is Genre? Discussion of Devitt | Rhetoric and Genre |
| <u>WEEK 3</u> | | |
| Day 1 | Quoting, citations, Rhetoric and Genre due | Fish “How to Recognize a Poem” |
| Day 2 | Discussion of Fish | |
| Day 3 | Claims, subclaims, counterclaims, | Ede “Understanding Writing Situations” |
| Day 4 | Textual Conventions | Genre conversation |
| <u>WEEK 4</u> | | |

¹⁰ Again, this calendar is for 131, because 110 has one less paper and two less readings, we have the time to spend two days discussing some of the more difficult texts (Bitzer, Bawarshi, and Devitt)

| | | |
|-------|--|--|
| Day 1 | How to do successful peer reviews Genre Conversation first draft due | Read and comment on each others' papers |
| Day 2 | Class cancelled for conferences | |
| Day 3 | Class cancelled for conferences | Genre Conversation |
| Day 4 | Genre Conversation 2nd draft due | Find and bring examples of public genres |

WEEK 5

| | |
|-------|---|
| Day 1 | Intro to genre analysis |
| Day 2 | Style, public vs. professional/academic genres |
| Day 3 | Public genre group work |
| Day 4 | Public genre papers 1st draft due, peer review |

WEEK 6

| | | |
|-------|---|--|
| Day 1 | Public genre project due, show and tell | find and bring examples of professional genres |
| Day 2 | Introduction to UW library system, Online research | |
| Day 3 | Professional style/tone, genre analysis | Bazerman from <i>What Writing Does</i> |
| Day 4 | Discussion of Bazerman, genre analysis worksheet | Contact professionals in your field about interviews |

WEEK 7

| | | |
|-------|---|------------------------------------|
| Day 1 | Ethnographic research, create interview questions | Miller "Blogging as Social Action" |
| Day 2 | Discussion of Miller | |
| Day 3 | Genre analysis example student papers | |
| Day 4 | Genre Analysis due | |

WEEK 8

| | | |
|-------|--|----------------------|
| Day 1 | Active/passive voice | Williams “Sentences” |
| Day 2 | Sentences | |
| Day 3 | Cohesion | |
| Day 4 | Professional Genre project 1st draft due, peer review | |

WEEK 9

| | | |
|-------|---|-----------------------------|
| Day 1 | Professional Genre project 2nd draft due Portfolio | choose papers for portfolio |
| Day 2 | Portfolio cover letter | |
| Day 3 | Revision, reflection | |
| Day 4 | Peer reviews | |

WEEK 10

| | |
|-------|----------------------------|
| Day 1 | Revision/peer reviews |
| Day 2 | Revision/peer reviews |
| Day 3 | Evaluations, class wrap up |
| Day 4 | Peer review cover letter |

*** Final Portfolios due between 2 and 4 on Tuesday of week eleven (finals week)**

Appendix 3

Genre Analysis Worksheet

1. Identify the scene and describe the situation in which the genre is used:

Where does the genre appear?

How and when is it transmitted and used?

With what other genres does the genre interact?

What topics, issues, ideas, questions, etc. does the genre address?

When people use this genre, what are they interacting about?

Who writes the text in this genre?

Are multiple writers possible?

What roles do they perform?

What characteristics must writers of this genre possess?

Why do writers write the genre?

Who reads the text in this genre?

Is there more than one type or reader for this genre?

What roles do they perform?

What characteristics must readers of this genre possess?

Why do readers read the genre?

What purposes does the genre fulfill for the people that use it?

2. Identify and describe patterns in the genre's features:

What content is typically included? What excluded?

How is the content treated?

What sorts of examples are used?

What counts as evidence (personal experience, facts, etc.)?

What rhetorical strategies are being used?

How are texts in the genre structured? What are the parts and how are they organized?

In what format are texts in this genre presented? What layout and or appearance is common?

How long is a typical text in this genre?

What types of sentences do texts in the genre typically use? Are they simple or complex, active or passive? How long are they? Are the sentences varied or do they share a certain style?

What type of vocabulary is most common? Jargon? Slang?

How would you describe the writer's voice?

3. Analyze what these patterns reveal about the situation and scene:

How do the features help the genre obtain its overall purpose?

Who is invited into the genre, and who is excluded?

What values, beliefs, goals, and assumptions are revealed through the genre's patterns?

What content is considered most important?

What actions does the genre help make possible?

What actions does the genre make difficult?

What attitude towards readers is implied in the genre?

What attitude toward the world is implied?

Appendix 4

**5 Paragraph Jane Schaffer Essay Outline
Response to Literature**

I. Introduction paragraph

a. Hook:

b. Title, Author, Genre:

c. Brief overview of story/text:

d. Assertion/Thesis Statement:

II. Body Paragraph #1

a. Topic Sentence:

b. Concrete Detail #1:

c. Commentary #1:

d. Commentary #2:

e. Concluding Sentence (with transition to next paragraph):

III. Body Paragraph #2

a. Topic Sentence:

b. Concrete Detail #1:

c. Commentary #1:

d. Commentary #2:

e. Concluding Sentence (with transition to next paragraph):

IV. Body Paragraph #3

a. Topic Sentence:

b. Concrete Detail#1:

c. Commentary #1:

d. Commentary #2:

e. Concluding Sentence (with transition to next paragraph):

V. Concluding Paragraph

a-d. Include the following: restate thesis, title/author, what you proved, how you proved it:

Works Cited

- Artemeva, Natasha and Janna Fox. "Awareness Versus Production: Probing Students' Antecedent Genre Knowledge." Journal of Business and Technical Communication. 11 June, 2010. <http://jbt.sagepub.com/content/early/2010/06/07/1050651910371302>.
- Artemeva, Natasha, Susan Logie, and Jennie St. Martins. "From Page to State: How Theories of Genre and Situated Learning Help introduce Engineering Students to Discipline-Specific Communication." Technical Communication Quarterly. 8.3 (Summer 1999): 301-317.
- Bawarshi, Anis S. Genre and the Invention of the Writer: Reconsidering the Place of Invention in Composition. Logan: Utah State UP, 2003.
- Bawarshi, Anis S. and Mary Jo Reiff. Genre: An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy. West Lafayette: Parlor Press, 2010.
- Beaufort, Anne. College writing and beyond: A new framework for university writing instruction. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2007.
- Bergmann, L. S. and Zepernick, J. "Disciplinary and Transfer: Students' Perceptions of Learning to Write." WPA: Writing Program Administration. 31 (2007): 124-149.
- Berkenkotter, Carol, and Thomas N. Huckin. Genre Knowledge in Disciplinary Communication: Cognition/Culture/Power. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1995.
- Bitzer, Lloyd F. "The Rhetorical Situation." Philosophy and Rhetoric. 1 (1968): 1-14.
- Bransford, John. "Learning and Transfer." How People Learn: Mind, Brain, Experience, and School. Eds. John Bransford et al. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000.
- Bereiter, Carl. "A Dispositional View of Transfer." Teaching for Transfer: Fostering Generalization in Learning. Anne McKeough, Judy Lupart, and Anthony Marini, eds. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1995.
- Carroll, Lee Ann. Rehearsing New Roles: How College Students Develop as Writers. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002.
- Cope, Bill and Mary Kalantzis, eds. The Power of Literacy: A Genre Approach to Teaching Writing. Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1993.

- Coe, Richard, Lorelei Lingard, and Tatiana Teslenko, eds. The Rhetoric and Ideology of Genre: Strategies for Stability and Change. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton P, 2001.
- Devitt, Amy J. "Generalizing about Genre: New Conceptions of an Old Concept." College Composition and Communication. 44.4 (December 1993): 573-585.
- . Writing Genres. Carbondale, IL: SIUP, 2004.
- . "Transferability and Genres." Locations of Composition. Eds. C. Keller and C. Weisser. New York: SUNY Press, 2007.
- Devitt, Amy, Mary Joe Reiff, and Anis Bawarshi. Scenes of Writing: Strategies for Composing with Genres. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2004.
- Downs, Douglas and Elizabeth Wardle. "Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions: (Re)Envisioning 'First-Year Composition' as 'Introduction to Writing Studies.'" College Composition and Communication. 58.4 (June 2007): 552-578.
- Freedman, Aviva. "Show and Tell? The Role of Explicit Teaching in the Learning of New Genres." Research in the Teaching of English 27 (1993): 222-51.
- Freedman, Aviva and Peter Medway, eds. Genre and the New Rhetoric. Bristol, PA: Taylor & Francis, 1994.
- . Learning and Teaching Genre. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook, 1994.
- Giltrow, Janet. "Meta-Genre." The Rhetoric and Ideology of Genre. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2002.
- James, M.A. "The influence of perceptions of task similarity/difference on learning transfer in second language writing." Written Communication 25 (2008): 76-103.
- Johns, Ann Ed. Genre in the Classroom: Multiple Perspectives. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2002.
- Kain, Donna and Elizabeth Wardle. "Building Context: Using Activity Theory to Teach about Genres in Multi-Major Professional Communication Courses." Technical Communication Quarterly. 14.2 (2005): 113-139.
- Marini, Anthony and Randy Genereux. "The Challenge of Teaching for Transfer." Teaching for

- Transfer: Fostering Generalization in Learning. Anne McKeough, Judy Lupart, and Anthony Marini, eds. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1995.
- McCarthy, Lucille P. "A Stranger in Strange Lands: A College Student Writing across the Curriculum." Research in the Teaching of English 21 (1987): 233-65.
- McDonald, Catherine. The Question of Transferability: What Students Take Away from Writing Instruction. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of English, University of Washington, 2006.
- McKeough, Anne, Judy Lupart, and Anthony Marini, eds. Teaching for Transfer: Fostering Generalization in Learning. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1995.
- Mertens, Donna M. Research Methods in Education and Psychology: Integrating Diversity with Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1998.
- Miller, Carolyn R. "Genre as Social Action." Quarterly Journal of Speech 70 (1984): 151-67.
- Nowacek, Rebecca. Agents of Integration: Understanding Transfer as a Rhetorical Act. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2011.
- Perkins, D. N., and Gavriel Salomon. "The Science and Art of Transfer." 1999. The Thinking Classroom. The Cognitive Skills Group at Harvard Project Zero. (June 2006). Online: <http://learnweb.harvard.edu/alps/thinking/docs/trancost.htm>
- Perkins, D.N. & Salomon, G. "Transfer of Learning." International Encyclopedia of Education, Second Edition. Oxford, England: Pergamon Press, 1992. Online: <http://learnweb.harvard.edu/alps/thinking/docs/traencyn.htm>
- Perkins, D.N. and G. Salomon. "Teaching for Transfer." Educational Leadership, 46.1 (1988): 22-32.
- Reiff, Mary Jo and Anis Bawarshi. "Tracing discursive resources: How students use prior genre knowledge to negotiate new writing contexts in first-year composition." Written Communication, 28 (2011), 312-337.
- Russell, David R. "Rethinking Genre in School and Society: An Activity Theory Analysis." Written Communication 14.4 (October 1997): 504-554.

- Salomon Gavriel, and T. Globerson. "Skills May not be Enough: The Role of Mindfulness in Learning and Transfer." International Journal of Educational Research, 11 (1987): 623-637.
- Salomon Gavriel, and David N. Perkins. "Rocky Roads to Transfer: Rethinking Mechanisms of a Neglected Phenomenon." Educational Psychologist, 24.2 (1989): 113-142.
- Schryer, Catherine. "The Lab vs. The Clinic: Sites of Competing Genres." Genre and The New Rhetoric. Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway, eds. London: Taylor and Francis, 1994.
- Smit, David. The End of Composition Studies. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004.
- Soliday, Mary. Everyday Genres: Writing Assignments Across the Disciplines. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2011
- Sommers, Nancy and Laura Saltz. "The Novice as Expert: Writing the Freshman Year." College Composition and Communication. 56.1 (Sep 2004): 124-149.
- Tardy, Christine. Building Genre Knowledge. West Lafayette, IN: Parlor Press, 2009.
- Wardle, Elizabeth. "'Mutt Genres' and the Goal of FYC: Can We Help Students Write the Genres of the University?" College Composition and Communication. 60.4 (June 2009): 765-789.
- . "Continuing the Dialogue: Follow-Up Comments on 'Teaching about Writing, Righting Misconceptions.'" College Composition and Communication. 60.1 (September 2008): 175-181.
- . "Understanding Transfer from FYC: Preliminary Results of a Longitudinal Study." WPA: Writing Program Administration, 31.1-2 (2007): 65-85.