ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: WRITING TRANSFER ACROSS DOMAINS:
                                          ACADEMIC, PERSONAL, AND
                                          EXTRACURRICULAR WRITING

                                          Heather M. Lindenman, Doctor of Philosophy,
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Directed By: Professor Jessica Enoch, Department of English

        Over the last decade, scholars in composition studies have devoted significant

attention to the issue of student transfer at the collegiate level. That is, they ask whether

and how students repurpose their writing knowledge and abilities for new and alternate

writing situations. This existing research provides insight into the ways that students do

or do not productively repurpose their writing experiences and suggests that successful

transfer occurs less often than writing instructors might hope.

        Drawing on data from a survey, focus groups, writing samples, and interviews,

my qualitative study extends this existing research in three primary ways. First, I expand

the scope of contexts included in studies of writing transfer. Much of students' writing,

and thus writing education, occurs outside of school. Rather than focus primarily on

academic settings, as most scholarship does, my study investigates students' writing

experiences across academic, personal, and extracurricular domains. Second, my study

discerns the specific ways that students *relate* their writing experiences across these

domains. Most scholarship in composition examines how students repurpose their writing knowledge by tracing vertical transfer, or the ways students transfer their learning from one writing class to another. My study redirects scholarly attention by focusing instead on how students forge connections between disparate contexts, establishing a "transfer mindset." Based on students' writing samples and commentary, this dissertation analyzes five relational reasoning strategies that students use to connect their writing across contexts. Finally, this study examines how students transfer prior experiences and knowledge to create a credible persona, or effective *ethos*, in many writing situations. My study examines three types of sources that students draw on to project an *ethos* appropriate to a given writing task.

Throughout "Writing Transfer Across Domains," I emphasize the importance of viewing transfer from students' own perspectives and valuing students' idiosyncratic ways of making meaning. Ultimately, this project shows that students can and do draw productive connections between their writing experiences, cultivating a "transfer mindset." "Writing Transfer Across Domains" offers both theoretical and pragmatic insights into college students' ability to move their writing knowledge between all the writing situations they encounter and create.

WRITING TRANSFER ACROSS DOMAINS:

ACADEMIC, PERSONAL, AND EXTRACURRICULAR WRITING

by

Heather M. Lindenman

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Advisory Committee:

Professor Jessica Enoch, Chair
Professor Shirley Logan
Professor Scott Wible
Professor Melanie Kill
Professor Rebecca Nowacek

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Chapter 1: Introduction

> The ability to transfer knowledge and ability from one context to another is what we mean by learning in the first place.
> —David Smit, *The End of Composition Studies* (130)

> I develop my writing skills in all realms of my life. They all feed off of each other.
> —Survey Respondent

We teach writing in the college setting because we hope that our students will be able to repurpose their learning from our classes for other writing situations and experiences they encounter, within and beyond the academic realm. As the opening epigraph indicates, this ability to transfer "knowledge and ability" between situations is in some ways "what we mean by learning in the first place" (Smit 130). The notion that transfer is at the heart of learning is especially the case when it comes to writing. Because writing is always context-bound and circumscribed by the rhetorical situation, no two situations will call for the exact same document or text—and the writer must always reconsider her approaches to composition based on the circumstances. For this reason, the notion that students could directly transfer a set of writing skills from one situation to the next simply does not make sense. As writing teachers, we cannot possibly prepare our students for every potential writing situation they might encounter in their futures. The question instead, then, is how to teach students to transfer, or recontextualize, their writing knowledge and abilities to suit the various new, and often unexpected, situations they might respond to or create.

Before asking how we might *teach* for transfer, however, we might first ask whether (and if so, how) students *already* transfer their writing abilities between

contexts—absent a teacher's specific prompting or transfer-focused curricular initiatives. Much research within composition studies that seeks to address this question has unfortunately yielded rather grim findings. Many studies of students' ability to transfer between academic settings suggest that students struggle to transfer their learning, especially from their first-year writing classes into their later writing experiences (e.g., Beaufort, Bergmann and Zepernick, Nelms and Dively). Studies of students' transitions from academic to professional writing situations similarly report minimal transfer or minimal potential for transfer, suggesting instead that these locations of writing are fundamentally different in a number of key ways (e.g., Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Paré). Research on students' use of prior knowledge also indicates that students often do not draw connections between the genres they compose in different contexts of their writing lives. Angela Rounsaville, Rachel Goldberg, and Anis Bawarshi report, for example, that "despite possessing a wide genre base, and despite having experience writing in multiple domains, students utilized only a fraction of these discursive resources when encountering new academic writing situations" (108). These findings seem to be a cause for concern: if students do not draw on their various writing experiences in new situations, they may be overlooking potentially relevant sources of knowledge that could help them compose the various writing tasks they encounter in multiple contexts.

This dissertation project revolves around the question of whether—and if so, how—students transfer their writing knowledge between situations. Through my multidimensional research study, I sought to discover how students repurpose their writing-related knowledge across contexts, possibly in ways that composition researchers have as yet been unable to see. In 2012-13, I gathered data about students' experiences

with writing transfer across contexts from a survey (*n*=319), focus groups (4), student writing samples (84), and interviews (10). I based my study on the assumption that writers do not simply move their knowledge forward in a clear or predictable way from one experience to the next similar experience. Rather, if a student takes into account her diverse array of writing experiences when she is faced with a new writing situation, she might partially or fundamentally reconsider her approach as a result. In other words, I designed my study to underscore the claim that "learning doesn't occur in a linear way for most people"—and that people instead revisit their understandings "in light of new information and experience" (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 139). Some early college experiences might be quite relevant for one student and completely forgotten by another. A first-year student might not interpret her teacher's feedback as useful until she finds herself in an internship context, years later. It is also possible that students learn and grow throughout their college years, but do not remember the moments or sources of their learning. As Susan C. Jarratt, Katherine Mack, Alexandra Sartor, and Shevaun E. Watson write, "in terms of transfer, when it is successful, the skill is remembered but the transfer is forgotten" (54).

Because students do not experience learning in a neat trajectory that they can easily narrate, I did not ask students in my study to tell their stories of transfer. Instead, I approached the concept more obliquely. I hypothesized that I might gain a new type of knowledge about transfer if I ask students to *relate* their specific writing experiences. Rather than inquire into the ways students see their knowledge moving forward from one task to another, I wanted to know how students *developed new knowledge* based on the connections they drew between experiences. After all, when we ask about transfer, we are

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not interested in the movement of knowledge, but rather in the ways that students construct and interpret their various experiences in order to make meaning of that knowledge.

Rebecca Nowacek's *Agents of Integration* provides a framework that guides my approach to researching transfer. Nowacek frames the individual student as the "meaning maker at the center of conceptions of transfer" and coins the phrase "agent of integration" to describe the active work that a student engages in as she attempts to repurpose her writing knowledge (38-39). Accordingly, Nowacek defines transfer as an act of "recontextualization" that "recognizes multiple avenues of connection among contexts, including knowledge, ways of knowing, identities, and goals" (20). The multiple ways that an individual constructs relationships between her various writing experiences is a key step of transfer. Furthermore, Nowacek's definition of transfer "recognizes that transfer is not only mere application; it is also an act of reconstruction" (25).[1] My dissertation looks closely at the ways that students perform the behind-the-scenes work of connecting, interpreting, and reconstructing their writing knowledge and experiences.

When trying to study how an "agent of integration" actually engages in the complex act of transfer, I borrow from Nowacek's division of transfer into two subcomponents. She explains that "agents of integration are individuals actively working to *perceive* as well as to *convey effectively to others* connections between previously distinct contexts" (38). In other words, there are two constituent parts to how students practice transfer: they "see" connections and they attempt to "sell" those connections (38-42). The first part, "seeing connections," refers to how students relate (or see) their

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[1] I highlight these two parts of Nowacek's definition because they are most central to my study. For more information on the other three parts of Nowacek's definition, see *Agents of Integration* 26-34.

writing across contexts (39). The second, "selling connections," addresses how students

present (or sell) their connections to the audience in a credible manner (39). For instance,

Nowacek explains that student Kelly sees connections between her reading of *The*

Canterbury Tales (for a literature class) and a "medieval diary assignment" for history

class. However, based on the connection she makes to *The Canterbury Tales*, Kelly takes

a "psychological approach" in her diary assignment, rather than the approach her history

professor is looking for—one that presents copious "physical, material details" to

demonstrate an understanding of the era (47). As a result, although Kelly sees

connections, she does not effectively sell those connections to her professor—the type of

connection Kelly makes contradicts what her professor is looking for.

  In borrowing from Nowacek's framework for my dissertation, I adopt the division

of "seeing" and "selling" connections with slight modifications. I define "seeing

connections" in the same way as Nowacek: how students perceive connections between

various other contexts and writing situations (38). To suit my study's approach, then, I

slightly modify Nowacek's definition of "selling connections." In Nowacek's study, the

ways students "sell connections" means the ways they *make explicit* the specific

connections they see to fit the epistemological framework underlying the discipline

where they are writing. In contrast, because my study moves beyond the academic, I do

not focus on how students write in ways that meet the expectations of various disciplinary

epistemologies. Rather, my version of "selling connections" examines how students vary

their tones, registers, and arrangement strategies, among other rhetorical tactics, to suit

various rhetorical situations both in *and beyond* the academy. In addition, Nowacek

traces the connections students draw to the particular documents where they attempt to

"sell" those connections. In my study, I do not trace the specific connections students forge to their instantiations in a text. Rather, I explore the sources that students draw from to craft an appropriate voice or persona for a given rhetorical situation. That is, I investigate the array of general techniques students use to "sell" their compositions by developing a credible *ethos*. Thus my version of "selling" connections, though following in the spirit of Nowacek's initial framework, differs from her approach slightly.

My study contributes to and expands upon Nowacek's work by identifying particular strategies that students employ to "see" connections and "sell" their work to readers. Nowacek's study provides examples of students' ability to "see" and "sell" connections along two spectra: unconscious to meta-aware seeing, and unsuccessful to successful selling (40) (for more information, see Chapter 2 and specifically Figure 2.1 on page 53). My study extends Nowacek's work by revealing specific strategies and tactics used by students who are already for the most part meta-aware of their seeing and successful in their selling. By examining precisely in what ways experienced college students "see" connections among their writing, I am able to construct a taxonomy of relational reasoning strategies that students use to connect their writing experiences (Chapter 4, see below for more detail). In addition, based on students' explanations of the roles they played and voices they approximated in their various texts, I developed a taxonomy of sources and strategies that students draw from to transfer *ethos*, or the persona appropriate to the given writing situation. I gathered data on how students transfer *ethos* by studying how my cohort of participants successfully "sells" their writing (Chapter 5, see below for more detail). Though I base my study on Nowacek's framework, then, I expand upon it to discover and present specific patterns among the

ways that experienced college writers practice "seeing connections" and draw on previous experiences to effectively "sell" those connections. In other words, my study builds on Nowacek's work by seeking patterns among exactly *how* students draw connections between their writing experiences and the particular *ways* they manage to effectively present (or sell) their connections to readers in the form of successful compositions.

The Role of the Extracurriculum

In addition to reorienting my approach to transfer to focus on the connections students make and the strategies they use to present themselves as credible, I crafted my study to make central the non-academic writing that students compose. As I demonstrate in Chapters 2 and 3, much scholarship on writing transfer defines transfer as students' ability to re-use or repurpose their prior learning from one college class—usually the required first-year writing course—for other academic writing assignments, such as writing in the major. Others look beyond the academic realm and attempt to determine whether college students redeploy their school learning to fulfill their subsequent professional or workplace writing tasks. Many of these studies assume the sources of students' writing abilities to be academic. That is, studies of writing transfer often implicitly assume that school is the central, if not sole, source of students' relevant writing knowledge. As I mention above, many of these studies conclude by suggesting that students do not engage in much transfer between their academic writing tasks during their college years.

As I detail in Chapter 2, there is also work in composition and literacy studies that takes a different view of the centrality of academic writing. Some research on transfer, and much scholarship unrelated to transfer, underscores the importance of students' non-academic writing. Scholarship by Anne Ruggles Gere, Kevin Roozen, Michelle Navarre Cleary, and Paul Prior and Jody Shipka, among others, suggests that a good deal of students' learning about writing and ideas for writing come from their non-academic and extracurricular experiences.[2] Gere, for instance, argues that scholars of composition ought to "acknowledge the extracurriculum as a legitimate and autonomous cultural formation that undertakes its own projects" (43). Deborah Brandt's "Sponsors of Literacy" demonstrates how important non-academic factors are to the literacy development of two individuals, Dora and Raymond. Indeed, Jonathan Alexander and Susan Jarratt express surprise in their study of student activists to find "how little of [their] education the students attributed to learning acquired or even encountered in the classroom" (540). As a result, the authors argue for giving non-academic writing a central role in future research: "future studies of rhetorical education should encompass the curricular and the cocurricular, the formally sponsored and the self-sponsored, as mutually informing resources" (542).

This scholarship, as well as my own experience working with low-income high school students who wrote far more outside of school than in it, influenced the way I designed my study. I felt it imperative that I look beyond students' academic writing experiences to consider the ways students might learn from the writing they compose for other purposes. As members of what Kathleen Blake Yancey calls "the writing public"

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[2] See also Deborah Brandt, Glynda Hull and K. Schultz, Beverly Moss, Michael C. Pennell, and Brian Street.

(298), our students compose various texts—including emails, grant proposals, websites, and speeches—beyond their curricular commitments. To make central students' extracurricular writing, then, I asked students about these texts, and their other extracurricular involvement and learning, throughout my study. My approach enabled me to explore whether students' experiences of transfer might extend across contexts to include their personal, academic, *and* extracurricular writing. The research team behind the Stanford Study of Writing, which collected samples of students' academic and non-academic writing over the course of their five-year study, reports being overwhelmed by the quantity and quality of students' extracurricular compositions ("Performing Writing" 29). I too found myself pleasantly surprised by the range and amount of students' extracurricular writing experiences. Those copious experiences contribute significantly to the conclusions I draw about transfer from my research project.

Studying Transfer Across Contexts

The goal of my study is to explore whether, when, and how students transfer their writing skills and abilities across different curricular and extracurricular contexts, assignments, and writing projects. Beginning with the premise that students learn to write in a variety of situations, not just in academic settings, my study determines what students write in their personal, extracurricular, and academic lives and how the writings they do in each of these three domains mutually inform each other. Although mine is a study of transfer, it is important to note that my central research questions (below) do not rely on the word transfer itself. Rather, like Doug Brent ("Crossing Boundaries"), I did not ask students about transfer directly, but instead asked around it so I could learn about

the ways they actively construct relationships between their writing experiences. My goal

in avoiding this term was to learn about the component parts of transfer, such as the ways

of thinking or approaches that are associated with transfer or prepare students to transfer.

By not asking about transfer directly, I hoped to gain insight into the relationships

students might draw between writing experiences—something they might not otherwise

mention because they do not associate such connections with "transfer." As I explain

above, I sought to learn how students "see" connections between their writing

experiences and also how they reconstruct their knowledge, and their writing, as a result

of seeing those connections. To do that, my study is based on the following two central

research questions:

> (1) If at all, in what ways do students relate their texts and writing
>
> experiences (from across contexts) to one another?
>
> (2) Drawing on any resources or prior experiences, how do students figure
>
> out how to craft their texts so they will succeed with a given audience?

To address these questions, I conducted a multi-part qualitative study that gathered data

on students' experiences of transfer from their own perspectives. I collected data from

four sources: a survey (*n*=319), focus groups (4), student writing submissions (84), and

document-based interviews (10). I began with the survey to get a sense of the genres

students compose and ways they relate those genres. I then increasingly narrowed my

scope through focus groups and interviews to gain greater detail about students'

experiences of transfer from a smaller number of participants.

In the survey, students selected from a list of fifty genres[3] that they might

compose in three different domains of their lives (academic, extracurricular, personal).[4]

After I gathered my survey data and conducted preliminary analysis of it, I recruited

participants to continue on in the study by taking part in focus groups, submitting writing

samples, or participating in an interview. The goal of my focus group discussions was to

see how students related their writing experiences from academic and non-academic

contexts. I also sought to learn how students figured out how to write in new contexts and

how (if at all) they saw their various writing experiences as "influencing" one another.

The aim of the writing sample collection was to gather data I could use to triangulate

students' self reports and to provide prompts for the interview discussions. I wanted to

see whether students' claims were based on actual texts or if their written documents

presented a different story than their oral accounts. Finally, the goal of the document-

based interviews was to gain insight into writers' understandings and evaluations of their

own work in closer detail.

At each stage in the data collection process, I designed my research questions and

procedures to be open enough for students to relate their writing projects or explain their

experiences of transfer on their own terms. As I mention above, I did not ask students

about transfer directly but rather asked *around* transfer by inquiring into its component

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[3] Some "genres" in the survey, such as email and presentations, are too various to be classified as a "genre," per se. We might understand email as a tool that can be used to communicate via many genres, particularly when attachments are involved. Presentations similarly are perhaps more of a medium of delivery than a "genre"; there are many different genres of presentation. The genres or categories I used in my survey are those that occurred most frequently among lists generated by my pilot group of students, and I tried to retain the students' language as much as possible.
[4] I distinguish between three distinct domains for the survey and subsequent stages of data collection: the academic, the personal, and the extracurricular. The academic involves anything for class or school, at the university level; the personal involves interpersonal communication, creative writing, and self-sponsored projects; and the extracurricular involves anything composed for an out-of-school organization, service activity, job, internship, or similar activity.

parts. I gave students the opportunity to select and describe their own texts, and I prompted them to try to relate their writing experiences in any way that made sense to them. The survey included multiple open-ended questions and relied on student-invented categories and terminology (for more information, see Chapter 3). I oriented the focus group and interview conversations around students' actual writing experiences and allowed students to choose which writing experiences they wanted to discuss. After the focus group conversations and before the interviews, participants also submitted actual writing samples via an online form. That form enabled students to select samples with minimal parameters and to describe their submissions in their own words. I designed my research process in this way to ensure that all of the data I collected about transfer was grounded in specific student texts and writing experiences, and to maximize students' freedom to explain their own experiences as they understood them.

Unlike many other studies of transfer within composition, my study reveals encouraging findings: students made frequent, idiosyncratic, and insightful connections between their various writing experiences, both within and across domains. Some students reported transferring their learning in a forward-moving way, such as from an internship early in college to professional correspondence and admissions materials composed some years later. Other students reported repurposing writing strategies or tactics from one context to serve them in another situation within the same timeframe, such as reworking graphic design strategies from a class to create a poster for a club during the same semester. Chapters 4 and 5 articulate and explore the major findings of this project. Chapter 4, "Forging Connections," presents five specific ways I found that students relate (or see connections between) their various writing experiences and offers a

taxonomy of strategies that students use to reason relationally among those experiences. Chapter 5, "*Ethos*, Transfer, and Extracurricular Writing," puts forward three primary sources that students draw on and reconstruct to present a credible *ethos*. In Chapter 5, I investigate these sources to show how students transfer *ethos* to new writing situations, or "sell" their compositions to various audiences.

Interventions and Scholarly Significance

My study of transfer makes four primary interventions into the existing research. First, and most importantly, my study takes the unique angle of approaching transfer through the lens of relational reasoning. Before students can transfer their writing knowledge between contexts, they need to be able to see possible connections or relationships between their writing experiences. In Chapter 2, I discuss at length multiple studies that show how college students see their writing experiences as fundamentally disconnected. If students see their writing experiences as fundamentally disconnected, they are not likely to draw on or transfer from potentially relevant texts or assignments.

In contrast, my study repeatedly revealed ways that students do relate their writing, sometimes in unexpected ways. Margaret's[5] case, for instance, offers an example of how students in my study identified relevant connections between texts they composed that otherwise seemed to be quite distant from one another. Margaret participated in a focus group discussion and was asked, along with other participants, how (if at all) she might relate two texts she recently composed (texts she selected): a parking ticket appeal she wrote for the Department of Transportation Services on campus and a self-evaluation she wrote based on her semester-long internship with Johnson & Johnson. After some

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[5] All names used are pseudonyms. Participants chose their own pseudonyms.

thought, Margaret identifies two connections between these texts. Here is an excerpt of Margaret's explanation (for the full excerpt, see note 34 in Chapter 4):

> Both experiences were very much summarizing an event, summarizing a situation, but one was more me having the voice of like "I'm proud of this, look at all these awesome things that happened" and trying to sell them, whereas the other one was trying to persuade someone to not make me pay a ticket. So similar goals but because of who it was for and how I felt about it, my writing was very different.

Margaret might surprise us by connecting two rather unlikely texts here: one non-academic and overtly persuasive (the parking ticket appeal) and one co-curricular and evaluative (the evaluation for her school-sponsored internship). One unexpected connection Margaret sees between the two is the need to summarize in both situations; the other is the need to persuade. Margaret also relates her experiences by pointing out a difference between them: "because of who it was for and how I felt about it," her voice and register were different. We see that Margaret identifies relevant similarities and differences between these two very different texts. Margaret's approach suggests that she might borrow from her experiences with one writing task to help with the other, or she might recognize the relevance of one or both of these patterns for a future writing task that she has not yet encountered. In other words, by first seeing connections between her writing tasks, Margaret sets herself up to be able to transfer, or to approach any writing experiences with a "transfer mindset."

My study devotes significant attention to this early step of transfer—this first crucial move that students must make before they might redeploy a specific strategy or

skill. I explore this concept, which I call relational reasoning, in depth in Chapter 4. By investigating relational reasoning in detail, I offer the field a fuller understanding of how students prepare themselves to be writers who might transfer in any writing situation by first relating their experiences from inside and outside of class. Instead of trying to see whether students remember or re-use what they learned in a specific class, as most existing studies of transfer do, my study inquires into ways that students draw potentially fruitful connections between *any* of their writing experiences, similar or different.

In this way, and as I describe above, I also intervene at the level of research method. By asking students to talk *around* transfer, and asking students to relate their writing experiences, I take a fundamentally different approach than studies looking for students to narrate their stories of transfer from one experience to another. In their conclusion to "Pedagogical Memory," Jarratt, Mack, Sartor, and Watson extol the potential virtues of shifting the focus in studies of transfer "from top-down curricular planning to the individual student's sense-making" (66). This is exactly the approach my study takes. Rather than gauge whether transfer as we teach it is working, I gauge how students, as individual sense-makers, interpret, relate, and map their various writing experiences so that they might prepare themselves to see future moments of relevance or identify useful subcomponents from any of their writing endeavors.

By introducing the concept of relational reasoning into writing-related transfer research, and by offering a unique research method, my study alters the way composition scholars might understand the idea of transfer itself. If we understand transfer as a student's ability to reuse a specific skill or concept taught in a class for a future writing situation, then we limit our view of transfer to what we teach within the college writing

curriculum. If we view transfer, instead, as a matter of relational reasoning and drawing connections, then we understand transfer as a *mindset* with which students might approach all of their writing experiences. My study analyzes the concept of transfer by looking closely at this first step: the ways students seek out relevant connections from among and reason relationally between their full range of writing experiences. In so doing, I redefine transfer as a *mindset* in which a student is pre-oriented toward identifying relevant relationships from across her individual mental map of writing, and the corresponding ability to re-see or re-consider any given writing task or assignment as a result. One significant contribution that my study makes to research and pedagogy, then, is this new framework for understanding transfer.[6]

In addition, my study takes the unique approach of exploring how students might transfer their *ethos*, or performed character, into new writing situations (Chapter 5). Multiple studies inquire into the ways that students transfer knowledge about writing (e.g., Beaufort; Nelms and Dively; Wardle, "Understanding 'Transfer'"). Other studies investigate ways that students' dispositions or attitudes might affect their propensity for transfer (e.g., Driscoll and Wells; Sommers and Saltz; Wardle, "Creative Repurposing"). These studies, however, focus on how students' dispositions either facilitate or impede their likelihood to transfer knowledge successfully—and assume that their dispositions

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[6] My idea of a "transfer mindset," while unique to my study, echoes related concepts in the field of rhetoric and composition. The Council of Writing Program Administrators Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing identifies eight "habits of mind" that foster success in college writers. The Framework for Success document defines "habits of mind" as "ways of approaching learning that are both intellectual and practical"; the list includes curiosity, openness, engagement, creativity, persistence, responsibility, flexibility, and metacognition. In addition, the ancient Greek progymnasmata exercises are designed to help students cultivate a "mindset" that promotes strong rhetorical competence. The progymnasmata aims to "oil" the minds of young students, molding their tendencies and inclinations as rhetors (Kennedy 94). As James J. Murphy writes, "the progymnasmata are taught not for themselves but for habit-building in the mind of the student" (56).

are, for the moment at least, fixed. My study, on the other hand, assumes students want to project a credible character in their writing and asks how they might learn to develop that character in new writing scenarios. My approach emphasizes the fact that students play many roles in various discourse communities and must frequently adjust the persona they present to suit the situation. Rather than consider how certain frames of mind influence a student's ability to transfer, then, I delve into the tactics students draw on to come across as credible in a given text.

Finally, my study expands the possible sites of writing where students might develop and deploy their writing knowledge. Rather than focusing only on academic writing, or on the trajectory of academic to professional writing, my study examines ways that students' academic, personal, extracurricular, and professional writing experiences might interanimate or mutually inform one another. In this way, my study takes advantage of the full range of students' literate experiences, and considers ways that the writing students compose outside the classroom may not only be the beneficiary of what they are learning and doing in school, but also the benefactor. This focus on students' academic and non-academic writing expands the possible sources of transfer that researchers and teachers might consider when working with college writers.

In addition to offering vital new approaches to scholarship on transfer, my study contributes to scholarly conversations about writing assessment and writing programs that aim to help students cross boundaries (e.g., from academic to professional writing or from secondary to post-secondary writing environments). In addition to offering theoretical and pedagogical implications of my study, Chapter 6 responds to these two conversational threads. First, I discuss the ways that my study offers implications for how

writing teachers and administrators might gauge students' learning about writing over the

college years. Although mine is not a study of assessment, my findings support and

advance Elizabeth Wardle and Kevin Roozen's endorsement of a "polycontextual"

approach to writing assessment, or an approach that takes into account the many contexts

where students write ("Addressing the Complexity"). In Chapter 6, I argue that any

assessment of student writing growth ought to include a significant portion of students'

own insights and interpretations alongside their written products.

Second, my study speaks to debates about how universities might design writing

programs that facilitate students' transitions across contexts, such as from academic to

professional writing or from secondary to university writing environments.[7] The purpose

of many WAC, WID, FYW and professional writing programs is to teach transferrable

writing abilities. My study suggests that these initiatives can do so by helping students

develop mental (or even actual) maps of their many writing experiences. In this way, my

study foregrounds and further develops the map-making metaphor for transfer.[8] This

model, which I describe in Chapter 2, suggests that students can cultivate what I am

calling a "transfer mindset" by mapping their writing experiences in relation to one

another. Based on my findings, I suggest ways that writing programs might foster transfer

by offering space and opportunity for students to cultivate such a "transfer mindset"

through relational reasoning. I discuss these ideas more fully in Chapter 6.

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[7] My personal experiences as a high school teacher and college "transition program" instructor called to my attention the fact that the shift between high school and college can be extreme for many students.

[8] See Jarratt, Mack, Sartor, and Watson 62, 66; Nowacek; Roozen, "Journalism, Poetry" and "Tracing Trajectories"; Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 124-25, 129.

Chapter Overview

This dissertation presents my qualitative study of students' writing transfer across contexts. In Chapter 2, "Interrelated Writing," I review the literature on transfer and students' non-academic writing. I introduce various theories of transfer from education and composition studies in order to demonstrate the importance of approaching transfer from a student-centered and context-oriented perspective. I then focus in on research that examines how students do (or do not) map their writing experiences in relation to one another and do (or do not) forge connections between their many compositions. To demonstrate the importance of making central students' non-academic writing experiences in our transfer research, I review the literature within composition studies on the "extracurriculum" and students' many out-of-school writing pursuits. I close by outlining the ways that previous scholarship has (1) examined students' approaches to relating their writing experiences across contexts and (2) explored the notions of character, performance, and credibility in students' professional and academic writing.

Chapter 3, "Researching Transfer Across Contexts," explains my research design and methodological grounding. I introduce the importance of trying to understand transfer from students' own perspectives and show how my research design works to support that guiding principle. I also show how my unique research methods, which ask *around* transfer rather than directly *about* it, helped me gather data primarily on how students relate or connect their writing experiences. I present my central research questions, describe my research site and participants, and provide the details of and rationale for my data collection methods. I offer details on the four elements of my data collection process: a survey, focus groups, writing sample collection, and interviews.

Chapter 3 also briefly introduces the focal participants of the study; I present the majors, selected extracurricular activities, and future goals of the ten participants who proceeded through all four stages of my research project. I close by explaining my data analysis processes and the ways I fused qualitative research analysis methods with traditions of data analysis in composition studies.

Chapters 4 and 5 present and analyze the findings of my research study. In Chapter 4, "Forging Connections," I address my first research question: if at all, in what ways do students relate their texts and writing experiences (from across contexts) to one another? In response, I claim that students draw productive connections in five distinct ways. I begin the chapter by using my survey data to expose the genres of writing that students report composing most frequently in different domains of their lives and the extent to which students see their writing experiences from personal, extracurricular, and academic contexts as "influencing" one another. I then distinguish between the "vertical" or forward-moving stories of transfer that students sometimes tell and students' accounts of relational reasoning. I devote the bulk of Chapter 4 to defining, exploring, and offering examples of the five types of relational reasoning that my study participants exercise as they "see connections" and relate the texts they produce. These include "not talk," or comparative and contrastive reasoning; metageneric reasoning; antithetical reasoning; a fortiori reasoning; and analogical reasoning.

In Chapter 5, "*Ethos*, Transfer, and Extracurricular Writing," I address my second research question: drawing on any resources or prior experiences, how do students figure out how to craft their texts so they will succeed with a given audience? Based on students' responses to this question, I focused my attention on ways that students report

transferring *ethos*, or performed credibility, to help them project a credible character in new writing situations. While Chapter 4 focuses on the ways that students "see connections" between their writing experiences, Chapter 5 calls attention to the ways that students construct their writerly *ethos* in order to "sell" their compositions to their readers. I provide a review of literature on *ethos* in order to present the concept as simultaneously context-dependent, on the one hand, and as learnable or transferrable, on the other. I then report and offer examples of the three primary ways that students in my study transferred their *ethos*: by drawing on lived personal experiences, by channeling the credibility of a real or specific person, or by imitating a more distant persona or situation. These sources of *ethos* range from what seem to be most accessible to what seem to be more unlikely or unexpected. Throughout the chapter, I point to the importance of students' extracurricular writing and non-academic experiences as sources of potential *ethos* transfer. I also show that sources of *ethos* often go through many transformations before students apply them to their writing tasks. Finally, I close by exploring how writing in online environments may function as a sort of "*ethos* calisthenics" by helping students develop audience awareness in several ways.

My conclusion, Chapter 6, discusses the implications of this dissertation, which emerge from my findings and analyses in Chapters 4 and 5. I open Chapter 6 with the interventions my dissertation makes into existing research and the contributions this project makes to the field of composition studies. Based on my research findings, I offer implications for pedagogy, including classroom activities. Several of my pedagogical propositions address the importance of helping students see the potential relevance of their non-academic writing to all of their writing projects and undertakings. I also explore

ways that teachers might adapt elements of my research process and methods for classroom use. Beyond the classroom, this chapter addresses the implications my dissertation has for writing assessment and writing programs attempting to facilitate students' transitions between sites of writing. In addition, I use this chapter to raise questions and concerns associated with transfer research. To demonstrate some complications of studying transfer, I explore the case of a student who seems to make the metacognitive moves associated with successful transfer but whose work does not bear out his seeming awareness. Based on this example, I raise questions about the concept of transfer, what it means to research transfer, and how composition scholars might investigate transfer going forward. I close by identifying areas for future research.

Chapter 2:

Interrelated Writing: A Review of Literature on Writing Transfer

> Understanding literate development is less about carving up the literate landscape persons inhabit into bounded and autonomous experiences with literacy . . . than paying attention to how persons repurpose literate practices across those territories; less about configuring persons only as journalers, students, or employees than attending to how multiple literate identities continually shape and reshape one another.
> —Kevin Roozen, "From Journals to Journalism" (567-68)

> Every time I write, I grow as a writer. No matter what you are writing for, you become a more accomplished, better rounded writer. There is no possible way for your writing, in all areas of your life, not to be influenced by your other works. It is impossible for your writing, and your writing skills, to not be influenced by what you write. They cannot be separated.
> —Survey Respondent

In this chapter, I critically examine the literature on transfer in order to lay the groundwork for my study and approach. I first present the mostly disheartening findings from research in education and composition studies on students' unlikelihood to transfer successfully. I then review one research intervention that might yield more positive outcomes (and that I take up in my study): looking at transfer from a student's perspective. Drawing on studies that seek students' perspectives of their writing in various contexts, I examine the literature on the ways students forge connections, or the ways that students do (or do not) integrate their new writing knowledge into a mental map that encompasses and relates an array of their writing experiences. I profile research on students' ability (or inability) to make use of relevant connections when moving between academic writing contexts, transitioning from academic to professional writing contexts, and drawing on their prior knowledge for academic contexts. I then consider

how scholars expand the concept of transfer by demonstrating the importance of students'

non-academic writing to the question of how they might repurpose their knowledge

across domains. Here, I profile multiple studies that establish the centrality of students'

extracurricular composing practices to their development as writers. To clarify the

definition of transfer I posit in this dissertation, and to lay the framework for Chapter 4, I

then review the literature in education and composition studies on relational reasoning, or

the ways that students craft (or fail to locate) meaningful relationships between their

writing experiences. Finally, to establish the basis for Chapter 5, I examine the literature

on how students "sell" their compositions, or how they transfer *ethos* to project the

appropriate character in various writing tasks. Throughout this chapter, I point to ways

that students' writing and learning across contexts may be more interrelated than some

previous research suggests and build the case for the interventions my study makes to

broaden our understanding of transfer to include the mindset or strategies that students

develop as they move between different writing situations.

Transfer: A Rare Occurrence?

Research on transfer in composition studies has exploded in recent years.[9] One

cause for the increased attention to transfer in composition studies is the concern that

students are not making use of their early college writing instruction, particularly from

their first-year writing classes, later in their college or post-college careers. In *The End of*

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[9] In addition to the *Composition Forum* special issue on transfer in 2012 and the Elon University research seminar on transfer ("Critical Transitions: Writing and the Question of Transfer") in 2011-13, there have been dozens of articles published on writing-related transfer in *WPA*, *Written Communication*, *CCC*, and *Across the Disciplines* over the last ten years. Nowacek's 2011 *Agents of Integration* and Yancey, Roberston, and Taczak's 2014 *Writing Across Contexts* offer high-profile book-length studies of transfer as well.

Composition Studies, David Smit calls attention to the fact that composition classes may be based on a flawed assumption: that students automatically re-use their learning.[10] One of the first calls to action based on this concern came from Elizabeth Wardle in 2007. In "Understanding 'Transfer' from FYC," Wardle states that "we have no evidence that FYC facilitates . . . transfer" and notes the "dearth of systematic *research attention* paid to transfer from first-year writing courses" (65). Indeed, many teachers and writing program administrators believed students might transfer their learning without testing that belief.

Meanwhile, research on transfer in education suggests that transfer, in learning situations writ large, is rare and difficult to facilitate. In *Transfer of Learning*, educational psychologist Robert Haskell argues, "Despite the importance of transfer of learning, research findings over the past nine decades clearly show that as individuals, and as educational institutions, we have failed to achieve transfer of learning on any significant level" (xiii). He goes on to claim that "most researchers and educational practitioners . . . agree" that transfer is "a rare event, indeed" (3). Education scholar King Beach explains that though we assume people must transfer knowledge all the time in day-to-day life, in research studies, transfer is difficult to identify and "appears even more difficult to intentionally facilitate" (40). Though not focused on writing, work on transfer in education suggests writing scholars have a reason to be skeptical of the automaticity of transfer in any learning environment, including writing classes.

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[10] Education researchers David Perkins and Gabriel Salomon call the tacit belief that transfer will "just happen" the "Bo Peep" theory of transfer. This theory "assumes that knowledge and skill a person has learned anywhere will 'come home' to wherever it is needed" ("Science and Art" 4).

Much of the research that has ensued in composition studies reports similarly disheartening findings. Studies focused on first-year writing are especially grim. For instance, in *College Writing and Beyond*, Anne Beaufort follows Tim, a history and engineering double major, through his first-year writing class, subsequent discipline-specific writing assignments, and workplace writing experiences. Beaufort finds that, despite Tim's own talents, his first-year writing teacher's enthusiasm and good intentions, and his legitimate curiosity and motivation, he gained very little by way of transferable writing skills over the course of his college career. In "Disciplinarity and Transfer," Linda Bergmann and Janet Zepernick also report that students struggle to transfer knowledge between their writing experiences. Bergmann and Zepernick argue that their study participants do not see a link between what they learn in high school English or first-year composition and their other college writing tasks. The authors also note that their participants seem entirely unable to connect their "street smarts" about writing with their FYC classes: "students in our study failed to take from their writing classes even a novice version of the skills most likely to be transferable to other writing situations" (134). Gerald Nelms and Ronda Leathers Dively likewise report in "Perceived Roadblocks to Transferring Knowledge from First-Year Composition to Writing-Intensive Major Courses" that students view school-sponsored writing tasks as discrete, do not seem to connect ideas between classes, and compartmentalize (and therefore do not transfer) their writing knowledge.

Studies that focus on other transitions—to professional and community writing, and between high school and college—also point out various limitations of and inhibitors to transfer. For instance, Patrick Dias, Aviva Freedman, Peter Medway, and Anthony

Paré argue in *Worlds Apart* that the competing functions of school versus workplace writing—the epistemic and ranking functions, for school, versus the instrumental function for the workplace—make the activities of writing in the two spaces so different that the gap is incredibly difficult for students to bridge. Similarly, in her study of community writing, Nora Bacon finds that students who directly apply school knowledge to their community writing tasks tend to fail miserably—though those who also transfer rhetorical awareness, interpersonal skills, and social abilities fare better ("The Trouble with Transfer"). Her study shows just how difficult it can be for students to repurpose their writing knowledge when moving from school to civic writing activities. In their study of students' movement from high school to college writing, Angela Rounsaville, Rachel Goldberg, and Anis Bawarshi claim that students struggle to effectively call on their existing knowledge. They report, "despite possessing a wide genre base, and despite having experience writing in multiple domains, students utilized only a fraction of these discursive resources when encountering new academic writing situations" (108). In other words, students might possess the raw material to transfer or draw on, but they do not access that material or engage it in order to repurpose their learning. My study intervenes in these conversations about the unlikelihood of transfer. As this dissertation shows, students do connect and transfer their writing knowledge—but researchers need to approach the question of transfer somewhat differently to see the ways that students forge connections.

Looking at Transfer from Students' Perspectives

The studies above suggest that transfer is elusive, that it occurs rarely. The puzzle I investigate in this section, and that helped guide the way I approached my own study, is how different ways of looking at and for transfer determine the types of transfer that we see. In other words, researchers' methods of finding transfer in part determine what we notice and "count" as transfer. As I discuss above, some of the ways that researchers have defined and sought out examples of transfer have led to rather grim findings. In other cases, scholars in education and composition studies have explored transfer from alternate theoretical frameworks. Some of these alternate ways of viewing the concept paint a more robust, and at times more hopeful, picture of students' literate dexterity and ability to reuse their writing knowledge.

Researchers in education typically attribute the origins of the concept of transfer, and the corresponding belief that transfer occurs rarely, to Edward Thorndike's 1906 identical elements theory. Thorndike's theory posits that the extent to which a person might transfer knowledge from a familiar situation to an unfamiliar one depends on how similar the two situations are (Lobato, "Alternative Perspectives" 433). There are many critiques of this approach to transfer, including the fact that it privileges the perspective of the researcher (rather than learner) and what he decides "counts" as transfer (Lobato, "Alternative Perspectives" 434). Another critique of the classical approach to transfer is that knowledge is not (as the theory implies) a static entity; knowledge cannot simply be taken from one context and "applied" without changes to another situation. As Joanne Lobato writes in "Alternative Perspectives on the Transfer of Learning," "the 'applying knowledge' metaphor of transfer suggests that knowledge is theoretically separable from

the situations in which it is developed or used, rather than a function of activity, social interactions, culture, history, and context" (434). Thorndike's classical "applying knowledge" concept of transfer suggests that learners should simply be able to "move" knowledge from one situation to another, or merely re-apply something they learned about writing in one assignment for the next. Based on the classical model, if a researcher is not able to trace the unequivocal movement of knowledge from one site to the next, then he has no proof that transfer occurred.

Much research in education and composition studies pushes back on classically inspired approaches, suggesting that the research methods that scholars use may influence the transfer we observe. In *Agents of Integration*, Rebecca Nowacek questions the ways researchers have examined transfer to date. She claims that it can be hard to see and take note of instances of transfer because they may fly beneath our typical assessment radar. She asks, "what if current theories of transfer inhibit the ability to recognize instances of transfer and obscure the institutional obstacles to making transfer visible?" (11). By focusing on the movement of knowledge and the conditions that facilitate that movement, rather than the thinking and mental work done by the learner, scholars who follow Thorndike's classical approach may not be able to recognize the transfer that students do experience. Other theories or approaches may not observe transfer at play because they look for evidence of what education researchers John D. Bransford and Daniel L. Schwartz call "full-blown expertise," or fully articulated and realized learning. Looking for "full-blown expertise" may prevent researchers from noticing students' "smaller changes" in learning or perception (Bransford and Schwartz 66). The authors explain this concern in "Rethinking Transfer":

> [E]vidence of transfer is often difficult to find because we tend to think
>
> about it from a perspective that blinds us to its presence. Prevailing
>
> theories and methods of measuring transfer work well for studying full-
>
> blown expertise, but they represent too blunt an instrument for studying
>
> the smaller changes in learning that lead to the development of expertise.
>
> (Bransford and Schwartz 66)

The studies I cite above may have been looking for direct application of large concepts rather than seeking "smaller changes in learning" that may also constitute transfer. The smaller changes, or what Rounsaville calls "micro" instances of transfer ("Selecting Genres"), merit more attention—and may yield different ways of noticing transfer at play.

Researchers might also be unlikely to see these "smaller changes" because they may appear in unexpected or unrecognizable guises. In "Understanding 'Transfer,'" Elizabeth Wardle writes,

> I suggest that focusing on a limited search for "skills" is the reason we do
>
> not recognize more evidence of "transfer"; we are looking for apples when
>
> those apples are now part of an apple pie. (69)

When students "transfer" their knowledge between contexts, that knowledge does not stay the same—the individual student *transforms* it to suit the new exigency grounded in the demands of the particular situation (Brent, "Transfer, Transformation"). However, when students transform their knowledge ("apples") for a new situation in this way, the "apples" may be unrecognizable to the researcher—the student has turned them into apple pie or applesauce muffins. In other words, students may repurpose their writing

knowledge all the time, but if researchers cannot see students' "micro" re-uses or transformation from the students' perspectives, we do not even realize it.

Scholars have responded to concerns such as Wardle's by adopting methods in which they examine transfer from a student perspective. These research models that value students' own perspectives guide my own study's approach as well. For instance, Lobato's "actor-oriented" theory of transfer prioritizes learners' perceptions of their own experiences. Lobato distinguishes her "actor-oriented" approach from the classical or "application of knowledge" approach to transfer:

> [T]ransfer from the classical approach is the application from one setting to another of a predetermined set of knowledge from the researcher's or expert's point of view; transfer from the actor-oriented perspective is the influence of learners' prior activities on their activity in novel situations, which entails any of the ways in which learning generalizes. ("Alternative Perspectives" 437)

Lobato developed her actor-oriented theory of transfer after encountering a confusing discrepancy between students' scores on a test and their ability to transfer.[11] When she changed her approach to looking for transfer to look from an actor-oriented perspective, she found significant evidence that students did indeed transfer knowledge and learning ("How Design Experiments" 18). Her revised definition of transfer is "the personal creation of relations of similarity, or how the 'actors' see situations as similar" ("How Design Experiments" 18). This definition differs from the traditional "application of

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[11] It is worth noting that research methods in education, such as Lobato's, differ substantially from research methods in composition studies. Even so, the two fields' findings about and theoretical approaches to transfer are still relevant to one another.

knowledge" definition of transfer because it prioritizes ways the *student* makes meaning and draws connections.

Lobato's actor-oriented theory thus proposes that transfer is a matter of active interpretation: the learner reconstructs her knowledge in each new situation. In that way, transfer is "a constructive process in which the regularities abstracted by the learner are not inherent in the situation, but rather are a result of personal structuring related to the learner's goals and prior knowledge" ("Alternative Perspectives" 441). In other words, Lobato's actor-oriented approach emphasizes the learner's role in the transfer process and calls attention to the ways that the learner makes meaning for herself, given her own specific situation and prior experiences. Such an approach offers insight into transfer by showing that, if the researcher gives a student agency to describe knowledge connections and transformation in her own terms, transfer might be more common than previously thought.

Beach's theory of transfer similarly emphasizes that the locus of control for transfer resides in the individual actor. His theory, however, depicts transfer as dependent on a learner's movement across different contexts. Beach points out, like Lobato, that "knowledge" does not move across contexts; people do. He goes on to explain that we have to remember the entire human being moves, and in so doing, the person reconstructs his relation to the context. Beach calls this adjustment of the self in relation to a new context a "consequential transition" (42). He defines a "consequential transition" as a transition that compels the individual to struggle, reflect, or shift his sense of identity as he works to propagate knowledge (42). In other words, Beach's theory emphasizes the relational aspect of transfer: as the individual moves between activity systems, he

changes in fundamental ways, even as he reflects and works to generalize his knowledge to suit the new situation where he finds himself.

In composition studies, Nowacek's work especially emphasizes the importance of the student's agency in transfer situations. She identifies students as "*agents* of integration" (italics mine) and explores how they perform the hard work of making meaning and drawing connections that enable them to move their learning from one situation to the next. Nowacek emphasizes the importance of transfer research centering its focus wholly on "the student's experience of transfer"; doing this, she explains, requires viewing the "the individual as meaning maker at the center of conceptions of transfer and integration" (39). Her study focuses on the ways students construe situations as relevant to one another and recontextualize their learning along various spectra.

My project follows in the tradition, outlined in this section, of valuing students' active interpretations of their learning experiences (discussed in more detail in Chapter 3). In so doing, I follow the lead of many other composition scholars who also make students' own interpretations of their writing experiences a priority (e.g., Carroll; Freedman, Adam, and Smart; Roozen, "Comedy Stages," "From Journals to Journalism," and "Tracing Trajectories of Practice"; Wardle, "Understanding 'Transfer'"). For instance, Kevin Roozen urges writing researchers to pay close attention to the ways that *students* understand the relationships between their writing experiences. He argues that we ought to "follo[w] participants' mappings of relevant [writing] activities, regardless of how different they seem or how distant they are temporally" (347). My study does not attempt to discover the optimal curricular path that maximizes a student's ability to transfer. Rather, I focus on what Susan C. Jarratt, Katherine Mack, Alexandra Sartor, and

Shevaun E. Watson call "the individual student's sense-making" (66). This approach, one that seeks and values students' own perspectives of their writing experiences, undergirds my whole project. Following in the scholarly tradition espoused by Lobato, Nowacek, Roozen, and others, I designed my study to determine what we might learn by asking students about their own copious and various literate experiences.

(Not) Forging Connections: Mental Maps of Writing

If students' perspectives of their writing experiences are important, then so too are students' perceptions of the connections between their writing experiences. For if students do not see relevant relationships between their writing, they are unlikely to transfer between contexts. As I show below, scholarship in composition studies suggests that, while some students do forge connections between their various writing experiences, many move through their academic and non-academic writing lives without any awareness of the potential for "relations of similarity" (Lobato). Much research in writing transfer seeks to learn whether students do or do not forge connections between their writing in different contexts. Some scholars use the metaphor of a mental map, explicitly or implicitly, to explore the question of how students do (or do not) connect their writing experiences.

In *Writing Across Contexts*, Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak call attention to students' varying levels of ability to develop a "mental map" of their writing knowledge. The authors liken such a mental map to "a larger road map that allows one to see different locations, routes to those locations, and connections among those routes" (41). When students create such mental maps, the authors claim, it

facilitates their ability to develop flexibility for new writing situations. In their words, "with such a map, one has a fair amount of agency in deciding where to go and how, at least in terms of seeing possibilities and how they relate to one another—precisely because one can see relationships *across* locations" (41). The authors extend their metaphor to contrast such a valuable "road map" with a GPS device. Although a GPS device "can be enormously helpful in getting from A to B," the authors note, a driver who relies on a GPS device "doesn't have much sense of how the route is situated in relationship to other routes or places" (41). The authors express the limits that students face when trying to navigate their writing experiences without a guiding mental map:

> [W]ithout a large road map of writing, students are too often traveling from one writing task to another using a definition and map of writing that is the moral equivalent of a GPS device. It will help students move from one writing task to another, but it can't provide them with a sense of the whole, the relationships among the various genres and discourse communities that constitute writing in the university (and outside it), and the opportunity for an accompanying agency that a larger map contributes to. (41-42)

The authors claim that if a student lacks a detailed mental map of her writing experiences, she is less likely to make informed decisions about how to draw on her writing in other genres or contexts for new writing tasks.

Much research in composition studies unfortunately suggests that students for the most part do not forge such mental maps. Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak report in their synopsis of prior research that, generally speaking, "students don't create a mental map

of writing that helps them move from one context to another and understand the relationships between writing in different contexts" (28). One example of a student who does not see connections between his writing experiences in college is Lucille McCarthy's focal student, Dave. In "A Stranger in Strange Lands," McCarthy demonstrates how Dave sees each of his college writing experiences as entirely unrelated to one another. For instance, Dave is required to summarize elements of articles for his biology class writing assignments. However, Dave sees his writing for biology as "totally new"—and only with significant prodding from McCarthy and a friend does he acknowledge he had written summaries before in his first-year writing class (249). McCarthy claims that Dave does not notice any reason to map his writing experiences in relation to one another: "although the writing tasks in the three classes [Cell Biology, Freshman Composition, and Poetry] were in many ways similar, Dave interpreted them as being totally different from each other and totally different from anything he had ever done before" (243). Dave does not exhibit a "transfer mindset."

Like McCarthy's Dave, Beaufort's Tim and students in Lee Ann Carroll's study at Pepperdine also struggle to form a mental map of writing across their college experiences. Beaufort reports that Tim struggles to draw productively on his various college writing experiences because they seem so disconnected to him. She attributes this in part to the curriculum of his first-year writing course, which focused on literary and journalistic themes. Beaufort explains, "most of the class seemed to be aligned with a sort of '*New York Times* Book Review-esque'" discourse community (42). Tim is very successful in his first-year writing class. In his history classes, however, the teachers expect Tim to follow the conventions of the discourse community, and Tim struggles to

alter his expressive prose style, lauded in FYW, to write in a style more appropriate to history. In other words, he does not mindfully map the similarities and differences between writing for his composition class and his history class, and instead automatically transfers his FYW writing approaches to his history course. This, Beaufort explains, is an unproductive approach. Beaufort also reports that, despite the many history courses Tim takes, he composes his best history paper during his sophomore year. Tim's lack of growth between his sophomore and senior years suggests he does not transfer knowledge about writing in history to future courses. Similarly, Carroll's longitudinal study of twenty students at Pepperdine University shows that they see their writing tasks across disciplines as disconnected. Although students do develop as writers over the course of their college careers, she argues, their development is not linear, comprehensive, or intentionally structured. It comes in fits and starts and seemingly haphazardly.

Other studies also report that students do not form a "mental map" of their academic writing experiences during college—specifically because they feel they do not need to. The students in Bergmann and Zepernick's study perceive a disconnect between the writing they compose in FYW—which they think of as "flowery"—and the writing they compose in the disciplines (125). Unlike Tim, they seem to prefer the more discipline-specific writing tasks and see FYW as irrelevant. The authors explain:

> The attitudes expressed by our respondents suggest that the primary obstacle to such transfer is not that students are *unable* to recognize situations outside FYC in which those skills can be used, but that students *do not look* for such situations because they believe that skills learned in FYC have no value in any other setting. (139)

Students in Bergmann and Zepernick's study do not bother to seek connections between their FYW classes and later writing experiences because they perceive their FYW classes to be irrelevant. Students in Wardle's pilot study report a similar concern. Wardle claims her study participants are "able to engage in meta-discourse about university writing in general and their own writing in particular" ("Understanding 'Transfer'" 73). In other words, they do "see" some connections between their writing experiences. However, students do not generalize or repurpose their learning from FYW because, Wardle argues, they do not feel the *need* to re-use the strategies they learned in the course. Wardle suggests that low teacher expectations and easy assignments made it possible for students to get through much of college without perceiving a need to transfer at all (74, 76).

These studies show that students struggle to connect their writing experiences during their college years—that they do not move through their college years with a "transfer mindset." In the case of McCarthy's Dave and Beaufort's Tim, writing in college is quite the complicated maze indeed—one where disciplinary writing expectations seem to have almost nothing to do with one another, or with the first-year writing class that is, at least to some extent, supposed to help prepare the students for "college writing." In other cases, such as Bergmann and Zepernick's and Wardle's studies, students report not transferring knowledge because their classes and assignments do not demand it. In each of these examples, we see a lack of mental mapping; students are either unable or unmotivated to forge connections between their writing experiences—connections that might help them get a better sense of the whole of their writing knowledge, or of how one set of their writing experiences might inform or influence another. As a result of these studies, I considered it quite possible, when I

designed my own project, that my participants might similarly not see or forge

connections between their writing experiences.

Moving from Academic to Professional Writing

Although mine is not specifically a study of students' professional writing, the

research on students' transitions from academic to professional writing informs my

inquiry into how students might transfer or transform their writing knowledge as they

cross boundaries between different writing contexts. Most studies of students' movement

between academic and workplace writing contexts also point to students' difficulty

mapping the relationships and bridging the gap between the two. This is especially true in

the older studies of students' transitions from academic to professional writing situations.

More recent work, particularly Doug Brent's study of co-op students "relearning" to

write ("Crossing Boundaries" 562), finds reason to question the research that suggests

students encounter an unbridgeable gap between academic and workplace writing.

Much of the research on professional writing outside the college classroom

suggests that transfer between academic and professional writing is especially difficult

because the activity systems of "school" and "work" are so distant. In *Worlds Apart*,

Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Paré argue that the gap between academic writing and

workplace writing is so wide that it is very challenging for students to bridge, even with

excellent instructional support. Only at the very end of their book (the last page) do they

suggest that it might be possible for academic writing to better prepare students for

workplace writing. Aviva Freedman, Christine Adam, and Graham Smart reach the same

conclusion in "Wearing Suits to Class." The authors study whether a professional

simulation in an academic environment, specifically a financial analysis class, might accurately represent workplace writing experiences. Based on their observational and textual analysis, the authors argue that the only real way for students to learn about workplace writing is for them to actually immerse themselves in that workplace. The "suits" students wear to role-play do help to an extent: students try harder to act as if they are in a workplace setting. However, the university context still shapes the driving rhetorical and social goals of writing—urging epistemic goals, rather than the instrumental goals associated with the workplace—which fundamentally alters the way the instructor and students approach their writing (202).

Natasha Artemeva's study of novice engineers (recent college graduates) learning to write in their field begins to look beyond this paradigm. She makes the point that students do not learn professional genres in a smooth progression that begins in school and ends at the workplace. Rather, students bring relevant experiences from throughout their lives to their attempts to write professionally, and these have the potential to have a profound effect. Artemeva's approach begins to complicate the notion that the academic environment is the only site responsible for teaching students to write in professional contexts and suggests that students might forge productive connections between their non-academic and workplace writing experiences. It also expands the potential sources students might draw on as they construct mental maps of their writing experiences to aid them in professional settings.

Brent's "Crossing Boundaries" further complicates the notion that workplace and academic writing are "worlds apart." In "Crossing Boundaries," Brent reports on his study of six Canadian students who participate in a four-month co-op work term. His goal

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is to show what resources these students bring with them to their new rhetorical situations and "what aspects of rhetorical education—if any—transfer from school to workplace" (559). Ultimately, Brent argues that students' experiences in the academy and movement around different academic environments do contribute significantly to their workplace-relevant rhetorical education. Part of the trouble with previous studies, he argues, is their reliance on activity theory—a theoretical framework that emphasizes the importance of context to human activity—as a theoretical basis.[12] He writes, "studies of writing based on activity theory sometimes shed disturbing doubts on the question of whether rhetorical knowledge can be transferred readily, or even at all, from one domain to another" (563). Activity theory, Brent explains, emphasizes the differences, rather than the similarities, between different spheres of activity. In other words, previous studies based in activity theory may be inclined to look for ways that mental maps of writing experiences *would not* work, rather than ways that they might. Brent's study instead looks for instances of "transformation," where students' experiences moving back and forth between many rhetorical contexts within the academy teach them the need to adapt their discourse for different audiences (587).

Brent's argument resonates with my own approach to transfer. Though I do not focus on students' internship or co-op writing experiences specifically, I do draw on Brent's "glass half full" ("Transfer, Transformation" 403) approach to looking for transfer across contexts. Brent looks beyond the limits imposed by activity theory to see

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[12] By "activity theory," here, I mean a theoretical framework that that takes as a its unit of analysis a group or collective of people who work together with similar goals or motives, and who use a similar set of tools to achieve those particular goals. Activity theory presents a way to study human activity and interactions within their historic, cultural, and environmental contexts. See Russell, Tuomi-Gröhn and Engeström, Vygotsky.

other ways students connect their academic, life, and co-op writing experiences. Without using the term "mental map," Brent identifies the connections that students forge between their writing (and non-writing) experiences in different domains. My study follows Brent's model of keeping an open mind to discover "what knowledge, if any, these boundary crossers were bringing to the new tasks" ("Crossing Boundaries" 567).

Transfer of Prior Knowledge

How, if at all, do students integrate their prior knowledge into a "mental map" of writing? Several studies identify patterns among the ways students integrate—or fail to integrate—their prior knowledge into their mental schemas as they encounter new writing situations. My study, which explores in part how students relate all of their writing experiences, builds on the research investigating the ways students forge connections (or fail to forge connections) between their prior knowledge and new writing situations. Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey identify three ways that college students make use of prior knowledge: assemblage, or *"drawing on"* prior knowledge "in ways almost identical" to past uses; remix, or *"reworking* . . . knowledge and practice" when faced with new tasks; and "re-thinking altogether," or *"creating new knowledge and practices* . . . when students encounter . . . a setback or critical incident" ("Notes toward a Theory of Prior Knowledge"). These three ways of engaging (or not engaging) prior knowledge range from least to most open-minded. Students who practice "assemblage" are not activating or successfully re-working a mental map of writing, whereas students who "re-think altogether" are fundamentally overhauling and re-mapping their previous understandings. The most successful students in Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey's study

are those who put the time and energy into "re-thinking altogether"; this tough mental work prepares them to transfer their writing knowledge from all areas of their lives.

The ability to radically reconsider prior knowledge also underpins Mary Jo Reiff and Anis Bawarshi's findings in "Tracing Discursive Resources." In their study of students' transition from high school to college, Reiff and Bawarshi identify two ways students approach FYW: as "boundary guarders" and "boundary crossers." Boundary crossers repurpose old knowledge and engage in high-road transfer (or "deliberate, mindful abstraction" [Perkins and Salomon, "Teaching for Transfer" 25]). Boundary guarders hold tight to what they know and engage in low-road transfer (or the automatic replication of prior experiences) (325). Reiff and Bawarshi find that students have a hard time drawing connections between the writing they do outside of school and the writing they do for academic purposes, and using "school word" triggers (such as "essay" and "analyze") particularly discourages students from calling on knowledge from beyond the school domain (323, 324). Though Reiff and Bawarshi do not make this point themselves, it is possible that boundary crossers are more likely to devise mental maps of their writing experiences and boundary guarders less likely. Reiff and Bawarshi's study compelled me to question in my research why students might (or might not) see connections between domains, and whether more students might forge connections, and be capable of constructing mental maps of their writing, than their findings suggest.

Finally, Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey speculate as to why students' robust writing lives outside of school do not seem to have a positive effect on their ability to write in FYW classes. They suggest that students "do understand writing both inside and outside of school as *writing*." However, the authors find that the first-year students they

interviewed "see writing principally as a vehicle for authorial expression, not as a vehicle for dialogue with a reader or an opportunity to make knowledge, both of which are common conceptions in college writing environments." The notion that writing is a vehicle for personal expression, rather than an instrument to communicate, inform, persuade, or perform any number of other functions, may affect the ways that students draw on or map their various prior experiences with writing, in and outside of school. In my study, I sought to discover whether experienced and highly involved college students are also limited by this sense of writing as primarily a "vehicle for authorial expression," or whether they see it differently. As Yancey, Roberston, and Taczak explain, the ability to construct mental maps that relate writing experiences may facilitate successful transfer. My study devotes its attention to the critical antecedent questions: are students able or inclined to forge connections in the first place? If so, how?

Expanding Potential Connections: Non-Academic Writing and Transfer

Scholarship shows that forging "mental maps" might help students gain a greater understanding of the relationships between *all* of their writing experiences. Many studies of transfer, however, focus only or mostly on students' academic writing, or on students' transition from academic to professional writing. In this section, I underscore the importance of including students' non-academic and professional writing in studies of transfer, as I do in my study. Indeed, research indicates that students compose substantial amounts of writing beyond their academic involvement and that that writing has the potential to significantly affect their learning and ability to write successfully in a variety of settings. In Elizabeth Wardle and Kevin Roozen's words, it is important to recognize

that "the breadth of students' of literate experiences—in *and* out of school—impacts their ability to 'do' academic literacy tasks" (107). Christopher J. Thaiss and Terry M. Zawacki also argue that students' non-academic writing is central to their writing development. At the end of *Engaged Writers and Dynamic Disciplines*, the authors assert that "writing for readers both inside and outside of the academy can affect all that a writer does and thinks" and claim that "focusing on the nexus among these tasks" is crucial for better understanding what it means to learn to write (170). Expanding on these scholars' claims, I focus here on the scholarship that highlights the importance of taking students' extracurricular writing practices into account in our studies of transfer. In addition, I review research that shows how students' academic and non-academic writing experiences might be mutually informing.

Non-Academic and Extracurricular Writing: Why It Matters

It is crucial to take students' non-academic writing into account because students do so much of it. In "Kitchen Tables and Rented Rooms," Anne Ruggles Gere shows that writers thrive outside the walls of the university and argues that scholars of composition ought to "acknowledge the extracurriculum as a legitimate and autonomous cultural formation that undertakes its own projects" (43). Indeed, research illustrates that the extracurriculum was alive and thriving in colleges in the nineteenth century, and many students reported learning more from their extracurricular involvement in literary societies than in from their coursework. David Russell explains,

> As in postelementary education today, students in the old curriculum
>
> devoted much of their time and energy to the extracurriculum and found it

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more satisfying overall than their classroom studies. . . . [T]he

extracurriculum centered around the literary . . . societies, organized and

run solely by students. . . . To many students the literary societies

represented the greatest contribution of the college to their education. The

societies clearly played a central role in the education of students, and they

did so by giving them a more creative and socially relevant outlet for the

speaking and writing skills they were exercising in a less satisfying way in

the curriculum. (*Writing in the Academic Disciplines* 44-45)

The importance of the extracurriculum remains consistent over the years. Indeed, Yancey

asserts the prevalence and importance of non-academic literacies in her 2004 Conference

on College Composition and Communication Chair's Address. She notes that people

write prolifically and in many forms outside the academy, and that these non-academic

writings are linked with images, audio, and video and composed by a voluntarily writing

public ("Made Not Only in Words" 298).[13]

More recent studies have gone on to show just how widespread this

"extracurriculum" is in the writing lives of college students in our contemporary moment.

The research team behind the Stanford Study of Writing, which asked students to submit

both their assigned and extracurricular writing to the study database, found themselves

inundated by quantity and variety of writing samples—especially in terms of

extracurricular, performative writings ("Performing Writing" 229). Jeff Grabill and

Stacey Pigg also report in their white paper, "The Writing Lives of College Students,"

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[13] Some studies of non-academic influences on students' writing also consider non-writing related factors. Marilyn Sternglass's longitudinal study of nontraditional students makes the crucial intervention of considering the wide array of nonacademic factors in students' lives (26) and shows the "messy, real-world environment in which writing is actually produced" (11).

that college students write prolifically outside of school. Their study points to the pervasiveness of writing in the lives of college students and the importance of hand-held devices like mobile phones as a writing platform for non-academic writing.

Scholarship on students' non-academic writing also demonstrates that students learn how to do much of this writing on their own—outside the purview of their academic writing classes. Yancey notes that the wide variety of writing publics in the US, including people who communicate via email, websites, and listservs, learn how to compose these types of writing on their own. For a specific example of self-sponsored writing that students learn to compose and undertake on their own, we might look to Jonathan Alexander and Susan Jarratt's profile of student activists in "Rhetorical Education and Student Activism." When asked how their formal education contributed to their rhetorical knowledge and activist literacy, participants reported that they saw the two as disconnected—and that their writing classes felt irrelevant to their rhetorical education. The non-academic writing the students composed to conduct their protests was very important to them—and yet it was not something the students learned in, or even associated with, school. Indeed, we might say that, as Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Paré suggest of academic and professional writing, these students view their writing for activism and school to be "worlds apart." Part of Alexander and Jarratt's conclusion, then, is to remind teachers and researchers that "individual courses are only moments in longer trajectories—they are not unimportant, but perhaps we shouldn't overestimate them by assigning them most of the burden of students' rhetorical educations" (541). As I note in Chapter 1, Alexander and Jarratt urge that "future studies of rhetorical education should encompass the curricular and the cocurricular, the formally sponsored and the

self-sponsored, as mutually informing resources" (542). My study aims to do just that. That is, my study extends the research that insists on the value of students' cocurricular and self-sponsored pursuits by inquiring into ways that students might see their extracurricular, personal, and academic writing as "mutually informing resources."

Interanimation: Academic and Non-Academic Writing as Mutually Informing

As this dissertation will show, students do see their writing experiences across contexts as connected in relevant ways. Whereas some studies, such as those I mention above, infer that students understand their academic and non-academic writing to be disconnected, Kevin Roozen's work tracing the literate development of individual students yields different results. Roozen's work informs my own by looking beyond the surface features of students' academic and non-academic writing to locate less obvious ways that students might relate their writing and life experiences from across contexts. In each of his articles, Roozen explores ways that students' non-academic writing practices inform and invigorate their academic writing practices—and vice-versa. In his study of Brian, a student who writes for his math education classes, comedy sketches, and role playing games, Roozen explains how intertwined writing experiences seem from the student's perspective: "Far from being isolated islands, Brian's math classes, sketch comedy, and gaming are so interwoven that it is impossible to talk about one activity without bringing up the others." While these activities might seem to be quite different from a researcher's perspective, they are, from Brian's perspective, inextricable. Roozen points out that "this interanimation is not unidirectional"; Brian's use of math in his extracurricular activities informs his work in math classes as well.

We see ways that students' academic and non-academic writing experiences might inform one another in Roozen's studies of Angelica ("From Journals to Journalism") and Lindsey ("Tracing Trajectories") as well. In "From Journals to Journalism," Roozen shows how Angelica's journaling experiences "textured" the writing she did for school and work. Although Angelica's journaling does not translate smoothly into her writing for English class, she is able to transfer from her self-sponsored writing to help in her journalism classes and eventually professional writing in the field of journalism. In this article, Roozen argues that Angelica's case illustrates that "private writing is not an isolated island of writing limited to diaries and journals and dedicated solely to writers' intimate thoughts and experiences"—rather, private writing might have an important role in both academic and professional writing contexts (566). Roozen puts forth a similar case in "Tracing Trajectories," where he describes Lindsey's ability to repurpose experiences she has with extradisciplinary practices, including keeping a prayer journal and creating visual work in a graphic arts class, as she crafts an MA-level English paper. According to Roozen, looking closely at the ways Lindsey transfers her personal writing and graphic arts class experiences "renders visible the enormously complex aggregation of practices that inform the production of disciplinary writing practices" (345). In other words, the writing Lindsey does for her English MA program is informed and enriched by multiple interwoven strands of writing activity she has practiced in other areas of her life.

Other works aside from Roozen's also explore the ways students' academic and non-academic writing experiences inform one another. Brent's study of co-op students (discussed earlier) takes an approach similar to Roozen's in that it emphasizes the

connections students notice between their co-op writing and their wide array of academic and life experiences. Marsha Curtis and Anne Herrington's study of students' writing development during their college years emphasizes that "cognitive development cannot be divorced from emotional and ethical development"; their conclusions support Roozen's claim that personal writing should not be considered "separate" or an island unto itself ("Writing Development" 88).[14] Likewise, Paul Prior and Jody Shipka argue in "Chronotopic Lamination" that literate activity is deeply and thoroughly interwoven with writers' lives and that writing practices cross boundaries between home, community, and discipline. Writing practices, they argue, require both private, internal time and social, interactive time. The case studies the authors present demonstrate both individual and social elements of the writing process, such as Michelle's discussion of her dissertation with her fiancé over drinks.

The notion that non-school literacies often play a key role in students' academic development is also a central argument of Richard Courage's "The Interaction of Public and Private Literacies" and Michelle Navarre Cleary's "Flowing and Freestyling." One of the students that Courage profiles, Janette, is a religious educator and church counselor who transfers knowledge from her public speaking and writing experiences, especially her experience with writing sermons, to help with her school writing. While the literacy Janette acquires outside of school is, in Courage's words, "by no means identical with academic literacy," it is quite valuable to Janette. Courage claims, as a result, that public literacies are quite beneficial indeed: "I would argue that participation in such public literacies may develop not only language practices but also a sense of self-worth that

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[14] Herrington and Curtis's book-length study goes even further, showing specific ways that even academic writing is not purely academic for any of the study participants; rather, all writing they compose is infused with personal life experiences (*Persons in Process*).

enables some students to enter more easily into academic literacy and culture" (491). As a result of his study, Courage encourages educators to look more closely at our students' non-academic literacy practices:

> [W]e must also explore their literacy practices outside the college classroom. We must ask how academic literacy compares and interacts with their other literacies, what values and practices each esteems and enables, how each situates them in relation to the world beyond the academy. (493)

Cleary echoes this call in "Flowing and Freestyling," her study of how adult students repurpose their life experiences for their academic writing. She writes,

> [T]hese students move, often daily, between writing at work, at school, in communities, and at home. To ignore how writing in these contexts influences how students write for school is to necessarily impoverish our understanding of our students, their writing development, and the possibilities for transfer. (661)

Cleary goes on to argue, drawing primarily on an extended case study of student Doppel, that adult students' non-academic experiences, and in particular their opportunities for high-stakes writing, influence their ability to write for school. Building on scholarship such as this, my own study prioritizes students' non-academic writing and considers the possibility that students might transfer their learning between all the writing they compose. Indeed, the copious and compelling research on the importance and relevance of students' non-academic writing makes it impossible to ignore the co- and extracurricular experiences that inform students' writing pursuits.

"Seeing" and "Selling"

In my discussion of students forging connections and constructing mental maps of their writing (above), I explore the scholarship on *whether* students see connections between their various writing experiences, including academic and non-academic experiences. In this section, I examine the scholarship on precisely *what kinds* of connections students see. As I introduce in Chapter 1, I develop my approach to transfer by adapting Nowacek's two-part definition of transfer as a matter of "seeing" and "selling" connections. Nowacek's study differs from many investigations into transfer because it does not focus on the ways students move their writing experiences forward from a writing class into later college or professional writing experiences. Instead, Nowacek focuses on the connections students draw between their writing for a linked group of classes that they are taking during the same semester. One advantage of Nowacek's approach is that it calls our attention not just to the ways students move and repurpose their knowledge but, first and foremost, to the ways they connect their experiences across contexts. Based on her study, Nowacek defines transfer as a matter of how students "*perceive* as well as to *convey effectively to others* connections between previously distinct contexts" (38). As an "agent of integration," then, a student's task is to not only "see connections" but also learn to "sell those connections," depending on the audience (39).

Nowacek presents a matrix of possible transfer outcomes (Figure 2.1), depending on how successful or unsuccessful a student is at seeing and/or selling connections (40).

The matrix presents two continuums, from "unconscious seeing" to "meta-aware seeing" and from "unsuccessful selling" to "successful selling":

The "transfer matrix"
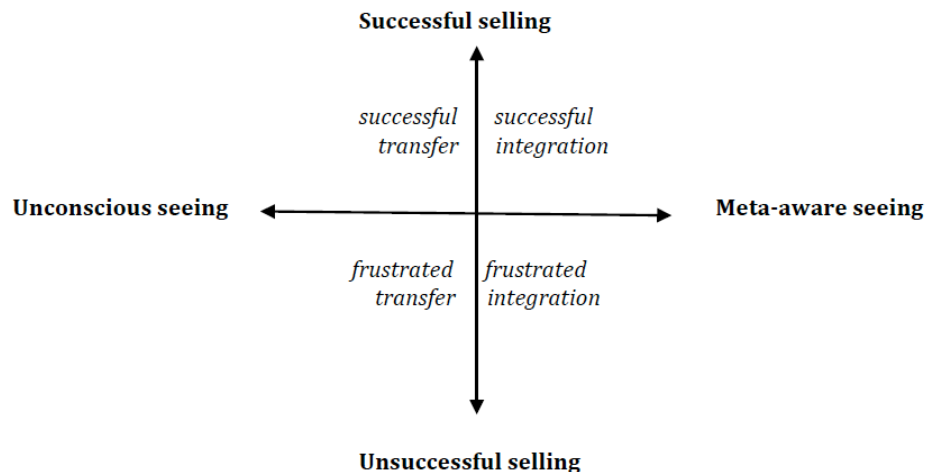
Figure 2.1: Nowacek's "transfer matrix" showing how students "see" and "sell" connections (*Agents of Integration* 40)

This matrix demonstrates that "seeing" and "selling" connections are in some ways different (though related) actions. In my study, I adopt Nowacek's concept of "seeing" connections and diverge somewhat from her version of "selling" connections. Nowacek investigates specific moves a student makes to "convey effectively" a particular connection she draws. In contrast, I focus on general strategies students exercise to transfer *ethos* and the sources they draw on to devise their *ethos*. However, I retain Nowacek's division of transfer into "seeing" and "selling" because it helps me explore in more detail how the different components of the concept might work independently of one another.

In this section, I examine the research on how students "see" and "sell" connections between their writing experiences. In my study, those terms translate roughly to "connecting," or reasoning relationally (Chapter 4), and "convincing," or crafting a credible *ethos* (Chapter 5). While no research in composition studies to date explores either of those phenomena in precisely the way I do, there are many instances where writing researchers examine concepts similar to relational reasoning and *ethos* transfer through different interpretative frameworks. Below, I present the ways that research in education and composition studies has addressed the concepts of "seeing connections," or relational reasoning, and "selling connections," or inventing an effective *ethos* for a given writing situation.

Relational Reasoning

In this section, I present scholarship that examines specific ways that students "see connections" between their writing experiences. As Chapter 4 shows, I use the concept of "relational reasoning" to explain *how* students forge connections between their writing experiences. I borrow the term "relational reasoning" from research in education because it provides a useful framework for delineating specific ways students "see connections" among their writing experiences. In their review of literature on relational reasoning, Denis Dumas, Patricia A. Alexander and Emily M. Grossnickle define "relational reasoning" as "the ability to reorganize or derive meaningful relations between and among pieces of information that would otherwise appear unrelated" (392). In other words, relational reasoning describes the different ways people draw connections

between information or ideas that may not appear related on first thought. The authors claim relational reasoning is regarded as "central to human cognition" (392).

Dumas, Alexander, and Grossnickle note that in the past, relational reasoning was regarded primarily as reasoning by analogy (recognizing similarities between dissimilar concepts). Since then, though analogy is still the central type of relational reasoning that people study, more forms have been identified. These forms include reasoning by anomaly (observing how something diverges from "an established pattern"), reasoning by antimony (determining what something is by establishing what it is *not*), and reasoning by antithesis (identifying an "oppositional relation" between two things) (395-96). In general, the authors argue, relational reasoning is positively correlated with student success: "it has been demonstrated that students' ability to reason relationally is predictive of success in a variety of academic domains" (419). Although the research on relational reasoning in education does not focus on writing in particular, its findings and theory apply equally well to writing-specific concerns.

One type of relational reasoning, reasoning by analogy, is often associated in education scholarship with successful transfer. As I show in Chapter 4, analogical reasoning is one way that students in my study connect their writing. Much research in education sees analogical reasoning to be so relevant to transfer that scholars almost equate the two. Patricia A. Alexander and P. Karen Murphy define analogical reasoning as "the ability to establish relationships between two seemingly dissimilar entities" and argue that "transfer and analogical reasoning are related processes" (564). Many researchers, the authors note, view transfer as though it is simply a special case of analogical reasoning. Their rationale is that if learners cannot make connections between

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dissimilar things, they are unlikely to engage in mindful transfer across contexts. Haskell also connects transfer firmly to analogy and considers transfer to be a form of analogical reasoning (28). He claims that "reasoning by similarity" *is* "in short, transfer" (58). In "Learning and Transfer through Analogical Encoding," Dedre Gentner, Jeffrey Loewenstein, and Leigh Thompson expand on these endorsements of analogical reasoning. In their study, they "investigate a technique called *analogical encoding*—in which learners compare two examples and by doing so come to understand the underlying structure common to both" (394). Based on their findings, the authors claim that "analogical encoding leads to better learning, which in turn leads to superior transfer" (400). They suggest, as a result, that we as teachers can promote students' transfer but encouraging explicit comparisons (403-4).

Research in composition has also explored analogical reasoning, although to a limited extent. Christiane Donahue points out that reasoning or learning by analogy, which is at the heart of transfer for many scholars of transfer in education, is very under-studied or referenced in composition studies (159). In "Flowing and Freestyling," Cleary looks closely at the analogies that adult students use to help them with process strategies. She argues that the quality and quantity of process analogies that students draw correlates with the effectiveness of their academic writing. Students who use more precise analogies transfer their process experiences more successfully from one writing context to another.

In "Sameness and Difference in Transfer," education researcher Ference Marton makes the case for considering, in studies of transfer, how learners relate experiences through both similarities *and* differences. Marton's findings point to another way that students in my study "see connections" between their writing: by comparing and

contrasting them. Marton notes that previous studies (with the exception of Beach's consequential transitions) focus on sameness between two situations rather than difference (507). His argument is that there cannot be any transfer without sameness, but that there also cannot be any transfer without difference. In other words, our perceptions of similarities and differences between situations are both vital for transfer to take place (512). Though he does not use the term "relational reasoning," Marton's study explores the concept by considering different ways beyond analogy that learners might relate their experiences.

Relational reasoning appears in composition studies in several guises. Composition researchers who discuss the concept of "not talk" seem to have identified something similar to Marton's "sameness and difference" approach to transfer, or Dumas, Alexander, and Grossnickle's definition of "reasoning by antimony." Reiff and Bawarshi define "not talk" as when "students describe their written work (and writing process) by explaining what genres it is *not*" (325, italics mine).[15] Students who practice "not talk" are able to see how what they are writing is dissimilar from other genres they have prior experience with. These students, Reiff and Bawarshi report, are more likely to be "boundary crossers," more open to both seeing connections and recognizing and processing discontinuities that they did not expect. "Boundary crossers," Reiff and Bawarshi argue, are more likely to succeed at writing tasks because they are willing to see beyond their familiar past writing experiences. Nowacek confirms this idea in her own study, noting that students who earned a high score on the "medieval diary assignment" "understood the ways in which their prior experiences with the genre of

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[15] For origins of the discussion of "not talk" or "not statements," see Freadman, "Anyone for Tennis?" (54).

diary did *not* apply" (86).[16] She points out that the most successful writers draw on "'not talk' as a way to understand their current task in relation to their prior work in a related genre" (86). While these authors do not use the term "relational reasoning," the idea of "not talk," which addresses how students draw relationships of similarity and difference between their writing experiences, expresses a similar concept. As I show in Chapter 4, "not talk," or comparative and contrastive reasoning, is another way that students in my study "see connections" between their compositions.

In addition to research that explores "not talk" and analogical reasoning, several studies within composition offer examples of student writers who see relationships or draw connections between their writing in various realms—not always with an eye toward transfer (though that is often the logical consequence), but just for the sake of noticing. In Brent's "Crossing Boundaries," student Amy draws connections related to evidence use between her business and English courses (571); Christina also practices something like relational reasoning when she locates similarities between the research process in business and sociology (580). Brent argues that these connections (among many others) constitute "transformation" of knowledge and stem from students' need to figure out the relationships between various academic contexts as they move between them (585, 587).

Similarly, Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak identify several students who discern relationships between their various academic and extra-academic writing experiences.

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[16] The medieval diary assignment, which I mention in Chapter 1, was part of students' interdisciplinary history class. The assignment asked students to "assume a specific medieval identity in terms of gender, age, social position, and occupation and write a diary entry for a single day" (qtd in Nowacek 85). The goal of the assignment, according to Nowacek, was "to get students thinking about the material details of medieval life" (85). I discuss one student's experience with this assignment more fully in Chapter 1.

One student they profile, Carolina, draws connections between her extracurricular and professional writing, in particular between a fundraising letter she writes for her sorority and the business letters she composes as "a summer employee at a financial advising office where writing business letters was a regular task for her" (86-87). Carolina recognizes both the similarities and differences between the fundraising letter and letters she wrote for her past job (87). Another student the authors profile, Rick, engages in even more robust relational reasoning. He seeks out patterns—similarities and differences— between all his classes and genres. For example, Rick identifies several connections between his academic research essay for his first-year writing class and his poster for a chemistry class (96-98). Rick also relates the process of reflection between his science and first-year writing classes and sees the notions of "discourse community" and "purpose" as relevant across writing contexts (96-97). In these cases, the students engage in what I call relational reasoning, and they are largely more successful as a result.

Scholarship in Writing Across the Curriculum addresses the concept of relational reasoning through the notion of viewing writing "in a comparative framework." In *Engaged Writers, Dynamic Disciplines*, Thaiss and Zawacki argue,

> [W]hen students regard writing expectations in a comparative framework—if, for example, they have a double major or have done considerable writing in more than one major—they are usually more articulate about expectations and how majors differ therein. (102)

Thaiss and Zawacki's research suggests that looking at writing in one field alongside writing in another helps the differences *and similarities* between the two "pop" or become more salient. The authors note that "those who were most articulate tended to be

students with double majors or minors. Working within two disciplines enabled them to contrast features of writing in different disciplines and also to explain how they negotiated those differences in their own work" (121). These findings support one of Bacon's claims in "Building a Swan's Nest for Instruction in Rhetoric." In addition to arguing that students need experience working in a variety of real-world rhetorical contexts, she argues it is important that teachers help students gain a view of genres *in relation to* one another. According to Bacon, the "comparative view of discourse" in turn enables students to be more critical writers: "if students write in more than one genre, in more than one rhetorical context, they have access to a *comparative* view of discourse— which is an essential step toward a *critical* view" (606). Here Bacon supports the notion that being able to reason relationally between writing in different genres prepares students to see the genres they compose more critically and engage them more adeptly. In Chapter 4, I demonstrate specific ways that students exercise a "comparative view of discourse" via relational reasoning.

Finally, several studies support the notion that relational reasoning does not always occur naturally—nor necessarily should it. Fostering relational reasoning can be one of the goals of a FYW class. Rounsaville, Goldberg, and Bawarshi argue that teachers should intervene in students' metacognitive processes as they consider drawing on prior genre knowledge in new writing situations (108). Indeed, in Jarratt, Mack, Sartor, and Watson's study, the interview itself is a site of discovery and a "lightbulb moment" for students, which suggests that asking students to discuss their writing experiences might be a productive way to foster relational reasoning (62). If the problem is, as Bergmann and Zepernick explain, "that students *do not look* for" connections

between their writing experiences (139), then asking students to engage in relational

reasoning might have tremendous benefits. By asking students whether they see any

relationships between their writing experiences, my research methods may provide a

model for a useful pedagogical intervention. In Chapter 6, I discuss ways that my

research questions might be adapted to foster relational reasoning in classroom settings.

Ethos *in Transfer Literature*

Many participants in my study reported the need to adapt their role or character in

any given piece of writing to appeal to their new audiences in various rhetorical

situations. In these circumstances, students reported transferring something different from

knowledge—they reported transferring something more like character, or *ethos*. Although

none use the term "*ethos*," several studies of students' professional, community, and

academic writing address questions of what roles students take on in order to "sell" their

writing. Studies of students' transitions from academic to professional writing contexts

suggest that the need to develop a credible persona may become most exigent for students

when they find themselves writing in a high-stakes professional or public capacity for the

first time. Other work, in particular two articles stemming from the Stanford Study of

Writing, demonstrate ways that students perform, envision, or transfer their *ethos* during

their college years.

Research in professional and community writing offers useful insights into the

importance of *ethos* for transfer and the ways students develop their *ethos* for new writing

situations. In "Moving Beyond the Academic Community," Chris M. Anson and L. Lee

Forsberg explain that being able to adopt a "persona" appropriate to the situation is

especially key in workplace writing: "in order to produce texts that become transactionally real, writers must first be able to adopt a persona appropriate to their position in the workplace, acceptable to themselves, their superiors, and other eventual audiences of their writing" (207). Anson and Forsberg's study calls attention to the ways students might learn to negotiate status and *ethos* in their writing. Bacon discusses the importance of projecting a certain persona in her study of transfer and community service writing. She explains that students' success *as writers* depends more on the "affective and social aspects of the experience" than their "mastery of the lessons typically covered in composition courses" ("The Trouble with Transfer" 449). Those who directly apply their "school knowledge" in her study are fairly unsuccessful, whereas those with rhetorical awareness, interpersonal skills, motivation, and social abilities fare better. These aspects of writing are often not a matter of teacher-taught skills or practices, but rather a matter of *ethos* development.

Several researchers argue that the ability to develop and project an effective *ethos* is not a matter of direct instruction but rather a matter of tapping students' life experiences. Artemeva argues in "Stories of Becoming" that students do not learn professional genres in a smooth progression that begins in school and ends at the workplace. Rather, she explains, the various experiences students bring from throughout their lives have a profound effect on their ability to project the right character in their professional work. For instance, students in her study with cultural capital from their family upbringings—such as Sami and Bill, whose fathers are engineers—are easily able to assimilate into the engineering profession (166). They are able to draw on their early life experiences for a seamless transition into their new professional field (166). Students

like Rebecca, on the other hand, lack the cultural capital of Sami and Bill, which makes for a more difficult transition into her chosen profession. However, once at the workplace, she is able to draw on elements of her engineering communication course, in combination with her other various workplace experiences, to piece together an effective *ethos* for herself over time (169). While most authors (including Artemeva) point to the limitations of school contexts to teach the *ethos* aspect of professional writing, many do concede that there is still some value to simulating a professional persona in class. For example, Freedman, Adam, and Smart concede that, by asking students to attempt workplace writing in a school setting, "a stance and an ideology were realized through the writing that—like their suits—were more like the stances, values, and ways of constructing, constructing, and persuading common to the work world to which these students aspired" (220). Freedman, Adam, and Smart found that asking students to simulate workplace writing does give them practice with assuming a new stance and character.

The other body of work on students' writing development that engages the concept of *ethos* stems from the Stanford Study of Writing. In "Performing Writing, Performing Literacy," Jenn Fishman, Andrea Lunsford, Beth McGregor, and Mark Otuteye approach writing from the frame of performativity and argue that writing for college students is linked to their attempts to perform certain identities. One example they offer stems from Beth's anxiety about the pressure to try to "sound smart" and write exactly "what the professor is looking for" for her Tolerance and Democracy seminar essay (235-36). She explains how she performs the character she needs in order to compose her essay:

My paper got written, largely because of the help of an adopted character,

who was just an elevated form of myself, but a character, nonetheless:

someone with a voice different from my own and more like the "eloquent"

voice I thought my erudite professor was looking for. In the end, equipped

with the authoritative voice of my assumed character I was able to hush

my hyperactive internal editors. To do that, I had borrowed the tool of

character assumption from my acting experiences in order to aid my

writing process, and in essence the way I hushed the paralyzing presence

of my internal editor-audiences for my paper is the same way I hush those

same internal audiences when I'm acting. (236-37)

In this case, we see the specific ways that Beth draws on her acting experiences to stifle

her "hyperactive internal editors" and enable her instead to take on the "adopted

character" necessary to successfully compose her essay. Based on Beth's and others'

experiences, the authors of the study suggest that writing teachers incorporate

performance into our classrooms and pedagogies, and urge readers to begin by looking at

the various types of performance already taking place on our campuses.

In a second article based on the same study, Lunsford, Fishman, and Warren Liew

observe that many students come to assume specific personas due to their extracurricular

involvement and jobs. When asking students about their views on intellectual property

(IP), the researchers noticed that several students already identified with particular fields

and already assumed the *ethos* of a participant in that arena. They write, "while Arun

spoke with the ambitious enthusiasm of a novice bioengineer, others spoke to us

explicitly 'as a teacher,' 'as a musician,' 'as an intellectual,' and so on" (476). Other

students identify with non-academic communities; for example, Jesse speaks about IP through his identity as "someone who wrote their own website" and Monesh as someone who works for Santa Clara County (478). The authors conclude, based on these findings, that there is a

> crucial need for formal and informal educational spaces where students can work actively to rehearse and create writerly identities: academic and nonacademic roles that enable them to participate with self-confidence and self-awareness in consuming and producing knowledge through publication and performance. (490)

Here again we see the emphasis on performance and role-playing as a way to teach students how to develop and take on certain identities suitable to their personal and professional aspirations. My study extends this research on performativity and *ethos* by inquiring into the specific sources students draw from to transfer that *ethos*. As Chapter 5 will reveal, many students in my study discussed the importance of drawing on prior experiences and imitation in order to build and develop an *ethos* appropriate to the rhetorical situation.

Conclusion

As this chapter makes clear, I build on research from education and composition studies to establish a scaffold for my own definition and study of transfer across contexts. In contrast to much research on transfer, my dissertation shows that students can and do transfer—and that our research methods determine, to a degree, the amount of transfer that researchers are able to see. To gain a more robust picture of transfer, my study

follows in the tradition established by some education and composition scholars who prioritize students' own active interpretations of their writing knowledge. With student agency as a guiding principle, this project draws on Nowacek's framework to present transfer in two parts: as a matter of "seeing" connections, or enacting relational reasoning, and as a matter of "selling" connections, or performing a credible *ethos*. In Chapter 4, I question the scholarship that suggests students see their writing experiences as fundamentally unrelated and invigorate transfer research by rethinking the concept as a matter of relational reasoning that helps students develop a "transfer mindset." Building on scholarship that demonstrates the significance of students' non-academic pursuits, my dissertation also underscores the importance of students' extracurricular writing to their ability to construct mental maps and transfer their writing knowledge. Finally, my study contributes to scholarship on transfer by considering sources that students might draw on to transfer a persona suitable for a new writing situation. Chapter 5 details how my project asks us to expand our thinking about transfer by considering an array of sources students draw from to develop an effective *ethos*.

Chapter 3: Researching Transfer Across Contexts

> Even students who have been exposed to a considerable amount of explicit writing instruction can lack the vocabulary and the metacognitive development to be able to articulate what is happening to them. Because my participants might apply the same narrow definition of transfer that many writers have argued to be inadequate, they might miss more subtle occasions of transfer.
>
> —Doug Brent, "Crossing Boundaries" (567)

> It's hard to think about how all these [personal, academic, and extracurricular writing] are different because I try to relate elements of all three to the other almost subconsciously. For instance, the things I think about when I write for either pleasure or an extracurricular can be brought up again in my academic writings. I like to actually apply the things that I'm learning whether they be in an academic, personal, or extracurricular setting.
>
> —Survey Respondent

This chapter describes my research methods for the study that lies at the heart of this dissertation, including my orienting framework, central questions, research design, setting, participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis process. My empirical study uses qualitative methods to describe college students' experiences of transfer across the various contexts where they write. I analyzed data from a survey (n=319), focus groups (4), writing samples (84), and interviews (10) of college students from a wide variety of majors at the University of Maryland, College Park. As discussed in the previous chapters, the goal of this study was to determine whether these students experience transfer between their writing experiences in different domains of their lives; and, if so, what types of connections they make or strategies they draw on when writing in new situations.

Orienting Framework

I designed my qualitative study of transfer to better understand students' experiences of transfer from *their own* perspectives, meaning that I wanted to minimize researcher bias regarding our ideas about transfer and let students discuss what stood out to them. To do this, I structured each stage of my data collection process to allow student participants as much autonomy and agency as possible to select and describe their unique experiences with writing, the connections they saw between their writing, and the possible transfer they might enact. As this explanation of my research methods will make clear, by designing my study this way, I am following in composition studies' rich tradition of eliciting students' perceptions of their own writing knowledge. This method is especially important in studies of writing transfer. As Rebecca Nowacek explains, students do not simply *experience* transfer but rather *construct* transfer by actively interpreting their various experiences. When looking for signs of transfer, then, researchers in composition cannot look only for evidence of the application of learning; we must seek out students' active interpretations of their experiences.

Other writing transfer scholars corroborate the importance of seeking students' active interpretations. In "Understanding 'Transfer' from FYC," Elizabeth Wardle explains, "students' understanding of tasks and activity systems is central to our ability to identify 'transfer' or any apparent lack of it" (72). Lee Ann Carroll's *Rehearsing New Roles* similarly pledges to seek "an understanding of complex, hard-to-measure human behavior as seen from the observed actor's perspective" (45); and, in "Wearing Suits to Class," Aviva Freedman, Christine Adam, and Graham Smart argue for the need to "elicit and value the participants' own construction" of their writing experiences (201). I shaped

my research methods to allow students the agency to express their writing knowledge and experiences in their own terms, which made it more likely I would gain new insight into their experiences of transfer across contexts. This research orientation informed each stage of my data collection: my survey, focus groups, writing sample collection, and interviews. In each stage, which I describe in detail below, I designed the research protocol to ensure that students had the maximum autonomy possible to describe their own ways of making meaning—and that the discussions we had about transfer took place in students' own words.

To ensure that students had the maximum autonomy over their interpretations of transfer, I approached transfer not from a teacher or researcher's perspective, which is likely often limited to students' academic writing, but from the students' perspective. Because students do not stop writing when they leave our classes, I expanded the scope of possible sources of transfer worth investigating to include students' non-academic writing from across realms. The Stanford Study of Writing, which also systematically gathered evidence of students' non-academic composing practices, presents students' out-of-school writing as an equal contributor to students' growth as writers, part and parcel of a bigger picture of literate development (Fishman, Lunsford, McGregor, and Otuteye). Studies about writing transfer that follow in that tradition, including Kevin Roozen's many case studies ("Comedy Stages," "From Journals to Journalism," "Tracing Trajectories of Practice") and Doug Brent's study of co-op students ("Crossing Boundaries"), informed the way I designed my survey instrument and discussion/interview protocols. At each stage of data collection, I prompted students to

consider personal, extracurricular, professional, and academic reasons as equally worthy

of attention and as potentially relevant and related to one another.

I also asked students to discuss specific texts they composed, rather than talk

about their writing experiences in general. This was partly in an effort to avoid the

potential limitations of soliciting only students' memories of writing experiences, which

might have become blurry or altered (see Jarratt, Sartor, Mack, and Watson). I prompted

students to tap into particular experiences (rather than provide generalized recollections)

in my focus groups by asking them to choose and discuss specific documents that they

had composed recently. I also structured my interviews to be almost entirely discourse-

based or document-based, terms I use to mean that in the interviews we focused

discussion on specific documents composed by the interview participant. Many transfer

researchers have adapted the discourse-based interview from Lee Odell, Dixie Goswami,

and Ann Herrington to elicit writers' tacit knowledge and to gain more insight into

writers' understanding of their own work (see Beaufort; Herrington and Curtis; Hilgers,

Stitt-Bergh, and Hussey; Reiff and Bawarshi; Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak).[17] I

followed in this tradition for much the same reason. I prompted focus group participants

to select specific writing experiences to discuss so that I could ensure that their

observations were grounded in something concrete rather than in reconstructed

memories, and I conducted discourse-based interviews because I wanted additional data,

in the form of students' written documents, to guide their self-reports. I also wanted to

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[17] In Odell, Goswami, and Herrington's original use, discourse-based interviews followed a structure meant to elicit "the tacit knowledge the writers brought to bear" on their compositions (222). The interviewer showed the participant samples of his own writing and asked whether he was willing to consider possible alternatives to what he wrote. The interviewer would then ask the participant to talk through the reasons why he made the choices he did. Since that original use, other researchers have used participants' own documents to solicit their ideas but have not necessarily used the same procedure.

give students the chance to consider the relationships between their writing experiences based on actual texts (such as "my design report" and "the email I wrote to my sister yesterday") rather than on default categorization schemes (such as "school writing" and "personal writing").

Finally, I designed this study as I did to approach transfer differently than many studies that call attention to the confines of college students' ability to transfer their writing knowledge. As I note in Chapter 2, many studies of transfer in composition suggest that students' transfer of writing-related knowledge is limited and occurs only rarely (Beaufort; Bergmann and Zepernick; Clark and Hernandez; Downs and Wardle; Driscoll; Freedman, Adam, and Smart; Fraizer; Nelms and Dively; Reiff and Bawarshi). As Doug Brent puts it, these "glass half empty" studies tend to pay attention to "what learning does not transfer as opposed to what does" ("Transfer, Transformation" 402). I designed my research with the hypotheses that students might be making more connections between their writing experiences than researchers tend to notice and that researchers' approaches might account for some of existing studies' less-than-encouraging findings. For example, some studies ask students about their writing only in terms of sequenced academic writing classes (Clark and Hernandez, Driscoll, Fraizer, Johnson and Krase, Nelms and Dively). These studies' implicit assumption that students develop the majority of their writing knowledge in specific writing classes might limit the ways that students interpret their questions about transfer. Other research methods that present different writing contexts as fundamentally dissimilar (see Beaufort; Dias, Freedman, Medway, Paré; Freedman, Adam, and Smart; Reiff and Bawarshi; Russell and Yañez) might have the same inadvertent effect. Their approach might dissuade

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participants from drawing useful connections by suggesting that the domains where they write are incompatible. For example, the Year 4 survey from the Stanford Study of Writing asks, "What are the main *differences* between your class-related writing and out-of-class writing?" (italics mine). Studies that approach transfer in these ways may make it difficult for students to see the relevance of the writing they do in non-academic settings or forge connections between the writing they compose in different contexts.

Rather than assume difference, then, I opened space for students to consider the possibility of similarity. In other words, I formed my focus group and interview questions with the hunch that students might see their writing across contexts as usefully similar if the researcher makes it possible for them to locate potential connections. The final survey (Year 5) in the Stanford Study of Writing makes this turn as well, asking, "Does the writing you do at work/school inform or affect writing you do in other contexts—or vice versa?" This question—like the questions I ask in my survey, focus group discussions, and interviews—primes the possibility of connection or transfer. Asking questions that indicate the possibility of connection may have biased my participants to seek connections they may not otherwise have seen or considered. At the same time, asking questions that assume difference (as many other studies do) may bias students in the other direction, inhibiting the connection-making students may have otherwise pursued. I thus set up my study not to discover how students do or do not overcome barriers to the transfer of writing knowledge but rather to discover, when students *do* notice relationships between their writing experiences, *what kinds of relationships* they identify and how the connections they do draw might inform their ability to transfer successfully.

Guiding Questions

I began this study with the goal of determining whether, when, and how students transfer their writing skills and abilities across different contexts, assignments, and writing projects. My central research question asked, "How do students transfer, partially transfer, or not transfer their writing abilities between and across the various domains in which they write?" I did not ask this question directly of my participants, however. Like Brent, I approached the word "transfer" with caution, noting (as he does in this chapter's epigraph) that previous studies of transfer may have biased their participants *against* noticing their own experiences of transfer by allowing them to "apply the same narrow definition of transfer that many writers have argued to be inadequate" ("Crossing Boundaries" 567). Because Brent did not want his study participants to "miss [the] more subtle moments of transfer" they experience, he chose not to focus on explicit questions of transfer but rather to "pursu[e] the conversation where it led to find clues from which [he] could extrapolate more information" ("Crossing Boundaries" 567). While my focus groups and interviews were not quite as open-ended as Brent's, he and I approached the issue of transfer research from a similar angle, both fashioning our studies to glean information on transfer without relying on the word "transfer" itself.

I thus asked my questions about transfer by breaking down my central research question into two component parts. These two components addressed the question of transfer somewhat indirectly:

> (1) If at all, in what ways do students relate their texts and writing
> experiences (from across contexts) to one another?

(2) Drawing on any resources or prior experiences, how do students

"figure out" how to craft their texts so they will succeed with a given

audience?

The first question of the sequence addresses the first step of transfer: how students relate

or "see connections" between their writing across contexts. Students cannot

recontextualize or repurpose their knowledge from different experiences if they see those

experiences as unrelated to one another. By asking how students *relate* their writing

experiences, I gained insight into the ways they might transfer knowledge based on those

perceived relationships. This question builds on the "actor-oriented approach," forwarded

by education researcher Joanne Lobato, which I introduce in Chapter 2. Lobato defines

transfer as "the personal construction of relations of similarity across activities (i.e.,

seeing situations as the same)" ("How Design Experiments" 20). Like Lobato, I

characterize transfer as relying on "the personal construction of relations," but my

definition extends those relations beyond "similarity" to include other possible ways of

constructing relationships. Thus by asking *in what ways* students relate their writing

across contexts, I was able to gather information on the various types of relational

reasoning—including, but not limited to, relations of similarity, or what we might call

analogous reasoning—that student-writers engage in when considering their writing from

across contexts. The question allowed for the possibility that students would practice

other types of relational reasoning as well. I present students' responses to this question

in Chapter 4.

The second question of my sequence asks more explicitly about how students

draw on prior knowledge in new writing situations. That is, based on the relations they

construe, how do writers mine their communicative experiences to extract relevant knowledge for new writing situations? This question inquires into transfer from a more traditional angle, thinking of it as the repurposing of knowledge across contexts. My findings from this question led me to address the issue of what sources students draw from to "sell" their writing or transfer a viable *ethos*. I address this second question in Chapter 5.

Research Site and Participants

My study is situated on the idea that many students learn as much (if not more) about writing from their extracurricular experiences as they do from their academic coursework. In "Rhetorical Education and Student Activism," Jonathan Alexander and Susan Jarratt interview a group of activist students who waged a political protest by strategically interrupting a speaker visiting their campus. These students explain in their interviews that they pursued this approach to activism not as a result of their academic education but rather as a result of their non-academic education. In the article, the authors show that the activist students see their "extracurricular, self-sponsored educational experiences" as far more important to the meaningful rhetorical work they do than their school-sponsored education experiences (541).

Like Alexander and Jarratt, I designed my study with the intention that it would highlight the oft-overlooked non-academic sources of learning that students draw on when they write. Thus when selecting my participants for this study and applying for IRB approval, I chose to recruit from a population of students who had experience with extracurricular activities that might play a role in their approaches to or beliefs about

writing. I recruited my first round of participants from the listserv of the Leadership and

Community Service-Learning (LCSL) program on our university campus. The LCSL

office organizes the many service-learning and community partnerships offered by the

university; its mission is to promote social change through community engagement

(LCSL website). LCSL's offerings vary widely, ranging from one-day service

opportunities to long-term commitments with organizations such as America

Reads*America Counts and Terps for Change. The program also organizes travel

opportunities, such as Alternative Breaks; leadership seminars and retreats; and

internships with non-profit organizations. The LCSL program director gave me access to

the LCSL email listserv, which reaches 3390 students (or approximately 13% of the

university's undergraduate population), in exchange for a report of relevant findings at

the conclusion of my research project. These 3390 students have all either participated in

or expressed interest in one or more of the activities sponsored by LCSL. I emailed the

link to my initial survey directly to the students on that listerv. By targeting this

population, I ensured that all of my participants had at least sought out a "self-sponsored

educational experience," one they might tap when trying to write in a new rhetorical

situation.

  The large, public, research university where I collected my data features a wide

range of academic programs and courses of study, and its student body represents a

diverse set of cultural, geographical, and linguistic backgrounds. One advantage of

recruiting study participants from the LCSL listserv is it provided me with a

representative sample of the university's undergraduate population as a whole. Students

involved in LCSL come from across the various colleges on the university campus and

reflect the multitude of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups represented at the
university. For example, the graphs below (Figure 3.1) represent the race and ethnicity of
my 319 survey participants as compared to the university's undergraduate student body
as a whole (*UMD Undergraduate Student Profile*):
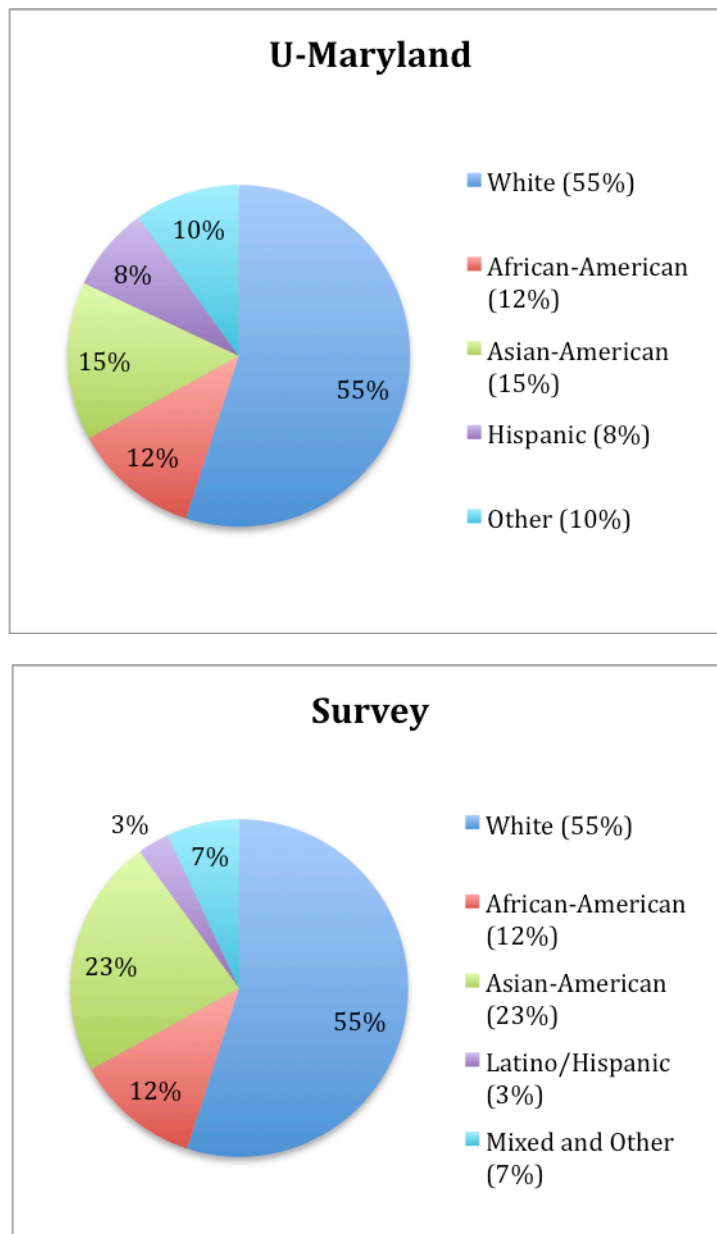
Figure 3.1: Racial/ethnic makeup of survey participants as compared with undergraduate population as a
whole

As the graphs in Figure 3.1 show, the same percentage of students of color took my survey as a random sampling from the undergraduate student body would have yielded (45%) and, in general, the distribution by race/ethnicity maps closely on to university's demographics overall. In addition, recruiting from the LCSL listserv helped me ensure that students from a wide array of majors and programs of study took my survey. In sum, students from over 53 majors took the survey I distributed. These included students from the colleges of Behavioral and Social Sciences; Architecture; Journalism; Arts and Humanities; Engineering; Computer, Math, and Natural Sciences; Business; and Education.

The only significant demographic bias of my survey, and as a result subsequent stages of the study, was the class year of the participants. The graph below (Figure 3.2) represents the college standing of the survey participants:
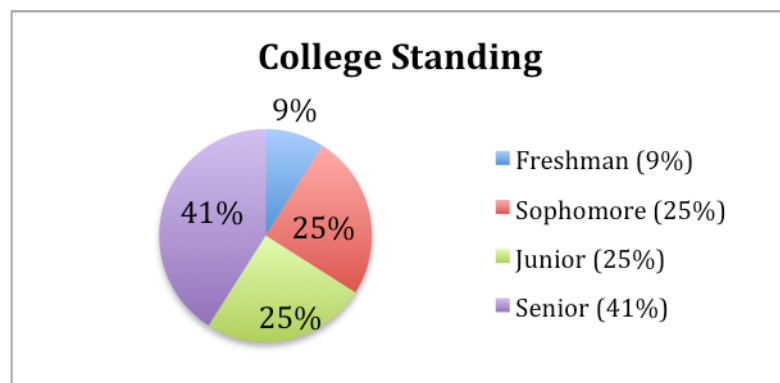
Figure 3.2: College standing of survey participants

Although it was unsurprising that only 9% of the survey participants were first-year students (they had just begun their college careers when they survey was disseminated), it is unclear as to why so many more seniors took this survey than juniors or sophomores. While there are slightly more seniors on the LCSL listserv than sophomores and juniors, that does not account for the high number of seniors who chose to participate. Whatever

the reason, the consequence is that the survey responses—and later stages of the study—tended to include more upperclassmen than lowerclassmen. Thus the findings I present in this project represent primarily the experiences of advanced rather than beginning college students, those who have had the opportunity to engage in many academic, extracurricular, and professional activities and writing experiences during their college years. As a result, my study findings may reflect the insights of students who have more self-awareness or greater writing knowledge than a similar study of first-year students may have yielded.

Each stage of my study also served as a means of recruiting participants for the subsequent stage. That is, the students who participated in the second stage (focus groups), third stage (writing submissions), and fourth stage (interviews) of my study opted to participate during the previous stage. Following the 319 who participated in the survey, 27 students participated in the focus groups, 14 submitted writing samples, and 10 participated in the interviews. The final group of focal participants—the 10 who submitted writing samples and participated in interviews about those samples—were those who, for whatever reason, self-selected to return for more conversation about writing across contexts of their lives. These students are very involved in campus life and are likely to be highly motivated writers. I offered relatively insubstantial incentives throughout the recruitment process: Chipotle burritos for each focus group, $5 cash for writing samples, and $10 cash for an interview. In the case that there were more interested students than there were spots, such as in the case of the focus groups, I recruited participants on a first-come, first-served basis.[18]

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[18] It is worth noting that there was incredible interest in these group discussions. Seventy-eight of the 319 survey takers expressed interested in the focus groups. Within only 36 hours, 59 of the 78

The students I focus most closely on in this project are the ten who participated in all four stages of the study. Below, I sketch out some characteristics of each of these participants[19] (Table 3.3):

students I emailed with a focus group invitation responded with interest and their availability. As my numbers show, I was able to include fewer than half of the students who expressed interest.

[19] All participants selected their own pseudonyms.

Name	Sex	Race/Ethnicity[20]	Class Year	Major(s)	Extracurricular Involvement (selected)	Future Career Goals/Field
CJ	M	Jewish	Senior	Marketing and Management	Triathlete, Active Blogger and "addicted to Twitter," Intern at Financial Sector Nonprofits	Financial Reform, Social Entreprenuership
Diddy	M	Indian-American	Senior	Neuro-physiology and Psychology (Pre-Med)	Radio Station Engineer and DJ (heavy metal station), Resident Advisor (RA), Lyrics writer	Medicine (Doctor)
Erika	F	Japanese	Junior	Special Education	Freelance Web and Graphic Designer, Aneurism and AVM Awareness Project, Disability Advocate	Special Education or Brain Injury Rehabilitation
Izzy	F	White	Senior	English, Psychology	Active Minds (mental health club), Writing Center Tutor, Blogger (esp. about study abroad)	Counselor, Psychologist, or Public Health field
James	M	White	Senior	Bio-engineering	President of Student Society of Bioengineers, Poet, Music Reviewer, Student Legislature Rep	Bio-engineering
Nkem	F	Ghanaian-American	Senior	Arabic, Government and Politics	Alternative Breaks Trip Leader, Admin Assistant to Director of Honors College, Intern with NGO (in Ghana), Saturday Academy volunteer	Public Policy
Preston	M	White	Senior	Marketing, Government and Politics	Student Legislature Rep, Model UN, Blogger (on policy sites and political issues)	Marketing or Public Service (IR focus)
Robert	M	Ashkenaz	Senior	Anthropology	Trail Club (maintenance officer and hike leader), Active Blogger (esp. about study abroad), Farm and Ranch worker	Sustainable Agriculture
Silver	M	Guyanese	Junior	Biological Anthropology	Church involvement, Beyond the Classroom, Student Legislature Rep, Basketball player	Nonprofit Work, Forwarding Social Justice
Yuri	M	Jewish	Senior	Cell Biology (Pre-Med)	Runner, Student Legislature Rep, Undergraduate Teaching Assistant (UTA), STEM Tutor	Medicine (Doctor)

Table 3.3: Characteristics of the focal ten participants (those who completed the survey, participated in focus groups, submitted writing samples, and participated in interviews)

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[20] I identify "Race/Ethnicity" with the labels that participants chose to describe themselves.

As a whole, my ten focal participants were involved in multiple activities on and off campus. Some, such as Yuri and Erika, participated in a relatively cohesive set of activities that forwarded specific, career-oriented goals. For example, consistent with her goals to work as a disability advocate or special educator, Erika created and maintained a website that offered tips for students with learning disabilities. Similarly, Yuri strategically cultivated his ambition to be a doctor by working as a teaching assistant (TA) for a microbiology class. He explains why he opted to do this in a final portfolio about his TA experience: "I want [this experience] to teach me skills on how to effectively communicate and teach scientific concepts. As a physician, I might want to teach at medical school one day, so this would be immensely helpful." Others, such as Izzy and Diddy, participated in a wide range of activities and expressed that many of these activities might not have anything to do with their future careers. For instance, Izzy blogged actively on topics unrelated to school or her professional goals, and Diddy dedicated considerable time to his role in the college's heavy metal radio station. Other students, such as James and CJ, engaged passionately in activities that forwarded their future goals (for James, bioengineering; for CJ, social entrepreneurship) as well as activities that were unrelated to their career paths but nonetheless mattered a great deal to them. James, for instance, committed significant time to writing poetry; CJ trained for and competed in triathlons. I introduce these students' many extracurricular commitments to underscore their range and importance to the students. Not all of my focal ten participants were passionate about their academic pursuits. All, however, were passionate about their extracurricular activities and involvement.

The process of interviewing these focal ten was enjoyable for me as the

interviewer and seemed to be enjoyable for the participants as well. The recordings of

these interviews reveal frequent laughter that the transcripts cannot capture. As an

interviewer, I worked hard to develop rapport with my participants to help them feel

comfortable discussing writing that was often personal in nature and not intended for me

as an audience. I did this in part because it is my *modus operandi* as a teacher, and I drew

on my experiences as a teacher as I assumed the role of researcher. I also endeavored to

make the interviews a pleasant experience for students because, as we learn from Jarratt,

Mack, Sartor, and Watson, "enjoyment" or pleasure can enhance pedagogical memory

(64). I considered it possible that a pleasant interview atmosphere might also enhance the

retrieval of their past experiences with writing. After conducting these interviews, I saw

my participants around campus, and many stopped by my office when I was an assistant

director in the writing center to fill me in on their latest writing and career pursuits. Silver

gave me a tote bag as a thank you gift, and Izzy, whom I also knew as a writing tutor,

treated me to lunch.[21]

I share this information about the focal ten students because they were, for the

most part, excited about writing, excited to talk about writing, and excited about

themselves as writers. This is partly a result of what they brought to our focus groups and

interviews and partly, I think, a result of my study design. Rather than requiring students

to submit essays from a particular class or experience, as many studies in our field do, I

asked students to choose selections of their own writing to submit to the study. This

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[21] When I emailed four participants a full 18 months after our interviews to ask for their feedback on an article I wrote about this study, they all wrote back within 24 hours. Two provided extensive supportive comments and the other two shared general excitement about being featured in a publication.

procedure allowed them the space to select documents they "felt proud of," which was a component of the guidelines for submission. In addition, I gave participants the chance to think through their writing on their own terms and make connections that worked for them. I did this by asking questions about specific documents first, raising the issue of transfer only at the end of our interviews, as I'll discuss in more detail below. Though I hesitate to characterize students' dispositions, because that is not what I set out to study, most of my participants demonstrated an open-minded approach—something like what Elizabeth Wardle calls a "problem-exploring" disposition ("Creative Repurposing") or what Dana Driscoll labels a "connected" mentality—most of the time. I attribute this open-mindedness in part to the positive atmosphere of the interviews, which may have encouraged the connection making or problem-solving itself.

In addition to sharing insights and experiences from these focal ten, I report data from eleven of my remaining focus group participants (Tara, Steve, Eleanor, Catherine, Lex, Margaret, Nora, Laurel, Mary, Charley, and Bethany) as well. These participants did not submit writing samples or interview with me. They did, however, explain moments of writing in the focus groups that related to one another in useful ways, report "figuring out" how to write in new situations, or discuss moments of transfer that they remembered. I briefly introduce each of these focus group participants when I discuss their transfer experiences in Chapters 4 and 5.

Research Design and Data Collection

I designed my study in four stages so that I could address my research questions both with breadth and depth. My approach resembled a funnel: I began by gathering big-

picture data through my survey and increasingly narrowed my scope to gain greater detail

from a smaller number of participants. I administrated a large-scale survey (stage one) in

Fall 2012 in order to gather enough data to make generalizations about what students

write and how they relate their writing. I conducted focus groups (stage two), collected

writing samples (stage three), and conducted interviews (stage four) in Spring 2013 to

gain insight into the nuances of individual student experiences with transfer. The writing

sample collection was important for reasons I explain above: students' writing samples

enabled me to triangulate their self-reports with their actual writing, and they provided

fodder for discussion of *specific* texts and experiences in the interviews.

As I have mentioned, at each stage of this project I worked hard to put choice,

both of writing experiences and words used to describe those experiences, in the hands of

the participants. In the survey, this meant I offered multiple open-ended questions and

used the "display logic" function to ensure each survey was tailored to the specific

participant (based on previous responses, the survey offered different choices). As I

discuss in more detail below, I also was careful, when designing the survey, to use

student-invented categories and terminology. In the focus groups and interviews, I

prompted students to select their own writing experiences to contribute to the discussion;

the interviews were semi-structured to allow participants to pursue the lines of inquiry

that most appealed to them. Finally, I designed the writing submissions form in such a

way that students had the opportunity, within a few categorical parameters, to select and

describe (in their own words) the samples they chose to share.

This study yielded quite a large amount of data. In sum, I collected 319 survey

responses, 13 hours and 28 minutes of audio recordings (which amount to 356 transcribed

pages for both focus groups and interviews), and 387 pages of writing submissions. The chart below (Table 3.4) presents the data I gathered at each stage:

Stage	# of participants	Recording Time	Pages
Survey	319	n/a	n/a
Focus Groups	27	3 hours 28 min	78*
Writing Submissions	14 (84 documents)	n/a	387
Interviews	10	9 hours 54 min	278*
TOTAL data	n/a	**13 hours 22 min**	**743 pages**

* indicates transcribed pages

Table 3.4: Amount of data gathered at each stage of my study

Below, I describe each stage of data collection in detail.

Survey

The primary goal of my survey was to determine what types of writing students report composing in different contexts of their lives. I began there to get a lay of the land—to ascertain the fundamentals of the writing experiences students engage in during their college years. A secondary goal was to determine whether students saw those writing experiences as related to one another or not. This secondary goal is important because, as scholars such as Nowacek and Reiff and Bawarshi have established, students first need to see relationships between their writing experiences in order to transfer their knowledge. In order to gather this data, I modeled my survey instrument after the surveys that Reiff and Bawarshi developed for their study, "Tracing Discursive Resources." The goal of their study, similar to the goal of mine, was to determine how students make use of their prior genre knowledge when faced with new writing tasks.[22] Their research team

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[22] Reiff and Bawarshi's study focused on how students make use of their prior genre knowledge for their first-year composition class writing in particular. My study, on the contrary, does not take first-year composition as its target space.

disseminated two slightly different surveys (one to students at the University of Tennessee and another to students at the University of Washington) to inquire into the types of writing that students compose in different "domains" of their lives, prior to college. The authors define their "domains" as "school," "work," and "outside of school or work." The U-Washington survey instrument asks participants to indicate which types of writing they composed in each of these domains and divides the 40 possible "types of writing" into different categories, such as "correspondence," "essays/papers," "informal writing," and "public writing." Their survey question about public writing, for instance, is copied below (Figure 3.5):

7. Public writing

	for school	for work	outside school and work
letter to the editor	☐	☐	☐
blog or online journal	☐	☐	☐
web page design	☐	☐	☐
web page text	☐	☐	☐
social networking profile (i.e. Facebook, MySpace, etc.)	☐	☐	☐

Figure 3.5: Sample question from Reiff and Bawarshi's study of students' writing across domains

Although this survey influenced the way I designed my own, I made changes to its structure, which I explain below. I also did not adopt their list of 40 "types of writing" but rather worked with undergraduate students to develop my own. I did so because I was distributing my survey five years after the U-Tennessee and U-Washington teams distributed theirs, and I suspected the most common genres and names for those genres, particularly in the case of online writing, might have shifted. I also wanted to ensure my

survey used the nomenclature most commonly heard and used by its intended local audience.

To develop the "types of writing" for the survey that undergraduate students might have experienced during their college years (not their pre-college years), I gathered input from one class of 12 first-year students and 60 writing tutors from the University of Maryland writing center.[23] These 72 students listed all the types of writing they had composed during their undergraduate years, and I sifted through the lists to gather the most frequently mentioned genres. I retained the students' own language for these genres whenever possible. I then shared the long list with a group of six undergraduate writing tutors. This group helped me narrow the list to 50 options. They also helped me further revise the language so the options would be listed using student-driven (rather than teacher-driven) nomenclature. With these 50 options, then, I developed a survey that asked participants to select all the types of writing they used in three domains. This process helped ensure that the genres I listed on my survey reflected students' actual writing experiences rather than my perspective on or hunch about what their writing experiences may be.

Rather than using Reiff and Bawarshi's domains of "school," "work," and "outside school and work" (the categories that appear in the U-Washington survey), I defined my three survey domains as "personal," "academic," and "extracurricular." I chose these three categories to most accurately represent the different overarching

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[23] I limited my study to the writing students composed during their college years in order to ensure its scope was reasonable. My study also did not set out to focus on vertical transfer, or how students transfer knowledge forward, but rather on how students locate relationships among their writing experiences. Finally, my study did not inquire into students pre-college writing because I did not aim to investigate students' transition from high school to college in particular, as Reiff and Bawarshi's study set out to do.

purposes of the types of writing that college students engage in, given my findings from the process above and research in the field. My categories are based in part on the Stanford Study of Writing, which divides students' writing into "school" and "out-of-class" or "self-sponsored" writing ("Performing Writing" 229-31). The Stanford Study further distinguishes between the writing students compose out of class: "outside of class, our students compose not only for themselves, their families, and their friends, but also for campus groups, off-campus organizations, and workplace audiences" (230). As such, "out-of-class" writing ends up being, in the words of their participant Keiko, "either very casual or very professional"—and indeed, for many of their participants, "the *purposefulness* of extracurricular writing stands out" [italics mine] (230). Following this model, I divided the out-of-class writing that students engage in into the categories of "personal" and "extracurricular" to reflect the often vast differences between the two in terms of purpose, audience, and constraints. On my survey, I defined the "personal" as writing that involves interpersonal communication, creative composition, and self-sponsored projects; and the "extracurricular" as writing that involves anything composed for an out-of-school organization, service activity, job, internship, or public purpose. Finally, I defined "academic" writing as any document composed for school, at the university level.

With these domains in mind, I recruited a group of eight undergraduate writing tutors to serve as "beta testers." They piloted the penultimate version, providing feedback on phrasing, arrangement, and readability. Once the survey had made it through beta testing, I finalized it and distributed it via email to the LCSL listserv. The survey's opening questions requested students' input on which 50 "types of writing" they compose

in each of the three domains. The survey question looked like this (with the options appearing in a randomized order) (Figure 3.6):

Figure 3.6: Initial survey question about extracurricular writing

Once participants made their selections for this question (and others like it), the questions that followed only offered participants those "types of writing" they selected, using "display logic" to personalize the survey and reduce the number of items participants saw on one screen at a time. For instance, students selected which genres they composed most frequently from a list of only the genres they reported composing in an earlier question. These targeted questions helped ensure that each survey taker's experience was unique to her own writing background.

After my survey asked participants which types of writing they composed in different domains, its questions shifted to inquire more directly into transfer. The second half of the survey included questions asking students if they believe the writing they compose in one domain affects the writing they compose in another. I had initially only designed these as Likert-scale-style questions, such as the following (Figure 3.7):

Q4.3. My **academic/school writing influences** the writing I do in my **extracurricular activities.**

Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
○	○	○	○	○	○

Figure 3.7: Likert-scale-style question about how writing in one domain "influences" writing in another

These questions ask participants for a quick reaction to the question of whether (and if so, to what degree) their composing practices in different domains influence each other. During the pilot stage of the survey, however, one of the undergraduate beta testers advised that I include an open-ended follow-up question as well because, as she suggested, survey takers might want to elaborate on or explain their responses to the Likert scale questions. I took her advice and added the question, "Do you have any other thoughts about how or why the kinds of writing you do in different areas of your life influence each other?" Her suggestion was fortunate as coded responses to this question yielded some of the most valuable survey data for this project. Student responses to this question offered far more nuance that the Likert scale questions could have provided.

I used Qualtrics to distribute my survey in November 2012. I left it open for two weeks and got 319 responses (9.4% response rate). For a PDF of the complete survey, see Appendix A.

Focus Groups

I conducted four 50-minute focus groups in February 2013. The goal of each focus group was to see how students related their writing experiences from academic and non-academic contexts. The surveys provided me with a sense that students do see relationships between their writing across domains; the purpose of the focus groups was to clarify *how* they relate their writing. I sought to gather information about the relationships students see or craft between their writing experiences because, as I indicate in Chapter 1, Chapter 2, and earlier in this chapter, the question of transfer may hinge on the question of relational reasoning. According to education researchers Patricia A. Alexander and P. Karen Murphy, analogical reasoning (which is one type of relational reasoning) and transfer are so similar that they are essentially the same thing (564-65, 573). Defining analogical reasoning as "the ability to establish relationships between two seemingly dissimilar entities," Alexander and Murphy argue that, at the very least, "if learners fail to see the similarities between particular tasks or contexts, then it is improbable that they will engage in the mindful transfer of conceptual or procedural knowledge across tasks or contexts" (564). The logic goes that analogical reasoning is a necessary part of transfer; the two go hand-in-hand.

Analogical reasoning, however, concerns itself only with similarities. In genre and composition studies, researchers have drawn our attention to a phenomenon related to analogical reasoning: "not talk." In "Anyone for Tennis," Anne Freadman makes the case that we identify genres by their similarities but also—and crucially—by their differences. Reiff and Bawarshi ("Tracing Discursive Resources") and Nowacek (*Agents of Integration*) refer to Freadman's "not statements" as "not talk." Reiff and Bawarshi

show that students who engage in "not talk" transferred more often and more effectively than those who did not (325). Nowacek likewise reports that the most successful students in her study (on the "medieval diary" assignment, see Chapter 1) were those who "understood the ways in which their prior experiences with the genre of diary did *not* apply" (86). These studies directed my attention to the possibility that transfer might not hinge solely on analogical reasoning, or students seeing relations of similarity, but also students seeing relations of other types—including relations of difference.

When I designed my focus groups, then, I composed my questions so that students had the opportunity to *compare and contrast* their writing from across domains. I was not sure, going into the focus group discussions, what types of relational reasoning the participants might engage in; I was aware only of the possibility that there might be more types of relational reasoning at play than had been previously identified by the transfer research in education. I thus designed my focus groups to ask participants to relate their writing experiences through both similarity and difference. In so doing, I set students up to engage in other types of relational reasoning strategies, including both "not talk" and strategies I had not yet even considered.

I designed my focus group protocol according to Richard A. Krueger and Mary A. Casey's *Focus Groups* guide, being sure to include opening, introduction, and transition questions before asking my key and ending questions.[24] To get participants warmed up

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[24] Krueger and Casey's guide provides an overview of each part of this procedure as well as a host of helpful tips for asking effective questions in a group discussion. They explain that the purpose of the opening question is to quickly get all participants talking. The introductory questions are meant to introduce the specific topic of discussion and get the conversation started. The transition questions then help prepare the participants for the 2-5 key questions, which should get at the heart of the research study's goals. Finally, the ending questions are meant to (1) provide space for reflection, (2) solicit a synopsis of each participant's ideas, and (3) ensure the researcher has not missed anything important.

for relational reasoning, I asked them to describe, at two separate times, two pieces of

writing they composed: one for non-academic purposes and one for academic purposes.

In addition to asking for a short description of each document, I asked participants to

explain how they "figured out" how to compose it and what (if any) resources they drew

on. After the participants talked through their two experiences in detail, I asked them to

compare and contrast those specific writing experiences with each other. The majority of

my useable findings came from the compare/contrast element of the conversation.

Students forged idiosyncratic connections between their writing experiences and

reasoned relationally in ways I could not have anticipated. Students' relational reasoning

in my focus groups informs much of my fourth chapter, "Forging Connections:

Relational Reasoning Across Contexts." For the complete focus group protocol, see

Appendix B.

Writing Submissions

     I requested samples of students' writing using an online form (Wufoo) so that

they could submit, in advance of our interview conversation, compositions of their

choice. In her study of undergraduate writing development at Pepperdine, Lee Ann

Carroll similarly gave participants the option to include any writing they would like,

within minimal parameters, in their portfolios. For her study, Carroll requested that

students include representative samples of work that showed significant learning as well

as samples that did not (35). The importance of Carroll's model for my study is that

students were able to select their own texts rather than being required to submit writing

from a specific class or that fits very particular criteria. In keeping with that principle, I

asked my participants to submit documents of their choice, prompting them to choose at least one piece of writing for each of the three domains I identified in my survey (personal, extracurricular, and academic). Participants were able to submit up to 10 files, three for each category and one "bonus" option (where a student could submit any additional piece of writing she did not already upload). The form could accommodate Microsoft Word documents, PDFs, Power Point files, links to web pages, audio files, video files, and more.

I asked students to submit their writing samples on this form for a particular purpose: the sets of submissions provided a writing-based snapshot of each participant *in his or her own terms* before our interview conversations. In addition to prompting participants to upload documents, the form requested that they label the type of writing they submitted, describe why they wrote it, and explain why they submitted it. This process of choosing, describing, and submitting writing samples from across their lives may have primed my participants to start thinking about their writing experiences in a different way before they even came in for an interview with me. At the very least, it prompted participants to think about why a given piece of writing would be worth sharing—why, in some way, it was remarkable or noteworthy. The majority of the participants indicated that they submitted a piece because they were proud of it or because they saw it as representative in some way (of their typical writing or ability level). Participants also reported choosing to submit the writing they did because they enjoyed writing it, found it difficult to write, "believed in it," or thought it would be interesting for me to read. Fourteen students, or 52% of focus group participants, submitted writing samples. My online writing submission form enabled me to review

each set of student writing before each interview and made it easy to organize and bring participants' writing submissions to their interviews. See Appendix C for an example of a completed writing submission form.

Interviews

As I discuss in the introduction to this chapter, I chose to conduct discourse- or document-based interviews to gain insight into writers' understanding of their own work and ensure participants' observations were grounded in something concrete. I also wanted additional data, in the form of students' written documents, to triangulate their self-reports. Students' written documents might help me see potential discrepancies between the ideas students articulated and their ability to demonstrate their understandings in practice. With those goals in mind, I organized my interviews around discussions of specific documents, selected by the participant. If possible, I tried to make sure that we talked about at least one writing sample from each category (personal, academic, extracurricular). I had a series of possible questions for each document, but even while I pursued them, I let the participants lead the discussion in whatever directions made sense to them. Their sometimes circuitous paths of inquiry occasionally led to discovery (as in the case of Izzy's realization about her source of *ethos* in the email to her club, see Chapter 5) and occasionally led nowhere (as in the case of James's discussion of his friend's eulogy—a moving discussion, to be sure, but not one about writing or transfer). If the participant was interested in continuing to talk, I let him keep talking regardless of whether his ideas were directly relevant to my research questions. Overall, I conducted

10 interviews in March and April 2013. These interviews ranged in length from 45 to 90 minutes.

Before explaining how and why I designed my interview protocol the way I did, let me briefly describe the protocol itself. I began my interviews by asking participants to choose one document (academic, personal, or extracurricular) to open our conversation. I then asked two questions about the chosen document to provide basic context: "What motivated you to write this?" and "Can you talk me through this piece?" Following the context-based questions, I inquired into the different roles the writers played or stances they took as the authors of the piece they chose; I list those three questions below. Next, I asked the participants one question about transfer—how they "figured out" how to write the piece, and what (if any) prior knowledge they drew from to do so. I closed the part of the conversation about each individual document by requesting that the participants evaluate their writing, explaining anything they might change, in hindsight, to improve it. Only after asking all of these questions did I inquire explicitly into relationships between documents or domains of writing, asking if the pieces the authors discussed might be related or have informed one another. In some interviews, I instead asked what "roles," from those identified earlier, were easier or harder for participants to play, and why. This question, as well as the three about "character" above, encouraged students to share ideas that eventually led to my chapter on *ethos* (Chapter 5). Occasionally, this part of the interview functioned more as open discussion about how the participant remembered "learning to write" or a space for the participant to theorize about writing in general. Although the entire interview was open to the participants' own thought processes, the

ending was most malleable, based on the participants' own interests and the themes that emerged as the interviews progressed. See Appendix D for the interview protocol.

Two types of sources informed the way I designed this protocol: other researchers' protocols and my own preliminary survey and focus group data. The other protocols provided both positive examples and negative examples that helped shape the way I designed my own questions. The non-examples—interview procedures I sought to avoid—were those that inquired directly into transfer or took a deductive approach. Brent argues that explicit questions about transfer may inadvertently make it more difficult for participants and interviewers to see transfer at play ("Crossing Boundaries" 567). In their study of writing instructors, for instance, Nelms and Dively ask upper-level Communication Across the Curriculum (CAC) instructors to report what skills their students seem to possess and/or lack, attributing the missing skills to failed transfer from FYC. By asking instructors to trace skills over time, this study takes a deductive approach to transfer and implicitly defines it as the reapplication of skills learned in an earlier, academic setting. Unsurprisingly, it reported minimal transfer between first-year writing courses and later CAC courses. Bergmann and Zepernick's interview questions also ask directly about transfer. While their study is otherwise quite compelling, their central interview question about transfer may have had the adverse effect of making it difficult for participants to identify their own experiences with cross-contextual transfer or micro-transfer. In their first focus group protocol, for example, the researchers ask directly about transfer: "How easy is it for you to use what you've learned in a writing class in another class or another writing situation?" (148). This question may have made it difficult for students to see transfer at play because they are trying to fashion a coherent

narrative that is based on the "knowledge application" metaphor rather than responding

with knowledge transformation or micro-transfer moments in mind.

In contrast, interview protocols designed by the Stanford Study group and the

Reiff and Bawarshi "Tracing Discursive Resources" research team provided examples

that I sought to emulate.[25] Both of these interview protocols ask about transfer more

obliquely. The interview protocol from U-Washington, which is slightly different from

the protocol for U-Tennessee, asks participants a series of questions about how they

figured out how to compose a specific essay for their FYC class, focusing on the

students' experiences with that particular piece rather than on transfer in general. The

Stanford Study—which is not set up to be a study of transfer, per se—does ask questions

about transfer, but only after first asking for a fair amount of description. For example,

one question from their Year 5 (final) interview protocol asks the follow series of

questions:

> Outside of work/school, what kinds of writing do you do? Is any of that
>
> writing collaborative? Or research-based? Do you use multimedia? Do
>
> you do any writing as a concerned citizen (e.g. letters to elected officials
>
> or newspapers, or postings to online discussions)? Do you participate in
>
> any activities that combine writing and live performance? Does the writing
>
> you do at work/school inform or affect writing you do in other contexts—
>
> or vice versa?

The last question asks about cross-contextual transfer (without using that term, of

course)—but only as a part of a series of descriptive questions that gets the writer

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[25] Brent's work helped shape the theory behind my interview protocol but not the specifics; his
protocol from "Crossing Boundaries" is not published.

thinking about specific experiences first. This ordering compels the student to first reflect on specific experiences and only then consider whether those experiences might affect one another. The structure of this question is one I chose to emulate because it helps the student ground her thoughts in the concrete details of her writing experience before she attempts to assert a response to a more open-ended question.

These two interview protocols also influenced my choice to ask questions about what "role" or "character" my participants see themselves playing in any given document. The Stanford Study interviews ask multiple questions about "voice," such as the following: "What are your (different) writing 'voice(s),' and what influences you to choose to write in a particular voice (i.e., your role, audience, objective or goal, medium (or mediums) available, context)?" These questions may have led to the Stanford Study's findings about the "performativity" of writing. The interview protocol for U-Tennessee (though not its counterpart from U-Washington) also asks about voice. One of their questions asks, in reference to a specific document, "What kind of voice did you try to adopt or image of yourself did you try to project? How did you try to make yourself sound like that in what you write?" By asking about what "image of yourself" the participants tried to project, this question implicitly asks about *ethos* as well. Finally, Bergmann and Zepernick use the word "tone" to ask a similar question of their participants. They ask, "When you're trying to achieve a professional tone, what do you have in mind as a gauge for what makes writing sound professional?" (149). Like the U-Tennessee survey question, this question inquires into the rhetorical moves associated with the presentation of a certain *ethos*.

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I sought to learn more about these concepts of voice, tone, or *ethos* in order to better understand what specific moves students might make in their prose to achieve effective transfer. Many transfer studies focus on students' ability to transfer big picture concepts, such as writing process knowledge (Beaufort, Cleary), rhetorical knowledge (Beaufort; Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak), and meta-awareness (Wardle, "Understanding 'Transfer'"). Although these studies demonstrate how big picture understandings facilitate transfer, they do not address the smaller-scale moves that credible writers make—moves that, in aggregate, create the sense of a credible *ethos*. I began this study with the suspicion that, in many cases, writers may transfer their *ethos*-generating moves from other realms. I thus sought to investigate more closely students' ability to project a credible *ethos* in their writing through their various rhetorical moves, including the tone or voice they adopt.

The survey data I collected and focus group discussions I conducted prior to this point confirmed the value of inquiring into the concept of "voice" or *ethos* in my study of transfer. Many of my survey responses to the question of "influence" (whether students see writing from across domains as mutually informing) related to tone or voice. Students expressed interest in "sounding a certain way," especially when they felt they needed to sound "professional." My focus groups bolstered my hunch that students expended significant energy trying to sound like they belonged in whatever role they were playing. They did not, however, provide sufficient data on how students developed or transferred that voice or *ethos*. In addition, the concept of voice, tone, or stance gave me a way to assess the relative success of a piece of writing. As I read through students' writing samples, I found that looking for markers of tone or stance helped me gauge the writers'

relative ability to project a credible persona to their intended audience. In my protocol, I thus ask three questions about character or stance. They are as follows:

1. Who are you acting like or who are you trying to be in this piece? What character are you taking on?

2. Can you point out specific phrases that make you sound the way you wanted to sound? Or that make you sound "in character"?

3. Where did you learn to write that phrase or to sound like that? What were you drawing on?

Students' responses to the first two questions gave me a starting point to return to their written texts and see if those texts indeed managed to use phrases to convey the character they were trying to take on. Students' responses to the third question eventually led to my findings about students' sources of *ethos* (Chapter 5).

Data Analysis

By the end of my data collection process I had quite a pile of information: 319 survey responses, over 13 hours of recordings, and 84 writing samples. I immediately transcribed (or paid to have transcribed) all the recordings and found that the transcription and reviewing process offered an unexpected opportunity to pay close attention to my data without the pressure, yet, of having to interpret anything. After completing the transcriptions, the driving goal of my initial stages of data analysis was to reduce my data to an amount I could work with. I decided to begin my data reduction process by simply reading through and annotating all of my survey data and transcripts. As I did this, I was guided by Jessica T. DeCuir-Gunby, Patricia L. Marshall, and Allison

W. McCulloch's explanation of theory-driven and data-driven codes (41). Though I was not actively trying to develop codes yet, I looked for patterns in the data that might help me eventually develop data-driven codes. Kathy Charmaz's *Constructing Grounded Theory* also helped direct my attention to emergent data-driven understandings and potentially unanticipated themes that might arise from my data.

My data reduction process helped me begin to notice patterns; it also helped me distinguish between the elements I wanted to look at more methodically and those I might not want to pursue further. For instance, because my interviews were document-based, much of the recordings contained descriptions of specific documents, assignments, or context. While important for the sake of the interview, those lengthy descriptions were often irrelevant to my primary research questions. Similarly, I noticed when I first reviewed the focus group and interview transcripts that about half the participants discussed their writing processes in some way. Because I see writing process as highly malleable depending on the person and genre, I decided not to pursue further analysis of participants' writing processes.

As I read through and annotated these transcripts, I developed an informal list of nine categories that applied to most documents: description, figuring out, evaluation, relational reasoning, stance/ethos, future use, theories of writing, transfer, and process. Four of these categories—description, figuring out, evaluation, and stance/ethos—came directly from the questions I asked participants in the focus groups or interviews (for descriptions and examples of each category, see Appendix E). When participants directly answered a question I asked in one of those areas, I noted it as belonging to the corresponding category. Other times, however, participants answered my questions, or

spoke about items that interested them, in ways I did not plan for. When I asked the focus

group and interview participants to consider potential relationships between their writing,

I found that they answered in three possible ways: either by relating their writing in a

non-chronological, non-narrative manner, which I categorized as "relational reasoning";

by telling a causal story of connection and reuse, which I categorized as "transfer"; or by

talking about how their writing processes were similar or different across various

experiences, which I categorized as "process." At later stages of analysis, I would break

the "transfer" category into "horizontal" and "vertical" transfer, complicating the

concept.[26] Initially, however, I did not make this distinction. In addition, a few students

mentioned possible (anticipated) future uses of their writing, which I did not ask for or

predict. Finally, at the end of many interviews and focus groups, many participants

responded to my closing question by offering what Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak

describe as "theories of writing," or their general beliefs about writing, or learning to

write.

These categories were useful because they enabled me to significantly shorten the

transcripts I was working with. I removed from all transcripts the elements that fell into

the categories of description, future use, and process; the data in these categories was not

particularly interesting or useful to me. I also removed all the small talk, filler

conversation, and reading aloud. The result was that for each interview participant, the

new transcript was about half its original length. I then added to the end of each

individual transcript excerpts from the focus groups attributable to that individual. My

second round of interpretation began with reading and annotating these new, excerpted

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[26] Although I do not use the term "horizontal transfer" in this dissertation, it was a helpful
element of my coding process. For more information, see my codebook, Appendix E.

transcripts. From here, I pursued a data analysis process that merged traditional

qualitative methods (such as coding and analytic memo writing) with methods

characteristic of studies done by other composition scholars.

I first drew on traditional qualitative research methods (Charmaz; DeCuir-Gunby,

Marshall, and McCulloch; Miles and Huberman; Saldaña) to revisit my survey data about

transfer. Although I had already read through the survey data multiple times, I returned to

it in order to identify patterns in response to the question about whether participants see

their writing experiences from across different domains as "influencing" each other in

some way. I chose to return to this question because I sought to see whether interview

participants' perceptions of multidirectional transfer (that is, transfer back and forth

between different contexts) across domains were representative of the larger set of survey

takers' beliefs, or not. After reviewing this data and developing an initial set of tentative

codes, I narrowed my codes to five: multidirectional transfer, unidirectional transfer, no

transfer, undecided, and not applicable. I coded the 184 responses (the question was

optional, so not all 319 survey takers responded to it) with these five codes and totaled

the percentage of each code. Based on this process, I determined that my interview

participants were not atypical at all; rather, most (64%) of survey takers said that they

experienced either "multidirectional" or "unidirectional" transfer—that they felt their

writing in one domain influenced their writing in another.

Once I reviewed the survey data on transfer, I returned to my transcripts to

investigate the interview and focus group participants' experience with transfer in more

detail. Following the models of Lee Ann Carroll, Michelle Cox, and Nancy Sommers and

Laura Saltz, I synthesized my interview, writing submission, and focus group data by

writing detailed profiles of each individual participant. Though this practice is not traditionally a part of the social science qualitative research process (Charmaz, Miles and Huberman, Saldaña), it has a close relative in analytic memos, which Charmaz describes as a place to "discover and explore ideas" (84). It is also a widely used data analysis process in composition studies. In *Rehearsing New Roles*, Carroll explains that her data analysis process entailed writing "thick descriptive profiles of individual students" that were based on "various perspectives that emerged both from the students themselves and our own analysis of their written and spoken words" (44). After analyzing survey data and students' essays, Sommers and Saltz similarly "wrote case studies of each student in the subsample to help us synthesize the range of materials assembled" (126). Michelle Cox also reports writing "a profile that created a narrative" of her study participants' experiences (49).

These detailed participant profiles differ from the qualitative tradition of analytic memos in their formality, length, and depth. I found them more useful than writing a series of memos, however, as way to organize and process my data. My case studies included a synthesis of participants' interview and focus group transcripts along with relevant excerpts from their writing submissions, which I analyzed alongside participants' commentary. In total, I composed one case study, ranging in length from four to twelve single-spaced pages, for each interview participant. I also composed one analysis of relational reasoning by focus group members who did not participate in later stages of the study. Finally, I composed two additional analyses about topics that emerged across all layers (survey, focus groups, writing submissions, interviews) of my

data: email and "multidirectional transfer." In total, then, I composed 13 lengthy case study analyses of individual participants or prominent concepts.

Re-reading these case study analyses as a set helped me identify common themes running through all of them. The most prominent themes I noticed were (1) relational reasoning strategies that participants employed and (2) the ways participants figured out how to play a certain role or assume a certain stance to convey a credible *ethos*. With these two themes in mind, I returned to the case studies and excerpted all elements of them that seemed relevant to one theme or the other, copying and pasting the excerpts into a separate (new) document. I then returned to the writing samples that participants discussed and I drew on for my case studies, reviewing them to see how they supported (or complicated) the ideas I presented in my aggregation of case studies. The documents containing relevant excerpts of my case studies would eventually take shape into Chapters 4 and 5.

In order to double check my own analyses, I returned to the data to code for the patterns I sensed. I wanted to be sure that the connections I gleaned from re-reading my case studies were in fact present in the data. To do that, I uploaded my excerpted transcripts to Dedoose (data analysis software) and created codes that reflected my data-driven hypotheses. These codes covered the types of relational reasoning I observed, the "sources of *ethos*" my participants talked about, and moments of "horizontal" versus "vertical" transfer. The codes also reflected some other topics my participants discussed, including "rhetorical velocity" and "theories of writing." For a complete list of codes with descriptions and examples, see Appendix E.

Based on the trends I identified by reviewing my case studies, then, I coded my raw data to clarify whether and how often that trend actually occurred. Doing so enhanced my understanding in several ways. One way coding helped me refine my hypotheses was by indicating the total number of times a particular phenomenon emerged in my data. For instance, I learned through the coding process that analogical reasoning was far and away the most frequent type of relational reasoning. I also realized that participants engaged in more than one type of analogical reasoning, including drawing similarities between two writing tasks or experiences, and making a connection between a writing task and an experience unrelated to writing. Coding also helped me determine which trends often co-occurred with another. It was through coding my data that I learned that metageneric reasoning, which I discuss in Chapter 4, overlapped often with other types of relational reasoning. Fortunately, my coding process confirmed and enhanced, rather than contradicted, the hypotheses I had tentatively drawn from my extended case studies. It offered me more precise ways to understand and report the findings about relational reasoning and *ethos* transfer that emerged from my more holistic readings and interpretation processes.

In the next two chapters, I share what I discovered through this research process: the relational reasoning moves that students make when relating their writing across contexts (Chapter 4) and the sources of *ethos* they draw on when trying to figure out how to project a credible character in any given writing situation (Chapter 5). Those chapters draw on findings from all stages of my research project, including my survey, focus groups, writing sample submissions, and interviews.

Chapter 4:

Forging Connections: Relational Reasoning Across Contexts

> I feel like there were so many experiences, I can't really get to the first one. But every single experience seems to just reaffirm or contradict an assumption I had before. And that's how I kind-of grow, I guess.
> —Diddy, senior neurophysiology and psychology double major, college radio station engineer and DJ, resident advisor

> Rather than relying on official maps to identify what activities are relevant to the production of disciplinary texts, researchers need to follow participants' mappings of relevant activities, regardless of how different they seem or how distant they are temporally.
> —Kevin Roozen, "Tracing Trajectories of Practice" (347)

In this chapter I present findings related to the first central research question of my study: if at all, in what ways do students relate their texts and writing experiences (from across contexts) to one another? Throughout the chapter I show that students relate their writing in multiple ways. I first present ways students relate their writing that reflect traditional, or what I call vertical, narratives of transfer (where learning in one situation cleanly applies to writing in another, future situation). I then expose students' more unexpected forms of connection, connections I call relational reasoning. Drawing on my survey data, I show what genres of writing students report composing in different areas of their lives, and whether they see those writing experiences as related. I offer several examples of vertical transfer. The major contribution (and majority) of this chapter, then, is a discussion of my findings related to relational reasoning. I present and explore five specific ways that my study participants reason relationally across contexts: through comparative and contrastive reasoning (or "not talk"), metageneric reasoning, antithetical reasoning, a fortiori reasoning, and analogical reasoning. The conclusions I draw here

make clear that students do relate their writing experiences across contexts, sometimes in idiosyncratic and unexpected ways.

As I discuss in Chapter 2, much research suggests that students do not see relevant connections between their writing experiences from different contexts. Mary Jo Reiff and Anis Bawarshi's cross institutional study suggests that students for the most part do not see the genres they write in one domain to be relevant to the genres they write in another. If students do make these connections, Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak argue, they are usually "serendipitous," rare and pleasant surprises that teachers probably cannot predict or bring about in a systematic way (133). Findings from the 2013 Listening Tour, conducted by a group of researchers affiliated with the Conference on College Composition and Communication, suggest that "students see themselves 'writing in silos, so what they do outside school is not what they do inside school'" (Adler-Kassner qtd. in Collier 11). This research suggests that many students see their academic and non-academic writing as unrelated. And if students see these writing experiences as unrelated, they are almost certainly not going to transfer mindfully between them.

This chapter challenges these findings. As I explain in Chapter 3, I designed my research procedures so I did *not* ask students about transfer directly; that is, I did not ask students if they saw themselves as repurposing specific knowledge from one writing experience to another. Instead, I approached the question of transfer somewhat obliquely, focusing instead on how students relate their writing across contexts—to see if they draw connections between their writing experiences or not and, if they do, then how. Through this process, I engage Roozen's urging in the epigraph above: I "follow *participants'*

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mappings of relevant activities" and present the various and sometimes unexpected ways

that participants draw connections between their composing experiences (347, italics

mine). By presenting the various ways that students reason relationally among their

writing, rather than how they move discreet elements of their writing knowledge forward

into new settings, I demonstrate how we might understand transfer to be a mindset rather

than an occurrence. That is, the examples I offer below show that, when prompted to

relate their writing, students in my study were inclined toward forging connections,

toward noticing potential relevant or transferrable commonalities or differences among

their work. The connections students forged orient them toward the possibility of

mindfully repurposing their writing knowledge in any concurrent or future writing

situations.

Diddy's quotation in my opening epigraph expresses a phenomenon common to

many of my participants: they view their specific writing experiences as moments that

"reaffirm or contradict an assumption" they held. Students who adopt this mindset take

advantage of each new writing task to construct a more nuanced web of relationships

among their writing experiences and knowledge. By presenting examples of the ways

students connect and relate their writing experiences, this chapter argues for the value of

reconsidering transfer: rather than view transfer only as a student's ability to *execute*, or

to repurpose their knowledge from one situation for the next, it presents transfer as

relational reasoning, or students' ability to *forge connections*, to develop a "transfer

mindset" that leads them to approach all of their writing experiences from the frame of

potential relevance.[27]

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[27] That is, I am not presenting a causal argument—that a certain type of relational reasoning
causes transfer or is necessary for transfer to take place—but rather a descriptive account of the

Transfer as Relational Reasoning

It is satisfying to be able to tell a story of learning. Teachers would like to be able to say that their students learned a specific skill or ability in a specific site that they then carried forward, re-working it to make sense in a new situation. Researchers want to be able to connect the dots between writing instruction and future writing capacity, or between past writing experience and present writing ability. For this reason, much research in transfer within rhetoric and composition offers stories of learners gaining knowledge in one time or context that they do or do not draw on in future situations (e.g., Beaufort, Bergmann and Zepernick, Carroll, Wardle, "Understanding Transfer"). I refer to these transfer stories as examples of "vertical transfer." In their introduction to *Transfer of Learning from a Modern Multidisciplinary Perspective*, James Royer, Jose P. Mestre, and Robert J. Dufresne explain, "vertical transfer occurs when a skill or knowledge unit learned in one situation directly influences the acquisition of a more complex skill or knowledge unit learned at a later point in time" (ix). Vertical transfer moves linearly and assumes an origin of learning: a student first learns in one setting and later repurposes that learning for a future situation.

Research on vertical transfer might look forward or backward. Most traces students' trajectories of learning in a forward pattern: after learning something in first-year writing (FYW), does the student ever think of it again or draw on it in another writing class or on the job (e.g., Beaufort; Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Paré; Hilgers, Stitt-Bergh, and Hussey; McCarthy)? Some of the narrative-based or vertical research

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specific ways that students, constantly trying to recontextualize their knowledge and selves, talk about transfer and engage in relational reasoning in particular.

models look backwards as well: what does a student bring to FYW from high school or other past learning experiences (Reiff and Bawarshi; Robertson, Taczak, and Yancey)? These models of looking assume that students carry learning forward and backward and that we can tell a story to explain how a certain educational intervention enabled a student to transfer learning to a future context.

As I note in Chapter 1, however, sometimes students develop or accumulate knowledge without being able to recall or pin down its source—or they might learn things whose future relevance they might not be able to predict. Susan C. Jarratt, Katherine Mack, Alexandra Sartor, and Shevaun E. Watson write in "Pedagogical Memory" that "In terms of transfer, when it is successful, the skill is remembered but the transfer is forgotten" (54). In other words, students might learn and be able to execute new writing tasks, but they might not be able to remember where they originally developed the ability to do so. Indeed, it may be quite difficult for anyone to consciously trace all of his learning back to his original moments of learning or discovery. A student who learned about arrangement strategies in a first-year writing class, for example, had likely already learned something about arrangement strategies in high school. So when a student traces the prior knowledge he gained and how it reappeared in a new guise, he still may be missing various pieces of the puzzle, including something he may have learned and integrated into his general store of knowledge, without remembering having learned it at all. Students might be able to draw on their knowledge without being able to narrate the complete story of how or from where they transferred that knowledge.

As a result of these findings, I explored in my study how vertical transfer, while valid, may not be the only way students connect and repurpose their learning—and in fact

may be secondary to a more prevalent and richer method of reconstructing knowledge that students practice. The alternative to the vertical approach to tracing transfer that I explore is what I call *relational reasoning*. While not ostensibly connected to the notion of transfer as recontextualization of knowledge for new scenarios, relational reasoning could be at the heart of what it means to be able to transfer knowledge, or to be able to see relevant connections between various experiences that could in turn inform new writing tasks in new scenarios.

The hypotheses I test in my study regarding relational reasoning are undergirded by scholarship in education. Within the field of educational psychology, relational reasoning is defined as "the ability to reorganize or derive meaningful relations between and among pieces of information that would otherwise appear unrelated" (Dumas, Alexander, and Grossnickle 392). Although the research on relational reasoning in education addresses all types of learning, rather than writing in particular,[28] it still provides a sound theoretical basis for my study. This review describes four primary types of relational reasoning: (1) reasoning by analogy, or recognizing "similarity between two seemingly disparate ideas, objects, or events"; (2) reasoning by anomaly, or noticing "an aberration or digression from an established pattern"; (3) reasoning by antimony, or reasoning that "allows the thinker to understand what something is by ascertaining what it is not"; and (4) reasoning by antithesis, or recognizing a "directly oppositional relation" between two things or ideas (Dumas, Alexander, and Grossnickle 395-96). Many researchers in education, and some in composition studies, have asserted the value of analogical reasoning to transfer (e.g., Alexander and Murphy; Cleary; Donahue; Gentner,

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[28] Only two paragraphs of the fairly comprehensive 37-page review of relational reasoning literature address writing at all (414).

Loewenstein, and Thompson; Haskell). Others have demonstrated the value of combining analogy with antimony—or, in other words, comparative and contrastive reasoning—to successful transfer (Freadman, Marton, Nowacek, Reiff and Bawarshi). Scholars in composition studies often refer to this approach as "not talk"; this phrase highlights the importance of recognizing not only what similar features two (or more) texts share but also what they do *not* have in common (Nowacek, Reiff and Bawarshi). All of this scholarship suggests that every time a student undertakes a new writing task, she has an opportunity to reason relationally—or to take stock of her various other experiences to see what if any relevant relationships there might be between them.

Relational reasoning is different from transfer: it is not the actual repurposing of knowledge from one situation to another. Instead, it is a way of seeing that attunes students to possible connections and differences that might inform their writing strategies or moves in the new task. As I discussed above, transfer research in composition studies is often concerned with tracing students' transfer from one class to future writing scenarios. I am instead interested in the ways students interpret the relationships between their varied writing experiences. My study hinges on the idea that students who engage in successful relational reasoning—students who can discern meaningful and complex relationships between the texts they have written in multiple domains and the text they are currently inventing or drafting—are more likely to succeed in the various writing tasks they undertake. In this way, relational reasoning is the first step of successful transfer. Relational reasoning enables students to cultivate a transfer mindset.

My study sought to learn the specifics of students' relational reasoning practices. As I indicate in Chapter 3, I gathered data on transfer by opening space for students to

comment on two or more texts they had composed, in terms of causal relationships, similarities and differences, or anything else they found interesting. The format of the focus group discussions and interviews prompted students to discuss writings they had composed for very different contexts (e.g., one for student government and one for biology class). There were opportunities during the focus groups and interviews for students to pursue a vertical approach if they wished—to explain how one piece of writing taught them something that they transferred to the other. Several students did pursue that approach and I share some of their stories of vertical transfer below. Far more of the focus group and interview discussions, however, addressed the ways that students *relate* their writing experiences in different ways. If we think of students as "agents of integration" (Nowacek) who work to reconstruct their learning across various genres, situations, and domains, then this "relational reasoning" ability may be the lynchpin of the transfer they do or do not perform as they move through their writing lives. The connections students draw or "see" between their writing experiences provide researchers with insight into the ways students understand their own constellations of compositions.

Survey: "They All Intertwine"

In my study, many students reported devoting more time and energy to their extracurricular, personal, and professional writing than to the writing they composed for academic purposes—suggesting that we must pay close attention to *all* student writing as a potential source of learning and transfer. Seventy-five percent of survey participants report regularly composing all of the following varied genres: spoken presentations, reflections, and resumes; research papers, PowerPoint presentations, and short answer

responses on tests; email, text messages, and Facebook posts. This wide range of genres does not tell the whole story, however; students report writing hundreds of other genres—including poetry, white papers, informational brochures, websites, eulogies (fictional and real), posters for academic conferences, stage directions, personal letters, and more. The exigencies of these writings range widely, from academic requirements to personal communications to extracurricular involvement to workplace assignments, and students must find ways to move back and forth between then, reconstructing their knowledge as they do so.

My data suggest that, for students, moving between these various contexts often means moving between different genres—and that the overlaps students might experience between contexts are not as simple as writing in the same genres. In fact, my survey data indicated minimal genre overlap between academic, personal, and extracurricular contexts, with a few notable exceptions: email appears everywhere, and several other genres—including speeches/presentations, resumes, text messages, Facebook-related writing, and lists—appeared in more than one context (see Table 4.1).

Academic	Personal	Extracurricular
1. Research paper 2. PowerPoint or Prezi 3. Test/quiz writing **4. Email** 5. Reflection essay 6. *Speech or presentation* 7. *Resume* 8. Summary 9. Analytical essay 10. Lab report	**1. Email** 2. *Text messages* 3. *Facebook-related* 4. *Lists* 5. Instant Message (G-chat, AIM, etc.) 6. Letters (snail mail)/cards/notes 7. Twitter-related 8. Comments (YouTube, online newspaper, someone else's blog, etc.) 9. Journal entry 10. Blog or Tumblr	**1. Email** 2. *Resume* 3. Meeting notes, minutes, or agenda 4. *Lists* 5. *Facebook-related* 6. Poster, sign, flyer 7. Cover letter 8. *Text messages* 9. Instructions or directions 10. *Speech or presentation*

Table 4.1: Writings that students report composing in each domain (top 10 most frequent); italicized items occur in more than one domain; email (bolded) occurs in all three.

Since most writings that students compose in different contexts of their lives are not easily related by genre, then, the question remains as to whether (and if so, how) students might relate their work or transfer their learning between contexts.

For transfer to occur—for students to recontexualize prior knowledge and use it in current contexts—they need to be open to seeing and forging connections (Driscoll; Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak). Research in education and composition suggests that the learner's perspective of those connections, rather than the researcher's perspective, is what matters (Hatano and Greeno; Jarratt, Mack, Sartor, and Watson; Lobato; Nowacek; Roozen, "Tracing Trajectories"). So do students see their writings across contexts as related or not? If they do relate their writings across contexts, then how? I asked questions that addressed these concerns in my survey in two separate forms: first, the survey asked participants to indicate on a Likert scale (always/most of the time/sometimes/rarely/never) whether their writings in extracurricular, personal, and academic contexts "influence" their writings in another context.[29] Then, I asked an optional, open-ended follow-up question: "Do you have any other thoughts about how or why the kinds of writing you do in different areas of your life influence each other?"[30]

Students' responses to these questions indicate that they do in fact see their writings across contexts as related. Responses to the multiple choice questions (of which

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[29] My idea to use the word "influence" rather than "transferred to" or another synonym came from a survey pilot I ran with a cohort of eight writing tutors. The tutors suggested that the word "influence" made most sense from a student perspective and was something easy for survey takers to understand.

[30] My beta version of the survey did not include this follow-up question. One of the beta testers (a writing tutor) suggested I include a follow-up to the Likert scale questions, and I used her suggested question verbatim. Though I acknowledge this question might encourage students to see "influences" among their writing that they may not otherwise have identified, it came after all of the Likert scale questions and was optional. For these reasons I do not think the question swayed beliefs too strongly if at all.

there were six, each focusing on writing in different realms) do not vary much between different directions of influence: in each case, about 44% of respondents indicate that their writing in one area "sometimes" influences their writing in another, and about 26% of respondents indicate that their writing in one area influences their writing in another "most of the time." Taken together, we see that 70% of students indicate on the multiple-choice-style question that their writing in one domain "sometimes" or "most of the time" influences their writing in another. An average of 3% of the respondents indicate that their writing from one area "never" influences their writing from another. Participants' responses to the open-ended follow-up question offer more specifics on ways the undergraduate writers see their written work across their lives as connected (or not). In their responses to the open-ended question, 64% of participants express the view that the writings they compose in different realms or domains influence each other in some way.[31] In contrast, 16% of respondents indicate that they view writings they compose in different areas of their lives as unrelated and separate from one another. The remaining 20% of respondents do not indicate a certain response about the relationship between their writings. My findings suggest that, unlike some studies have shown, students do see relevant connections between their writing in different domains.

While the majority of respondents indicate that the many writings they compose influence each other, few parse exactly *how* in the brief space that the survey allowed. One survey respondent explains that thinking specifically about the ways influence might work is complicated: "It's hard to think about how all these are different because I try to

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[31] Of the 319 survey respondents, 184 responded to the optional question asking if they had any additional thoughts on whether the writings they compose across domains of their lives influence each other. Of those 184 responses, I coded 106 (some were blank, some not applicable, and some responded with N/A). I coded some of those responses more than once (as they responded in more than one way or with several thoughts).

relate elements of all three to the other almost subconsciously." The fact that these "influences" occur under the radar of conscious decision-making does not mean they are not happening, only that they may be difficult to detect. Like the students in Jarratt, Mack, Sartor, and Watson's "Pedagogical Memory," this survey respondent claims to experience transfer—just beyond her conscious awareness or control. Another student explains that it is difficult to distinguish the ways that her writings in different realms affect one another because, in her words, "they all intertwine with my schedule and how I conduct daily business." The fact that her writings throughout life are so "intertwined" makes it difficult to determine what learning transferred from what and to where.

Other survey takers are more specific about what activities or writing experiences influenced their writing in other situations, and some offer narrative-like or vertical accounts of transfer. This survey respondent describes a way that her extracurricular work with editors has affected her academic writing success:

> My extracurricular writing influences my academic writing because I write a lot more for extracurricular activities. What I've picked up from just that bulk of copy and working with editors has helped me write more effectively for school.

Another student gives a similar explanation about how she transfers her learning about writing in extracurricular contexts to specific academic settings:

> I have become a pro at composing emails and giving mission statements as a result of my extracurricular involvement. This has given me the ability to practice direct and clear communication skills that are useful when composing reports for my classes.

These explanations tell stories of learning that cross domains of school and extracurricular activities: due to work with copy editors as well as composing emails and mission statements, these students feel more adept at composing reports (and other texts) for academic purposes. We could say, in this way, that the students transferred learning from writing in one domain (extracurricular) to writing in another (academic).

Other survey respondents connect their writings across contexts in ways that do not present trajectories of learning but instead point out relevant relationships. For example, in the following response, the author attempts to connect different genres based on their goals:

> Many different types of writing overlap. For example, resumes, cover letters, application essays, and scholarship essays all are formal types of writing aimed at an unknown audience responsible for judging the writer as a person based on his or her writing. Additionally, various kinds of analytical writing, literature reviews, reports, and research papers require similar skills. Media writing, including news articles, op-eds, press releases, and blogs have many similarities in purpose, style, and audience.

This explanation does not tell a narrative of learning; rather, the author describes ways he groups different genres by purpose-based meta-genres. While this example does not tell a story of learning per se, it still demonstrates an attempt to draw connections. This author practices relational reasoning, thinking through possibly relevant connections among various genres he composes. Although there are exceptions like this one, most survey respondents discuss transfer (or "influence") in broad terms. This is likely due at least in part to the fact that it is a survey with limited space for lengthy responses. To answer the

more specific and difficult question of how transfer works between domains, I needed to reach out to individual students for more detail.

Tracing Trajectories of Transfer

Like two of the survey respondents I quote above, some participants in my focus groups and interviews tell stories of transfer that fit into the vertical paradigm. Many of these accounts came in response to my focus group question that asked students, "Can you explain how you figured out or learned how to do [the writing project you chose]?" or my interview question that asked, "How did you figure out how to write this?" (see Appendix B for Focus Group Protocol and Appendix D for Interview Protocol). Students' responses to these questions often offered vague sources of learning: students reported drawing on process knowledge, imitative writing (and model texts), lessons from AP English, instructor feedback, and help from friends or family. This question also yielded many reductive responses, such as "I learned everything I know about writing from my eighth grade librarian," rather than specific or focused insights.

Some students, however, traced in detail the ways that their past or concurrent experiences have improved their ability to write in new situations. In other words, they told classic stories of vertical transfer. Catherine's account offers one such example. Catherine, a neurobiology and physiology major who also works at the campus performing arts center, attributes her ability to write "on a professional level" directly to the experience she gained during her internship with Easter Seals. In this way, she tells a clear story of vertical transfer:

I think definitely the work outside of school has influenced my

schoolwork because starting my freshman year, I got an internship with

Easter Seals Disability Service and I was doing event planning for them,

so I did a lot of communication. I did a lot of grant writing for funds for

the events and stuff like that, and they expect you to be on a professional

level. And I was a freshman, so I had no idea what I was doing, so I had to

figure that out really quickly, but then I got to keep that, everything

professional that I learned from that first year, and that kind of made

everything much easier, like as I got up to job applications or scholarship

applications . . . I'm just used to communicating to a more professional

community [now].

Catherine's story explains a principal situation where she learned and later situations

where she repurposed her learning. She is an excellent example of Nowacek's "agent of

integration," integrating her learning as she moves from one context to the next.

Other students who participated in the focus groups and interviews also attributed

their ability to write in new situations to specific past writing experiences. One

particularly oft-cited positive influence and source of transfer was journaling. Tara, a

neurobiology and physiology major who participates in the Residence Hall Association,

cited her personal journaling experiences as a helpful source of practice for her

academic/extracurricular assignments:

I feel like since I journal a lot, or blog a lot, the journals that I have to

write for my RA [resident advisor] class are really easy to do. It's

supposed to be two pages long and it's really easy for me to just write

what I feel because I do that on a regular basis anyway. It definitely makes

it easier to write in school.

We see that Tara's personal journal writing habits transfer for her into an academic environment. Steve, a business management major and campus shuttle bus driver, also identifies ways that journaling improves his academic writing. Unlike Tara, Steve does not journal regularly and is not asked to compose journal entries for class. He does freewrite to deal with personal struggles, however, and explains that this low-stakes personal writing helps him feel more comfortable with himself as a writer in other situations:

Personal writing . . . helps me come through in academic writing, because

I feel more comfortable with myself . . . in my personal writing, I know

I'm not judging myself, I'm just writing whatever. When I go and turn

around and do something academically, it helps me be more relaxed about

it. I can write more comfortably.

For Steve, this ability to be "comfortable" and approach an academic assignment with confidence is itself something that "transfers" from personal to academic writing; it is a benefit that crosses domains. Journaling may facilitate successful transfer for Steve by helping put him at ease when facing academic writing assignments.

Eleanor and Izzy highlight the cognitive and stylistic benefits of journal writing, explaining that keeping a journal helps them develop ideas and play with style. Eleanor, a psychology and English double major and peer educator for the Sexual Assault Response and Prevention program, describes this:

[My non-academic writing] helps me analyze more deeply. My creative

writing outside, whether it's a personal narrative or poetry or whatever, I

think it helps me think outside the box more and be a little bit more

creative with word choice and how I write. That can help me

academically. If I get stuck, I just try to think of something else.

For Eleanor, free writing or creative writing opens up space for invention to take place or

for new ideas to morph and adjust. Izzy, also a psychology and English double major

(and whom I describe in more detail later in this chapter), similarly explains that her

long-time journaling habit has helped her develop ideas and stances that she later adapts

to academic situations. She says, "I started journaling when I was like, eleven years old,

and I have ever since. I think that it really improved my writing, and it really got me

ready for college and . . . these big essays." When attempting to compose academic

writing and "other writing that's more formal," Izzy says her personal journaling

experience helps her take on the right voice. She attributes her ability to craft an effective

voice to the fact that her personal writing gives her a chance to experiment stylistically:

for the pieces she writes "completely on my own," she says, "I get to play around with

language a little more in them and with tone and stuff like that. I got to try out different

voices in them." These different voices, she says, translate later to her various academic

tasks.

These examples of vertical transfer show ways that students identify sources of

learning that they then repurpose for later writing tasks, tasks sometimes similar to the

original experience and sometimes quite different. Unlike some studies that suggest

students' academic and non-academic writing are "worlds apart," these findings suggest

that students locate and take advantage of opportunities for cross-domain transfer. We see

from these examples that vertical transfer is certainly possible, and that students

occasionally tell stories that suggest they can identify the sources of their writing

knowledge. These stories affirm other studies' ways of looking at and for transfer. They

are not, however, the only way to look, as the rest of this chapter will show.

Profiles of Relational Reasoning

Whereas 70% of survey respondents (to the Likert-scale question) indicate that

their writing in one domain "influences" their writing in another, 85% percent of the

students who participated in focus groups and/or interviews identified and explained

ways that their writing experiences relate or connect to one another: they were able to

"see connections" among their sometimes distant-seeming writing endeavors.[32] In many

cases, participants found ways to relate writing experiences that seemed quite dissimilar

on the surface, and many of the ways that students drew connections between their own

writing experiences were surprising to me as the researcher. Students often pointed out

common features or differences between their writing experiences that I could not have

anticipated. Here students were not articulating vertical transfer but were instead

connecting their writing across contexts, or practicing relational reasoning. I was

interested in learning about these connections because participants' methods of relational

reasoning, while not equivalent to stories or accounts of transfer, instead shed light on the

"behind the scenes" mental work that goes into unraveling and reweaving various strands

of knowledge for each new writing situation. In other words, students' explanations of

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[32] Although I do not offer examples in this chapter from among the 15% of students who did not "see connections," I discuss two in the conclusion: Silver (at length) and Lex (briefly).

relational reasoning open up the possibility for scholars to think about transfer in a new way and consider more specifically the precise kinds of mental priming that enable transfer to occur across situations.

The specific relationships students pointed out between their compositions were unique to the individual students and their experiences. However, I was able to identify patterns in the *types of* relational reasoning that students practiced. In particular, I found that my study participants related their work across contexts through five primary means: comparative and contrastive reasoning (or "not talk"; also similar to reasoning by antimony), metageneric reasoning, antithetical reasoning (or recognizing a "directly oppositional relation"), a fortiori reasoning, and analogical reasoning. In the profiles below, I offer definitions and examples of these five types of relational reasoning, along with examples of participants' written work and their commentary on that work. All of these modes suggest the variety of connections that students draw. I focus on one primary student for each profile. In addition, it is important to note that these types of relational reasoning are not mutually exclusive; in many cases, students practice more than one type of relational reasoning, or even several types, at once. Though there is certainly overlap among the types of relational reasoning that appear in the examples below, I focus on the most prominent version in each.

Comparative and Contrastive Reasoning: Preston

In the examples I offer below, Preston relates his writings across domains by both comparing and contrasting the documents. We might also refer to this as "not talk," or describing a text by explaining what it is like, but also what it is not like. Alternately, we

could understand it as reasoning by antimony, or determining the features of a text by establishing what it is not. Preston is a senior double majoring in marketing and government and politics. In addition to his academic commitments, Preston is committed to campus student government, Model United Nations (Model UN), and blogging on Policy Mic, a policy-related website. I give two examples when Preston draws on "not talk": (1) to relate his self-motivated live blog and a policy memo assigned in one of his government and politics (GVPT) classes, and (2) to relate his academic essay about Somaliland and blog post on the same topic. Preston's practice of "seeing connections" through detailed comparison and contrast is especially notable in his explanation of two pieces of his writing related to Somaliland.

During a focus group discussion, Preston draws out the relationships between a live blog he wrote the night of the 2012 presidential election and a policy piece he wrote for his GVPT major. He was asked to write the live blog by a friend who thought Preston might do a good job covering the election in real time, and he was assigned the policy piece for the class associated with his Federal Semester Program internship. When prompted in the focus group discussion to explain whether his writing experiences have anything in common, Preston explores both differences and similarities between the pieces, beginning with the differences:

> The difference between a blog and a policy piece. Audience is obviously
> the first one. You're speaking to somebody who already knows what
> you're talking about with a policy piece. You can't assume that with the
> blog, definitely. Of course one's a lot more formal, it's very informal to
> write in a blog setting, especially with a live blog on an election night, the

live blog is all opinion, pretty much. The focus is on what your thoughts

are and the policy piece has nothing to do with opinion. At the end you

choose between a variety of options but you're expected to do so based on

the rational weighing of costs and benefits and explain how you got there.

It's not supposed to be your personal opinion.

After discussing another topic briefly, Preston pauses to add something the two genres
have in common:

I forgot to mention about both . . . actually both my policy pieces and

blogs, you're supposed to put the conclusion at the first . . . at the

beginning. It's the smallest biggest thing about policy pieces that

completely blows your mind from . . . 10 years of writing these things.

You have to first write a conclusion paragraph and then explain how you

got there.

Preston's relational reasoning here shows a fairly sophisticated grasp of genre

conventions in the two situations. When describing the differences between the live blog

and policy memo, Preston focuses on the way audience affects both formality and the

need for certain background information. He also clearly explains the types of knowledge

and evidence that are valued in the respective writing situations. In addition, Preston's

ability to connect the genres by the need to "first write a conclusion paragraph and then

explain how you got there" shows how he does not stop with differences between the

genres, but is able to see relevant similarities as well. His comparative and contrastive

reasoning leaves space for relevant similarities without erasing crucial distinctions. This

way of seeing—this way of drawing out relationships that both connect and distinguish

between the genres—suggests that Preston is cultivating "transfer mindset" where he is aware of potentially relevant links among his work.

Second, Preston practices comparative and contrastive reasoning when describing two texts he wrote about Somaliland, one for school and one outside of his coursework. In this case, Preston delves into even more detail about the two texts by discussing small-scale, sentence-level adjustments alongside some bigger differences. Preston wrote his academic essay, titled "Analysis of Somaliland Statehood," in December 2011, and decided to write a related blog post, titled "You Think You Know Somalia? Meet Somaliland," about a year later. The essay was assigned for an upper-level African Politics class. The blog post was a result of Preston's own interest in sharing his learning with a wider audience—it was entirely self-motivated. To move from essay to the blog post, then, Preston did not need to do additional research; the topic was the same. He did, however, need to re-mediate—or move into a new medium—the work he did for his class.

In the documents below, we see Preston address the same topic, the viability of Somaliland statehood, in two different genres and mediums. By beginning with the same subject matter, this re-mediation project highlights the differences between the two texts. In the first, Preston takes an academic tone and approach; in the second, Preston writes for a popular audience of online readers:

Analysis of Somaliland Statehood

The former British protectorate of Somaliland is the autonomous Northwest region of the internationally recognized state of Somalia. While the country as a whole has experienced anarchy, lawlessness, terrorism, famine, piracy, civil war, and many other calamities over the last 20 years since the collapse of the central government led by Siad Barre in 1991, Somaliland has been much less affected by these crises. The ability of this region's people to independently organize themselves into relatively effective institutions has allowed them to stave off many of the problems facing the rest of Somalia. Despite this, and the aggressive pursuit of recognition by the Somaliland government, the international community has yet to recognize the region as an independent nation-state. This lack of recognition poses difficulties to the economy and security of the region, and exacerbates the poverty of its denizens.

Figure 4.2: Introduction of 15-page "Analysis of Somaliland Statehood" essay, for GVPT class, "African Politics: Between Conflict and Democratization," submitted December 2011

You Think You Know Somalia? Meet Somaliland

When people think of Somalia, they think of Mark Bowden's *Black Hawk Down*. They think of South Park's "Somalian Pirates We" episode. They even think of (sigh) *Pirates of the Caribbean*. What they don't usually know is that Somalia has three extremely different regions, and that one of those regions is a fully functional unrecognized state.

The first region, Somalia, is the southern half of the former Italian Somaliland colony. This is the area most people think of, with Mogadishu and Islamic warlords and perpetually failing transitional governments (we'll see about the new government formed in August 2012 in a few years). The tip of the country, to the north of the old Italian colony, is Puntland. Puntland is autonomous, governing itself with a central government, but it is not seeking independence.

Political Situation in Somalia 13 October 2012

You Think You Know Somalia? Meet Somaliland

The third section is Somaliland, the former British colony part of Somalia. It is a fully functioning state in all but name. They have an innovative legislature, a successful democratic system, an army and navy, and a presidency that has gone through several peacefully transfers of power. Sure, it is poor, but it conducts itself better than most states at its level of development. Its current development is actually being held up by the lack of recognition, as it cannot gain access to international loans or support for its currency.

Figure 4.3: Opening of Somaliland blog post, posted November 2012

In talking about these pieces, Preston does not focus on the similarities between them because they go without saying. Instead, he focuses on ways that their differences help clarify the contours of either genre. For instance, Preston contrasts the goals of the texts: while the goal of the academic paper is to "make an argument" and persuade, he says, the goal of the blog is "to educate" and explain. To explain this further, Preston distinguishes between the documents' respective audiences and how he crafts his writing accordingly. For the essay, Preston explains,

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I'm using pretty long complex sentences. I assume a basic level of

knowledge about Somaliland, Somalia. For example, I refer briefly to the

collapse of the central government led by Siad Barre in 1991, whereas if I

was writing to an uninformed audience, then I would probably have to

explain . . . what happened there with the collapse of the central

government. I assume that the person reading this has a basic knowledge

of Somalia, so I just briefly cover over it and move on.

In contrast, Preston explains that the audience of the blog post demands a different

approach:

Here, I have to use a lot shorter sentences and much more of a hook in the

first sentence, in the form of a more radical statement and hyperlinks and

pop culture references . . . so, to make it a little bit more relatable and to

address an audience that doesn't necessarily know a lot about Somalia. So

that [the opening paragraph] . . . assumes that the people have heard of

Somalia before but it doesn't assume they know anything about it other

than that it has pirates. . . . So much shorter, assuming much less.

Preston varies the openings of these two documents in order to meet the needs and prior

knowledge of their two different audiences. He also suggests that one way to do this is to

alter his sentence structure—from "pretty long complex sentences" in the academic piece

to "a lot shorter sentences and much more of a hook" in the blog. In relating the two

documents, Preston focuses on these key differences that distinguish the genres based on

their audience and goals.

Preston also describes how the documents' respective arrangement strategies align with their goals. In the essay, Preston explains, he first defines his terms and then lists all the elements of statehood that apply to Somaliland. "I argued my five points that they fulfilled all of those requirements," Preston says, "and then I had a conclusion where I summed up the argument . . . that there's no justifiable reason why they're aren't a state yet." By contrast, he says, his blog "is explaining everything a lot more" and gets into "what the things I'm talking about actually mean." Whether Preston consciously practiced relational reasoning at the time or not, we can see from his commentary here and above that he is aware of the relationships between the pieces and chooses to express them through comparative and contrastive reasoning. His way of discussing the relationships between these two pieces demonstrates what I refer to as a "transfer mindset," a way of seeing that primes Preston to be able to move effectively between different writing experiences.

Finally, Preston identifies his essay as more formal and his blog as more informal and crafts his tone and citation practice accordingly. He describes the tone of the blog as "more conversational" and says it is less methodical and "much briefer and less formal." He explains that citation differs between the two documents, as he needs to cite in an academic format for his paper but can insert hyperlinks for his blog. Preston adds that he prefers hyperlinking because the links give interested readers the opportunity to pursue more information or not, as suits their needs.

Preston's use of comparative and contrastive reasoning helps the specific generic features of his respective documents "pop": he locates his compositions' shared features, but he also—crucially—distinguishes between texts based on their goals and audiences.

He is able to "see connections" between his texts without letting those connections blind him to crucial differences. Preston's ability to explain his choices in detail is especially impressive in his re-mediated Somaliland writings. We do not know the extent to which Preston consciously drew on comparative and contrastive reasoning when composing his texts. We can see, however, that his ability to engage in "not talk" or reasoning by antimony seems aligned with a mindset that is attuned to the potential of transfer. As I posit in Chapter 6, Preston's discussion of these remediated pieces suggests that prompting students to consider the similarities and differences between compositions on the same topic but in different media may foster particularly astute relational reasoning.

Metageneric Reasoning: Izzy

Like Preston, Izzy also compares and contrasts her various compositions. However, Izzy practices a relational reasoning strategy that differs from (and extends) Preston's: she groups her writing by overarching metagenres that link the texts by a shared purpose. I define metagenres as *groupings of* genres based on similarities in purpose, impetus, or rhetorical moves. My use of this term is based on Michael Carter's definition of a metagenre as a "dynamic" category linking genres that share "general ways of doing" (392-93).[33] Students' metagenres, like Izzy's below, demonstrate the sometimes idiosyncratic but nonetheless logical and thought-provoking ways that students might group their writing experiences.

Izzy is a senior English and psychology double major who is also a tutor at the writing center and president of the student-run mental health club on campus, Active

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[33] This differs from Janet Giltrow's definition of metagenres, which she describes as "atmospheres of wordings and activities . . . atmospheres surrounding genres" (195).

Minds. Through that club, Izzy sponsors many events for university students, such as "Puppy Palooza," when an organization brings puppies to campus to help students relax, and "Pinwheels for Prevention," which raises awareness of suicide among college students and works toward suicide prevention. She enjoys journaling and creative writing and sometimes writes poems for friends. In this section, I discuss the ways that Izzy engages in relational reasoning by connecting disparate-seeming genres under larger metageneric umbrellas, often in spite of their clear stylistic (and other) differences. In particular, I highlight Izzy's metageneric reasoning in her grouping of documents that are "trying to get something from [the reader]" as well as her comparison of documents that all "review" or "critique."

When I asked Izzy if she saw any relationships among the compositions she submitted to the study, she chose to consider all of the ten texts she submitted, rather than focus only on two or three. Izzy's willingness to consider more than two texts at a time seems to be part of what led her to invent overarching metagenres, or logical groupings of genres, that link multiple texts by their shared purposes. One metagenre that Izzy identified and discussed based on this approach linked a research article she wrote in conjunction with graduate students in psychology, a grant application for her student club, and an email of recommendation for her advisor for a national award. She linked these writings under the metagenre of, in her words, "I'm trying to get something from [the reader]." Instead of categorizing these by domain as scholars of composition might do, as (for example) "communicative," "academic," and "extracurricular/professional," Izzy groups these writings in her own unique way that crosses domains by her understanding of their similar goals. While this category seems fairly idiosyncratic, it

makes sense as a way to connect the documents. With the recommendation, Izzy notes, "I'm trying to get them to do something": consider her advisor for the award. For the psychology article, Izzy explains that she and her co-authors want to convince the readers that "this is something that you should really consider" for publication. The grant application is also trying to convince the audience to do something for her: to give her $2000 for her organization. This metagenre links Izzy's writings in terms of their illocutionary effect: Izzy does not simply want to convince the reader; she wants to convince the reader to do something very specific for her.

The next metageneric category of Izzy's takes her some time to cobble together, as she thinks aloud through the process of distilling the similarities between various writing tasks she has undertaken. She begins by noting that a number of her writings fall under the category of "analysis," "review," or "critique." She describes her literary analysis essay about *Measure for Measure* (for English class) and her review of the play *Peter and the Starcatcher* (on Tumblr) both as "kind-of like a review." She also connects her literary analysis of *Measure for Measure* with her critique of the article "Finding Benefit from Cancer" for psychology class, explaining they are "kind of analysis in a way." Upon later thought, Izzy explains, "in general, a critique is a review. So that's interesting. Both of these [the psychology critique and the play review] are reviewing things." Izzy's thinking through of these metageneric connections is important to note, and is something that I take up in Chapter 6. Here I focus on Izzy's connections themselves. After thinking through her documents, Izzy eventually reaches this conclusion:

I think that anytime you're reviewing something, you're looking at it, analyzing something, you kind-of approach it in the same way. Even if this was a research article and this was a play, you look at both of them. You kind of see what worked, what didn't work. So like, both of these are a critique.

In addition to her analysis essay of *Measure for Measure* (for school), Tumblr-posted critique of *Peter and the Starcatcher* ("for fun"), and psychology article critique (also for school), Izzy includes in the "review/critique" metagenre the reviews she writes for Yelp. Izzy likes to review the restaurants she visits, in particular. One that she submitted for the study, a review of Perricone's Marketplace and Café in Miami, makes the same general moves as her longer reviews and critiques for school. While to a researcher a Yelp review might seem "worlds apart" from Izzy's English and psychology class assignments, Izzy sees relevant similarities between the genres, and groups them by their common purpose.

One aspect of a successful "review/critique" that Izzy reports is the need to identify and offer specific examples of strengths and weaknesses. All four of Izzy's "analyses" do this to a greater or lesser degree; the psychology article, play review, and Yelp review do it most thoroughly. Here, I use Izzy's writing submissions to illustrate more closely how she practices metageneric reasoning when comparing stylistically different writings across contexts. Although Izzy "sees connections" among the texts she composes in different locations, she does not make the mistake of using the same style or format in these texts. In the excerpts below, Izzy makes the same moves—she identifies and offers examples of strengths and weaknesses—but in styles that differ enormously.

In both Izzy's psychology article critique and her Tumblr review of *Peter and the Starcatcher*, she describes the strengths of the text in detail. In her psychology article critique, Izzy discusses some strengths of the study's research design:

> These measures [Likert scales] were paired with the qualitative design of an open-ended interview question inquiring into the patient's ability to find benefit after treatment. I believe this design is particularly useful for the goals of this study because it is examining the unique experience of the participant, which may not have been explored to as much depth if the participant were to answer a Likert scale questionnaire instead.

In her Tumblr review of *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Izzy also analyzes strengths, in this case of the play's set design:

> The best part for me was the lack of the high tech flying gear that is common in recent shows like Spiderman and the reliance on simple props like ladders and ropes, along with the audience's imagination, with the actors at one point asking the audience to imagine a cat flying across the stage when really there was a rag looking thing attached to a rope. It became very meta at times, which was pretty cool.

In our interview, Izzy pointed out to me that, while both this paragraph and the one above describe strengths of the article and play, one key difference between them is the basis of authority from which she can judge. In the first, Izzy evaluates the study from the perspective of a researcher, drawing on the values of the field of psychology, whereas in the second, Izzy evaluates the play as a person, bringing to the table only her own reactions. Because this is the case, Izzy suggested, she has more liberty in the second

critique to call attention to whatever suits her, as opposed to pointing out expected

elements (such as research design). She also can take more liberties with her style.

Despite the clear stylistic differences between these (and the other two documents) in

Izzy's "review/critique" category, she still considers them to share important common

features and belong to the same metagenre.

Izzy also practices metageneric reasoning by describing how in both her review of

the play and her critique of the article she devotes a paragraph to presenting their

weaknesses. Here she critiques one element of the cancer study for her psychology

assignment:

> Another limitation of the study is that it examines correlation, not
>
> causation. Their results state that finding benefit is 'related' to better
>
> outcomes, but this may not necessarily mean that they cause better
>
> outcomes. Instead, the patients who are already psychologically and
>
> physically more well off are more likely to respond that they have found
>
> benefit. This distinction is not very well discussed in the article.

In her evaluation of the play, on the other hand, Izzy's critique—which addresses the

playwright's possible misreading of what his audience would find funny—is more lively

and playful:

> One thing I didn't like about the play was the character of Mrs. Bumbrake,
>
> Molly's nana who was a woman (I think? Although many were confused
>
> whether or not it was a woman or cross dressing gay man) played by a
>
> man. Normally I am all for cross-gendered casting or even cross dressing,
>
> but his entire role seemed to exist upon the fact that the audience would be

uncomfortable with the idea of 2 men together (most of the character's

scenes involved him acting flamboyantly and getting into risqué situations

with different men while wearing a dress and talking in a high pitched

voice) and that was where the "humor" came from. I didn't quite know

what to make of it.

The juxtaposition of these two texts shows just how different the styles are that Izzy takes

on—even if she's "doing the same thing," as she suggested, with the two pieces of

writing. It is especially notable that, despite these texts' obvious differences in style, Izzy

sees them as part of the same overarching metagenre and classifies them by their shared

purpose. Importantly, grouping her genres into the metagenre of "review/critique" does

not erase the necessary differences in rhetorical moves that Izzy makes when composing

in different contexts. Izzy's similar aims in these two different genres help her locate "the

intersections" between them (Carter)—but without erasing their substantial differences

on the paragraph and sentence level.[34]

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[34] Like Izzy, Margaret practices metageneric reasoning to link but also mindfully distinguish
between two unlike genres. Margaret, a junior supply team management major and resident
assistant, composed a self-evaluation for her internship and, around the same time, a parking
ticket appeal for the campus Department of Transportation Services. While it seems unlikely that
she might connect these genres on first glance, she recognizes several connections with some
chance to talk it through (excerpted also in Chapter 1):

> Last semester I was on co-op with Johnson & Johnson and at our
> midterm and the final eval, we had to write up what we've done. So we were
> trying to summarize this as the last thing that they'll see in your folder before you
> graduate and they want them to hire you. So like how do you sell yourself and
> tell your story. In that experience I was making a list of all the things that I had
> done and trying to capture both the quantitative and the qualitative things that I
> accomplished and the process I had done to do that, the references that I could
> refer to. So trying to be concise but clear but also thorough.
>
> And then around the same time, I was appealing a parking ticket that
> DOTS [Department of Transportation Services] had given me and, ironically that
> felt equally as important because I was so upset that I'd gotten parking ticket in
> the first place since I tried to ask them where I was allowed to park. So that
> appeal was very chronological, it was very much like, this is what happened, this

The way Izzy reasons relationally is by linking her compositions under metageneric umbrellas based on a shared purpose or goal. Her metagenres do not obscure the differences between her writings, but they do find unexpected points of similarity. Indeed, Izzy's connections do at times feel quite surprising—the metagenre of writing that is "trying to get something," for example, makes sense to Izzy but may not have been a researcher's first instinct to locate as a common feature. While I might have been more inclined to group Izzy's work, for instance, by the metagenres of "academic writing," "self-sponsored writing," and "professional writing," Izzy chose to draw her distinctions instead based on the broader shared goal of a "review/critique" rather than domains or contexts. These examples show that the ways students relate their writings may be unexpected or idiosyncratic, but that does not make them any less potentially valuable. On the contrary, the fact that Izzy is able to forge meaningful connections among specific texts in her own oeuvre suggests that other students may be able to locate metageneric relationships between their own unique writing experiences as well. Izzy's examples of metageneric reasoning also show that, when prompted, students may be able to map interesting and valuable relationships among their writing experiences—and that

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is what I did, and this is why you shouldn't make me pay this. Both experiences were very much summarizing an event, summarizing a situation, but one was more me having the voice of like "I'm proud of this, look at all these awesome things that happened" and trying to sell them, whereas the other one was trying to persuade someone to not make me pay a ticket. So similar goals but because of who it was for and how I felt about it, my writing was very different.

Both of these writings fall under the meta-genre of "selling" something, for Margaret—in one case herself and in another her story. They are both persuasive writing, more broadly. Margaret identifies this act of persuasion as dependent on her ability to list evidence clearly and thoroughly. She also explains that the tone she strikes and her feeling about both documents changes dramatically based on the audience and her own emotions toward both at the time, explaining how the documents are similar in some ways and dissimilar in others.

"participants' mappings," as Roozen notes in this chapter's epigraph, can be far more useful than what "official maps" may have pointed toward (347).

Antithetical Reasoning: CJ

Not all relational reasoning is positive or searches for commonalities. Unlike Preston and Izzy, CJ contrasts far more than he compares in his relational reasoning. While CJ's relational reasoning is more complex than simply pitting his academic and personal writing as complete opposites, I refer to his approach to relational reasoning as antithetical because that term characterizes its overarching structure. CJ helps us see from the mindset of a student who is openly frustrated by school and academic writing assignments. Even so, he is far from a "resistant" student: a senior marketing and management double major, CJ earns As in his classes and is extremely involved in blogging, posting on Twitter, and training for triathlons. Most of his personal and non-school writing focuses on the topic of socially responsible investing and the question of how to make "meaningful" career choices. Thus, though CJ is disillusioned with school for a number of reasons, he is articulate about what matters to him and is well prepared (due to current employment, internship experiences, and academic training) for the professional world that awaits him post-graduation.

The central theme of CJ's antithetical reasoning is that academic writing closes a conversation and his personal and extracurricular writing open a conversation. In this way, he "relates" them as opposites—he relates them by showing how they are antithetical to one another. In the case of academic writing, CJ explains, the student's goal is to present an argument in the form of an "answer" that the professor would like or

approve of. In contrast, the goal of a blog is to open up a conversation to input and audience response. He explains this at length when comparing essay writing and blog writing:

> I think the two biggest differences [between writing for school and writing for a blog] is . . . like essay writing, there has to be a conclusion at the end, there has to be a right answer and a point which . . . can be very confining and frustrating at times, especially when there isn't a right answer and you just weighed some very good alternatives and then you have to decide and be like, so we should do this! With blogging it's nicer because you . . . what you do more often than not is you just present options . . . so you always want to have a tying in of the possibilities and potential but it's more of a like, what if we did this? Let's . . . talk about it in the comments section. You try and have, like push some interaction as well. But you're not telling people what you should do, you're presenting options and opening up more [of] a discussion or a debate, which I like a lot more.

It may initially seem as though CJ does not identify any connections between his academic and non-academic writing. However, CJ does not exactly say his writing is unrelated. Instead, he sees his blogging as "opening up a discussion or debate" and his academic writing as presenting "a right answer." We see, then, that CJ relates these types of writing by showing how they are antithetical to one another. In other words, CJ does see a relationship between these writing experiences, even if they are related by being different. CJ's antithetical reasoning is his way of relating the writing he composes by thinking in bigger picture terms about how the goals of these groups of texts differ, and

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why. In particular, CJ explains how his academic writing differs from his blogging because the former is driven by one set of goals—primarily epistemic—and the latter is driven by another, primarily geared toward public or civic debate.

In order to facilitate this kind of interaction or debate among his blog readers, CJ actually feigns some degree of unawareness or presents something as controversial so that people feel more inclined to respond, whether to correct him or because they feel strongly about the issue. In our interview, CJ explains that he does this in one of his blog posts, "Beyond Work/Life Balance." Printed below is an excerpt of the blog post where CJ presents his ideas in a way that might be more incendiary than he really feels in order to try to drum up a response:

Beyond Work/Life Balance

Posted on January 8, 2013. By ████████

As I prepare for my last semester of college, I've been getting a classic piece of advice from the adults in my life – "enjoy your time in school while it lasts." Usually, I just laugh and nod in response, but really, I can't stand hearing it.

Why? Because, to me, this seemingly well-intentioned remark implies that college is as good as life's going to get. What's even more maddening is that students all around me have accepted that this is how it's supposed to be. They are living in the moment now because they've been convinced that post-graduation means 40 hours of cubicle monotony per week for the rest of their professional lives. How depressing is that?

In my opinion, there's something wrong with a culture that embraces such an outlook. I've considered what leads us to spend the rest of our lives wishing we could be back in high school or college: Maybe its that the people who do not take school seriously (but have a really good time) end up with careers that are unfulfilling—but I've realized this is an arrogant and limiting view. As I've thought on it further, the real problem, I think, is that many don't realize that alternatives to this corporate monotony exist.

Previous generations have looked at work as a paycheck, a necessity to provide for one's family, a means to an end. Now, there are clear ways for people to pursue a career that has more than financial gain—a career that actually gives back and creates positive social impact. Our view of work has changed, but the systems we work in have not.

Much has been written on why so many millennials seem to be enamored by social change. I think a great deal of it has to do with the pursuit of a fulfilling career and an impatience for existing business and industries to provide it. I think that millennials see their careers as not a part of their lives, but rather what they do with their lives – and life is so much more than making ends meet. It's social, emotional, physical, and spiritual. It's about pursuing your passions, building relationships, and giving back. CSR initiatives and the growing buzz around intrapreneurship show us that the corporate world is taking notice and trying to change, but these efforts are fragmented and still developing at best. Until our careers reflect our lives, we'll be left wanting. Think beyond the idea of work/life balance where the two are looked at as separate pieces. Instead of balancing your personal life with your work life, it's time to integrate your passions into your career trajectory.

Figure 4.4: An excerpt of CJ's blog post, "Beyond Work/Life Balance" posted on his personal blog. This excerpt includes the first two-thirds of the post; I print the remaining one-third of the post in Chapter 5 (see Figure 5.2).

From this excerpt, we can see that CJ presents a passionate plea for thinking beyond work as a necessary evil.[35] He explains that in this post, he takes a slightly more controversial stance than he otherwise would take (or than he really feels) to try to get people to respond in the comments section. He describes this tactic: "I try and make myself more controversial here because I'm trying to drive a response, right? . . . I mean, I want people to talk about it." CJ approaches his blogging with goals other than proving or demonstrating his own knowledge—the goal he asserts is central to an essay for a class. Rather, he makes strategic rhetorical choices that incite discussion or rile up the audience. While that would not be appropriate for an academic essay, CJ explains, it is very appropriate for his blogging.

Indeed, CJ returns multiple times during our conversation to the importance of proving his knowledge to his professor in academic writing. Here again he distinguishes between blogging and essay writing for class:

> [Blogging] is much more of a dialogue or at least my attempt at creating one . . . I'm intentionally leaving information out, or I'm pushing people to respond back, whereas that's like the exact opposite of what you want to do in school, right? [For school] you want to leave absolutely no question that this is the right answer. And any comments or questions that your professor has is probably going to be a bad thing, right? . . . [In academic writing] I'm covering all my bases.

This distinction shows that CJ holds extracurricular writing, new media writing, and blogging in higher regard than their academic counterparts because they allow for a

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[35] I present the remainder of the post in Chapter 5 where I discuss CJ's development of his *ethos*. See Figure 5.2.

greater level of dialogue. In those contexts, CJ strategically withholds the "covering all my bases" element of academic writing, even intentionally inserting holes into his own argument, in order to foster a response. He values the comments that people leave about his posts, and the follow-up conversations that they instigate, more than he values praise about a job well done.

CJ says that he has the same goal (of opening a conversation) as a social media intern at the Calvert Foundation, a nonprofit that connects investors with pressing social causes. While at the Calvert Foundation, CJ tries to initiate written conversations though Twitter. He explains:

> The tweets that I sent out were the beginnings of conversations. So either I would go after the author or the organization or use a hash tag and try to get other people involved. But to really look at it is, I would read the post, and then I would make some sort of comment or question about it. And, you know, 80% of the time, it didn't get answered, but the 20% of the time that it did, it was always really interesting.

In this case, CJ's job as a social media intern actually required this approach as his goal was to "drum up business" or attention to the Calvert Foundation's website. He explains that this approach came naturally to him since, unlike academic writing, it occurred in a realm "where people were actually talking about things that are going on right now."

CJ has a hard time getting past the affective barrier when engaging in relational reasoning about his writing for school and for outside of school because, he says, "I feel so radically different about these two things." His attitude toward school writing is pragmatic—it's something that needs to get done—whereas his approach toward his

writing for the community blog and internship is driven more by passion. In some cases, CJ is actively frustrated with school writing and school in general due to its separation from the "real world," as he puts it:

> Basically I was like done with college after my freshman year. It was just so fake. I was ready to do something real. And not that the things that I do here aren't real, but you know, I was just very much ready to engage in the real world and do real problems and do real things, as opposed to just learn about them. And so I got very impatient with being in school.

CJ's negative evaluation of academic writing, and school in general, is especially thought provoking due to composition's use of the "entering the academic conversation" (Bartholomae) metaphor or its Burkean Parlor analogue to describe students' early experiences with scholarly writing. CJ applies almost the same schema to explain his blogging in opposition to academic writing. In other words, rather than thinking of academic writing as a chance to "put your oar in" to a conversation, CJ thinks of it as a time that he is being asked to display—to display knowledge in the most complete way possible.[36] On the contrary, blogging is a place to really ask, with the intention of perhaps slightly changing the direction of a conversation. With some exceptions, including the blogging he does for the business school and a proposal he wrote for a class he found especially challenging, CJ draws on antithetical reasoning to separate the writing he does for school and the writing he composes for "the real world."[37]

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[36] In this way, CJ's concept of academic writing is reminiscent of Dias, Freedman, Medway, and Paré's account of academic writing as "epistemic" and therefore fundamentally different from professional writing.

[37] When I asked CJ about whether he thought his professors knew about any of the writing he did outside of class, he laughed. "Oh, they definitely don't," he said.

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To an extent, relational reasoning committed to finding difference and no points of connection is not likely to facilitate transfer. The sort of antithetical reasoning that CJ engages in could prevent him from transferring potentially relevant learning between academic and non-academic situations because he sees the writing situations as fundamentally different. However, CJ's reasoning strategy is different from saying that writings in academic and non-academic settings are *not related*. CJ's reasoning strategy relates his various writings by describing, in specific ways, *how* they are different or even opposites. In this way, his relational reasoning style may be more useful than it initially seems: it may enable him to better describe the goals of a particular task or assignment by being able to describe or discern what they are not. In this way, CJ's relational reasoning strategy is almost like half of "not talk": he distinguishes his writing in specific ways without also presenting them as "like" one another. If CJ were to stop short with his reasoning and say simply that his various writings have nothing to do with one another, then opportunities for transfer would truly be difficult or impossible to find. However, CJ does "see connections." He reasons relationally, identifying specific ways his academic and web writing are antithetical to one another. Antithetical relational reasoning, I argue, is still a valuable approach to mapping connections.

A Fortiori Reasoning (the same, but more so—a matter of degree): Erika

A fourth type of relational reasoning I located in my participants' explanations is one that Dumas, Alexander, and Grossnickle do not identify in their review of literature and composition scholars have not otherwise recognized. "A fortiori" reasoning is a way of relating writing experiences by saying that they are similar, but one contains *more of* a

shared quality than the other. An a fortiori argument is an argument literally "from stronger reason"; that is, if an original argument is already convincing, then the argument "from stronger reason" is even more convincing. In this case, I use a fortiori to mean that one case is like the other, but even stronger, or even more so. In the examples I share here, Erika explains how texts she has composed are similar in certain ways, but the features of one distinguish it from the other by being a stronger example of the case.

Erika is a special education major who freelances in web and graphic design. She is a native speaker of Japanese and fully bilingual, which she attributes to beginning to read Harry Potter books in fourth grade. She was diagnosed with an arteriovenous malformation (AVM) during her sophomore year in college and had to have brain surgery shortly after. She explains that, since her brain surgery, her writing interests and focuses have changed, from more open-ended creative writing, like fan fiction, to more straightforward writing, like informational blog posts about useful study tactics for students with learning disabilities. In this section, I describe two ways Erika uses a fortiori reasoning to relate her web writing and research essays.

Much of Erika's writing, both for her personal and extracurricular/professional activities, relates to AVM. She created a website (see Figure 4.5) about the condition that contains a plethora of information directed toward both people diagnosed with AVM and supporters.[38] Copied below is an example of an informational page from within the site:

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[38] In addition to basic information, the website includes a 2-minute informational video, a collection of blogs posts and stories by survivors, an online store (selling aneurysm awareness products, including stickers, pins, and bracelets), and information about local support groups and meeting times.
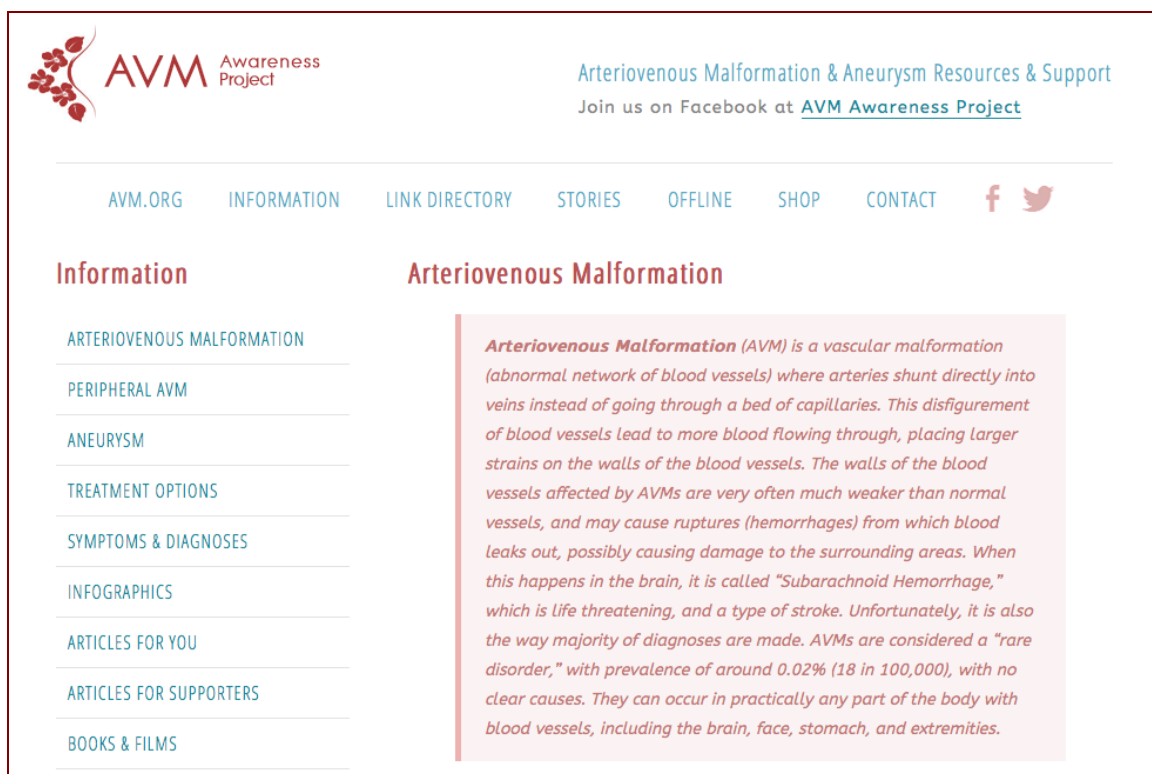
AVM Awareness Project

Arteriovenous Malformation & Aneurysm Resources & Support

Join us on Facebook at AVM Awareness Project

AVM.ORG   INFORMATION   LINK DIRECTORY   STORIES   OFFLINE   SHOP   CONTACT

Information

ARTERIOVENOUS MALFORMATION

PERIPHERAL AVM

ANEURYSM

TREATMENT OPTIONS

SYMPTOMS & DIAGNOSES

INFOGRAPHICS

ARTICLES FOR YOU

ARTICLES FOR SUPPORTERS

BOOKS & FILMS

Arteriovenous Malformation

Arteriovenous Malformation (AVM) is a vascular malformation (abnormal network of blood vessels) where arteries shunt directly into veins instead of going through a bed of capillaries. This disfigurement of blood vessels lead to more blood flowing through, placing larger strains on the walls of the blood vessels. The walls of the blood vessels affected by AVMs are very often much weaker than normal vessels, and may cause ruptures (hemorrhages) from which blood leaks out, possibly causing damage to the surrounding areas. When this happens in the brain, it is called "Subarachnoid Hemorrhage," which is life threatening, and a type of stroke. Unfortunately, it is also the way majority of diagnoses are made. AVMs are considered a "rare disorder," with prevalence of around 0.02% (18 in 100,000), with no clear causes. They can occur in practically any part of the body with blood vessels, including the brain, face, stomach, and extremities.

Figure 4.5: A page of Erika's informational website about Arteriovenous Malformation

One place that Erika articulates a fortiori reasoning is in her discussions of source use, both for her website and a research assignment about the Fukushima nuclear disaster. The website is self-sponsored; Erika creates and maintains it on her own time in order to provide reliable information to the public about AVM and how people diagnosed with AVM can get support. The research essay was assigned for a 400-level Japanese class (conducted in English) called Atomic Bomb Literature and Memory. Erika devotes significant time and energy in her AVM website to verifying sources and ensuring that her statistics and information are accurate. Erika cares about this in her academic writing as well, but it is even more important for her web writing. She explains: "This website is definitely like my research papers because . . . well, it's even worse than the research papers because I actually have to make it legitimate because people are actually . . .

relying on the information." While it is important for Erika to verify sources in both her academic and her web writing, the importance of verifying sources reaches a new level for her AVM website because the stakes are so high. She explains that, for her website, investigating sources is key:

> I had to actually literally verify the sources, because for school stuff you're like eh, you know, it's from this source, it must be true. But [for] this one [the AVM website] you actually had to verify the sources and make sure that the person that says who he is is actually who he is and you can't just publish someone's statistics because it says Doctor Something. You actually have to go and verify it with other sources and make sure it's correct because people are coming to that site to find information.

Erika takes the research she does for this website very seriously. She explains that even peer-reviewed medical studies are suspect to her; she checks to see if multiple peer-reviewed studies, and those conducted by different stakeholders, have achieved the same results.

Her standards for credibility in this case are far higher than her standards for credibility for her academic work—where, she says, as long as you acknowledge the bias, it is generally okay to draw on studies that may be biased or that have not been successfully replicated. Other than her AVM website, Erika says, "I've never had to write something that's majorly, you know, that could influence someone's life in a certain way. So that was a new way of writing." Even though the research papers Erika submitted to the study are on important issues, such as the Fukushima nuclear disaster and the US penal system, they do not qualify to Erika as "influential."

We can see a fortiori reasoning at work here: Erika connects her academic writing and web writing along the lines of source credibility, but explains that the data she draws on for her web-writing must be even more credible than her academic writing sources. This is the case in part, Erika explains, because she is the compiler of information, rather than the on-the-ground researcher. As such, she needs to put in extra effort to projecting and assuring her credibility (more on Erika's *ethos* in Chapter 5): "I'm not actually a professional . . . I just try to find resources, and I do try to cross-reference sources, so that I get legitimate [information]." Because she is not a certified expert with credentials, Erika feels the need to take additional pains to ensure the information she shares online is legitimate.

In addition, Erika draws on a fortiori reasoning to describe the need to appeal to her audience in both academic and web writing. Erika claims that the bar is set much higher in her writing for public audiences because her professors are required to read her writing for school (in her words, "I don't know if . . . they want to read what I write, but they have to") and readers in the online world are not required to read her work at all. Erika explains that, in all her writing, "if you want people to come back, you need to be able to write something that people are willing to read." However, while this is a shared feature of online and academic writing, it is even more than case for Erika in her online writing. She notes that "the website-related things and blog-related things are more people-related" and therefore require much more attention to what would seem worthwhile and readable to a wide audience. While Erika feels obliged to write in a way that connects to her audience in both academic and online settings, she explains it is

especially important that her web writing be interesting and concise so that a wide

audience will read it through, pay attention, and return to the site in the future.[39]

Erika demonstrates the ability to reason relationally in a fairly sophisticated way.

She moves beyond noting similarities and differences and instead shows how similar

compositions might fall on different places on a spectrum. Like the other students I

profile, Erika also draws fairly idiosyncratic and unexpected connections between her

writing experiences, and she makes connections across domains. In addition, we see that

Erika's a fortiori reasoning orients her toward a "transfer mindset" by helping her explain

the gradations of difference between texts that she sees as otherwise sharing a common

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[39] Another participant, Nora, also relates two of her writing experiences through a fortiori reasoning, in her case through their similarly collaborative nature and the importance of reaching particular audiences. Nora is a sophomore psychology major who also participates in "Mockapella," a comedic a capella singing group. Nora demonstrates a fortiori reasoning when she compares her psychology group research paper with the lyrics she writes for Mockapella because, she says, the Mockapella lyrics are a more extreme or salient version of the academic writing. Nora describes the two writing experiences:

> Two big things for me and they're super different, but more similar than I thought at first, is I had to do a really big research paper for Psych 300 where essentially you get into a group of three and you just pick a random topic. And you narrow it down to a research question, you write out like a full-blown report. . . . And then writing lyrics for a song in Mockapella and—I mean obviously they're really different . . . but they're both group work. They're both like, learning to work in groups and when to take someone's opinion into account and when you think you should override it and then when you get overridden anyway, how to deal with that. Sometimes writing the lyrics for Mockapella is almost more difficult because you have to keep within the lyrics of the song, make it singable, make it relevant and current and have shock value, but not be so distasteful that people are like, run[ning] away. And then of course with the big, formal, academic writing you have to make sure you follow all the different rules.

In additional to explaining that these are both "group work" and require the tough social maneuvering typical of collaborative projects, Nora explains that both texts require a certain audience awareness and appropriateness. In addition, she relates her research project and song lyrics along a spectrum in which the lyrics require an even more extreme version of audience awareness than the academic writing, explaining that targeting the song lyrics to the audience is often more difficult and important. We see that Nora practices a fortiori reasoning by claiming that one writing experience presents a stronger or more extreme version of a quality—audience awareness—that also characterizes another writing experience.

feature. A fortiori reasoning extends the work we see Preston and CJ doing because it adds even more nuance to the ways the students might map the relationships between their writing. In other words, a fortiori reasoning offers a strategy to further refine the mental maps students may develop among their various writing experiences.

Analogical Reasoning: Diddy

The final type of relational reasoning I profile is analogical reasoning. This kind of reasoning exhibits itself in various forms. The connections that Diddy makes demonstrate two types of analogical reasoning: finding points of comparison (or extracting similar features) between two different genres written in different contexts and drawing analogies between writing and prior experiences or related concepts. Analogical reasoning differs from comparative and contrastive reasoning because it focuses on the similarities and likenesses between two texts or a text and a related concept, without concentrating on the differences. Diddy demonstrates a particularly open "transfer mindset" by locating connections in more idiosyncratic ways than any of the other participants I interviewed. Indeed, Diddy claims to be predisposed to searching for connections. "People call me really random," he says, but "I like making connections."

A senior double majoring in neurophysiology and psychology and minoring in philosophy, Diddy also works at the college radio station as an engineer and DJ. He is passionate about music, heavy metal in particular, and was president of the metal club for some time. He was interested in computer programming as a high school student but in college decided to take pre-med classes and intern in biology and chemistry labs so he could prepare himself to apply to medical school. He is ambivalent about being a doctor:

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on the one hand, he is excited about the idea; on the other, he fears that practicing

medicine will take too much time and prevent him from pursing his many other interests.

Most of Diddy's analogous reasoning compares his writing assignments with these many

non-academic and wide-ranging interests.

When I asked Diddy to explain as how he managed to figure out the new writing

tasks he encountered, he responded, "I feel like there were so many experiences, I can't

really get to the first one. But every single experience seems to just reaffirm or contradict

an assumption I had before. And that's how I kind-of grow, I guess." This quotation,

which is also this chapter's epigraph, reveals Diddy explaining the ways he encounters

and engages new writing situations, and helps show the potential value of relational

reasoning. Diddy claims to "grow" as a writer by reassessing his assumptions each time a

new writing experience confirms or challenges them. In this way, Diddy's knowledge

about writing is like an ever-shifting constellation: as he has new experiences, its quantity

of points and number of connections between those points both grow. In the examples of

analogical reasoning I profile below, Diddy explicitly names, alludes to, or invents

examples based on common features he identifies between his various writing

experiences and life experiences.

Diddy engages in analogical reasoning in a way similar to those I profile above by

locating common features between two pieces of his writing: his FYW final research

paper and a music review he wrote for the college heavy metal radio station's blog.

Diddy's FYW essay, titled "Musical Mayhem" (April 28, 2010), and his music review of

the hard rock band The Mars Volta's album *Noctourniquet* (April 17, 2012) seem to be

relatively unrelated, other than loosely in their content. However, Diddy locates multiple

similarities between these texts, including their presentation of background information, use of research, and (more critically) misguided tones. This example is like Preston's, Izzy's, and Erika's above in that Diddy locates similarities between two seemingly unrelated texts. It differs in that Diddy focuses on similarities based on his evaluation of each text; he points out common strengths and common weaknesses that the texts share. Excerpts of both texts are copied below (see Figures 4.6 and 4.7):

Diddy Sample A: Opening of "Musical Mayhem"

 In 1995, some radical fans of the metal band Slayer called teenager Elyse Pahler to hang out with them at a local grove. Little did she know that her three friends would strangle and rape her in an attempt to receive blessings from Satan or whoever they worshiped to benefit their band. Finding nothing else to blame, Pahler's parents used the listening choices of the children as a scapegoat for their daughter's death. According to Newsweek journalist, Horn, they sued the music industry citing lyrics from specific songs such as "'Dead Skin Mask,' and 'PostMortem', which gave the teenagers step-by-step instructions to stalk, rape, kill and commit acts of necrophilia on their daughter," (46). It is truly unfortunate that Elyse Pahler had to die at such a young age in such a horrid way, but why should only music be blamed?
 Similar situations have cropped up repeatedly over the years. Some of these include the Columbine shootings of 1999 and the suicides of Judas Priest fans in Nevada among many others. These events have led to conflicts between the music industry and the victims or relatives of victims of so-called musically related crimes. These people who use the music industry as a scapegoat for criminal activity should seriously consider the other side of this conflict. This issue could also concern others including researchers and students in the fields of psychology, sociology, criminology and ethnomusicology among many others. As forms of media such as music have become more prevalent, so have the accusations against them for various issues society face. However, we, as a group, fail to remember that we have been facing these issues before the popularity of music and other media increased. Our assumption of a causal relationship between music and societal problems, namely violence, is flawed.
 There are many natural factors that may influence a person to commit violence. Firstly, there is the innate human tendency towards violence. According to musician Marilyn Manson, one of the celebrities most blamed for the Columbine massacre of 1999, "the day that Cain bashed his brother Abel's brains in, the only motivation he needed was his own human disposition to violence" (1). We can be quite sure that there were factors in play besides whatever was on Cain's on-the-go playlist. […]

Figure 4.6: First page and a half of Diddy's final research-based position paper for first-year writing

Diddy Sample B: Review of *Noctourniquet*
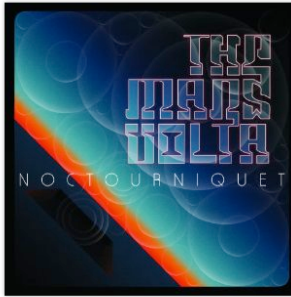
The Mars Volta

Noctourniquet

In their latest album, The Mars Volta take forward their more conventional songwriting from Octahedron, but splatter a little bit of the energy from their earlier albums here and there. The songs are dynamic as usual, with livid songs such as The Whip Hand, and somber, beautiful songs like Empty Vessels Make the Loudest Sound. Once again, the musicianship is impeccable. It seems like Rodriguez-Lopez has decided to take a step or two back as a guitarist and allow the synths to take on a more significant role, adding a layer of freshness to their sound. Vocalist Bixler-Zavala has changed up his style on this record, opting for less of his high-pitched wails in favor of experimentation with his lower range. Noctourniquet also welcomes new drummer Deantoni Parker, whose style sharply contrasts that of Thomas Pridgen, who was featured on the previous two TMV albums. Whereas Pridgen was a force of nature, throwing in 32nd note fills amidst complex patterns, Parker plays as a machine, weaving in and out of the mechanical electronic beats that are spread through the album. Alderete continues to supply a strong foundation with his bass playing, complementing the guitars and synths beautifully. As a consequence, TMV have been able to take a step forward, delivering fresh and original music once again with Noctourniquet.

Good Tracks: 1, 2, 5, 13
FCC: All tracks clean

Figure 4.7: Diddy's music review of album *Noctourniquet*, posted on the college radio station website

When looking at these texts together, Diddy explains that he feels he does a good job with two of the elements that both of these texts have in common: the need to set up context or background information and the need to conduct thorough research. In the music review, Diddy says, he began by "set[ting] up the context," which was "the latest album." He claims he wrote the music review, much like his FYW essay, with the

reader's need for background information in mind: "when I write something, I like to write it the way I would like to read it. So like, the first thing I would like to know is the background." Though Diddy never uses the word "narration" (the classical Parts of a Full Argument are taught in FYW at the University of Maryland), he describes the importance of background information in both contexts. In addition, Diddy explains that both documents required extensive research. To write the music review, Diddy says, he read other people's reviews on various radio station websites and watched interviews with musicians on YouTube. He chose to conduct this research because, as he says, "I think if you're writing a review about something, you should know your stuff." He went through the same process with his FYW essay several years earlier, he says, gathering research from sources ranging from scholarly articles to "some friends from the metal club that I was in." We notice Diddy "sees connections" between two very different genres for two very different purposes, connecting them by extracting a common feature.

Diddy also draws analogies between these two pieces based on critique: in both his FYW essay and his music review, he explains, he finds his tone to be inappropriate or off target. Looking back on his FYW essay, Diddy explains his tone felt too urgent and confrontational: "it felt a little bit like I was making a speech at a rally. I didn't really restrict myself." Diddy suggests here that his tone does not match the conventions of the genre and claims that the desire to rouse the reader's emotions by drawing on opposing sources and presenting himself in an angry, passionate tone is something that he grew out of as he matured. We see an example of Diddy's self-critique in Figure 4.8, where I print another excerpt of Diddy's "Musical Mayhem" essay alongside his critique of that excerpt. The passage comes from a paragraph where Diddy argues there are many

reasons humans commit violent acts, most of which have nothing to do with the music they listen to.

Excerpt (from page 3 of "Musical Mayhem")	Diddy's Commentary
We truly are dedicated to excelling in the art of war. Actually, in another Marilyn Manson interview conducted by director Mike Moore in the documentary Bowling for Columbine, Moore notes that "the day that Columbine happened, the United States dropped more bombs on Kosovo than any other time during that war" under the watch of the president (Moore). So, now that it is out in the clear, who are we greater influenced by? The president or shock rocker Manson? I believe the answer is obvious. Whether we choose to believe it or not, we are an innately violent species, and music is barely responsible for it.	I feel like I just didn't really restrict myself. I was like, "So now that is clear, who are we greater influenced by?" Greater is a weird word to use there. "The president, or shock-rocker Manson. I believe the answer is obvious." I just felt like . . . you know, when you call someone's bluff? You can either do it, and be really forthright about it. Or you can be really sneaky, and when they realize, they're like, "Aw, man, that hurt." Yeah, I feel like this was just obvious, and I had a really good point going, and then I just kind of just threw it out there, as opposed to . . . it seems . . . a little too dramatic, and a little too distasteful, I guess.

Figure 4.8: Excerpt of Diddy's FYW essay alongside his commentary on his tone and word choice

Diddy goes on to say that, were he to re-write this paper, "I wouldn't make as big a deal about the point, and [would] let the reader make a big deal out of it. I guess I would kind of say, 'so there's that,' and I'd kind-of move on." Diddy clarifies here that he would not want to force his ideas at the reader, but would rather set up conditions in his paper to facilitate the reader's ability to come to her own conclusions.

Diddy is similarly critical of his style or tone in the music review he writes, explaining that in this text he is also overly dramatic and also does not adequately respect the reader's intelligence. For example, Diddy claims that elements of his review are not substantive at all, but are rather "just like fan boying all over the place":

This is such a subjective statement: "He was able to supply a strong

foundation with his base playing, that complements the guitars and synths

beautifully." Like, there's nothing to substantiate that, besides my taste.

This might be the worst sentence in the entire thing.

Diddy cringes when he re-reads his album review. Were he to revise it, he says, he would take a different approach: "it would be a lot longer. There would be a track-by-track. And I would probably try to find the little Easter eggs, these like, little things that people don't really notice." Finding and showing the "little Easter eggs" would help establish a better and more respectful relationship with his reader, Diddy says, much like taking a less dramatic tone in his FYW essay would ultimately be more persuasive. In comparing these examples, Diddy locates common features—across wide differences in genres and domains—that characterize his documents' relative effectiveness or ineffectiveness. Diddy's awareness of these common features demonstrates his "transfer mindset," or his orientation toward seeing potentially relevant connections.

Diddy also practices analogical reasoning by relating his writing to his prior experiences or related concepts apart from his writing experiences.[40] These examples are even more idiosyncratic, locating similarities between writing and concepts that are more far-flung. For instance, Diddy draws an analogy between concise writing and coding, explaining how his experience with computer programming helped him understand how to write more efficiently. We see this type of analogical reasoning in Diddy's explanation of streamlining his writing:

> I just kind of look through it and I try to condense. I think the way this
>
> relates is, I used to do computer programming in high school. What

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[40] This type of analogical reasoning is similar to the analogical reasoning Michelle Navarre Cleary identifies among adult students in "Flowing and Freestyling" (see 668-70). As a whole, Diddy's analogies are more explicit than the analogies Cleary's participants make (which are more implied) (see 684).

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happens is like, for code . . . it's a form of communication. [With

coding] . . . you're telling it what to do, and it's just going to listen to you.

And you can tell it in a bunch of ways. There's like a different way to do

everything. But . . . the challenge is . . . how to find a way to do it easily.

Like, efficiently. And you have to be able to do it with as little space as

possible. So it's like, if I had a sentence that I made like a paragraph

on . . . it would just be hard for a person to find the main point. It would be

much easier if it was a sentence. So if I could do a paragraph of code in

just one line, that would be much better. And I think that's kind of what

happens. That's [the resume] like an extreme example there.

In this example, Diddy explains how condensing writing (such as in his resume) and

condensing a computer code are similar and draw from the same principles. Diddy

elaborates on this analogy at another point when he explains, "It's much stronger when

you can take something that . . . can take up a lot of space, and you just put it in one

sentence. It's like not meandering anymore. It's much more like, surgical."

Diddy draws fairly far-flung analogies between his writing and related concepts to

explain his arrangement choices as well. When describing his arrangement strategy for a

particular essay, for instance, Diddy explains, "I kind of look at it as a suspension bridge.

With each point, once I get the points in order, I can connect them." Thinking of

arrangement in terms of a suspension bridge, Diddy says, also helps him with his

outlines. He explains: "I'm all about outlines. Just because I can ramble about something

forever . . . it reminds me of a suspension bridge the way I envision it. Each point is some

point that I need to make and that's why I make the outline. Then I shape my flow to

that." Diddy also explains his arrangement strategies by drawing analogies to roller

coasters. When discussing the arrangement strategy of his final, research-based essay for

his FYW class, for example, Diddy notes,

> I think the structure was good. I really, just looking back on it, I think I did
>
> a good job, with the organization . . . it felt a little bit like a roller coaster
>
> ride. There was the peaks, where it was like, really just gruesome
>
> descriptions. . . . I guess the reader kind of gets a little bit of a rush. And
>
> then like the lower portions, which are more analytical. And you're
>
> quoting a source.

This analogy helps Diddy explain the "flow" or feel of his work, in terms of its energy

and order, and how to balance attention-grabbing sections with more mundane analysis.

In these examples, Diddy is not reasoning relationally between domains of writing as

much as he is seeing connections—practicing analogical reasoning—between his writing

and concepts that help him make more sense of his writing.

Diddy draws analogies to concepts far afield of writing when describing his

understanding of argumentation as well. Specifically, Diddy draws an analogy to

mathematical reasoning when describing the logic of his essay. One goal of his final

research essay from FYW is to disabuse the reader of the notion that music and violence

are causally related or that the influence of music could be "to blame" for violent acts. He

explains this goal in terms of a math equation:

> What I was trying to do was like, if you look at it in terms of variables, in
>
> a very mathematical sort of way . . . it's like . . . heavy metal music plus

person equals violence, and I was just trying to make that equals sign with a dash through it.

Diddy manages to articulate his paper's goal—disproving a common conception or frequent misconception—through "math language." This provides yet another useful analog for Diddy as he explains his approach to argumentation. We see Diddy's "transfer mindset" at work through these many examples. He reaches out to draw on any possibly relevant information, regardless of where he learned or thought about it (including math class and computer programming). Diddy's relational reasoning moves *beyond* writing; he sees relevant connections across many experiences and concepts.

Toward the end of our conversation, Diddy paused for a moment to think through how all of his writing experiences might relate to one another. He questioned whether his first-year writing class could be considered the "source" of his writing knowledge or not. He elaborates on this thought:

> Well I mean I've always . . . I think I've always kind of talked like this. And I think the [final philosophy class] paper wasn't . . . like the summation of that. I've always kind-of had those weird, I don't know, philosophical conversations. So this [review] was just like applying that to music, and I think this [FYW essay] was one of the first major [written] endeavors for that kind of thing.

Even while Diddy identifies the FYW essay as one of his first attempts of putting into written words his "philosophical conversations," he still sees it as having a clear antecedent genre in his conversations with others. Rather than seeming to be a "source" for transfer either in or out, Diddy expresses a sense that this essay belongs in a larger

network of similar conversations, some spoken and this written. In other words, Diddy sees his FYW essay (and other writing from that class) not a "separate" learning event, but rather as another experience that "reaffirms or contradicts" his beliefs as he continues to write and communicate. Diddy's many analogies, between his life, experiences, and other compositions, help him negotiate his personal network of knowledge, the one with and against which he can reassess the new writing tasks he encounters and makes for himself.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I present survey data about the genres that students report writing most frequently throughout their college years, across personal, extracurricular, and academic settings. I show ways that survey respondents relate those writing experiences and see them as "influencing" one another, a point that challenges scholarship that suggests students do not see connections across domains. I also describe several students' experiences with vertical transfer, or transfer that involves moving specific learning forward into new writing activities. Drawing from research in education, I set up a rationale for focusing attention on relational reasoning and its relevance to transfer, explaining how it might help students develop a "transfer mindset." The most significant contribution of my chapter to research on writing transfer is the series of case studies of the five central ways that students "see connections" and practice relational reasoning. I identify and offer specific examples of comparative and contrastive reasoning, metageneric reasoning, antithetical reasoning, a fortiori reasoning, and analogical reasoning.

The range of connections that my study participants forged between genres and contexts was quite vast. I recorded many additional instances of relational reasoning throughout the focus group conversations and interviews that space constraints prevent me from reporting in this chapter. One pattern worth commenting on, however, is the fact that the group discussion format itself (in focus groups) seemed to encourage relational reasoning among participants; I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 6. When one student engaged in relational reasoning about his writing, it seemed to encourage group members to engage in relational reasoning with their group members' experiences as well.

Scholarship suggests that relational reasoning is central to successful transfer because forging relevant relationships, or "seeing connections," is the first step of repurposing knowledge strategically. The five students I profile from my study as well as the survey and focus group participants show how attempting to relate writings across difference can generate unexpected points of connection. While instructors cannot (and should not) dictate that students perform relational reasoning exactly as these students do, we can learn from their varied approaches and practices to open space for our students to develop *their own* relational reasoning strategies. Relational reasoning may be important for students because it helps them locate their writing experiences in relation to one another, which is an essential element of being a flexible writer. As I note in Chapter 2, asking students to engage in relational reasoning has the potential to "help [them] create a map of writing that could function as a passport to various postsecondary sites of writing" (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 129). My findings in this chapter offer a more precise and nuanced understanding of *exactly how* students construct those maps of writing. The

five relational reasoning strategies I outline demonstrate the specific tactics students might use—or, as I discuss in Chapter 6, that teachers might prompt students to use—to develop a mindset oriented toward transfer in any writing situation.

Chapter 5: *Ethos*, Transfer, and Extracurricular Writing

> From whom does the authority to speak publicly in one genre translate
> into wider authority over new areas of knowledge? When does *ethos* that
> emerged in one arena—say, the chemistry lab—allow a rhetor to argue in
> broader rhetorical environments? When and where can *ethos* move?
> —Risa Applegarth, "Genre, Location, and Mary Austin's *Ethos*" (60)

> I think it [writing both in and out of school] has just made me very aware
> of . . . my audience a lot of times. I think because . . . all the shifting
> audiences . . . this time, I'm just writing it for a teacher, but now this time
> I'm writing it for my participants and their parents. This time I'm writing
> it as a policymaker advising another, you know? Like, if I'm writing a
> status update on Facebook or something, you always have to write it in
> mind to like, okay well, who's reading this?
> —Nkem, senior government and politics and Arabic double major,
> Alternative Breaks trip leader, administrative assistant to director of
> honors college

This chapter presents findings related to the second central research question of

my study: drawing on any resources or prior experiences, how do students figure out how

to craft their texts so they will succeed with a given audience? When I asked students in

focus groups and interviews how they figured out to craft a text for a given scenario,

many commented on the importance of voice, tone, style, or sounding "a certain way" for

a particular audience. Although none of the students in my study used the term "*ethos*" to

describe their attempts at projecting a particular persona, students did use the terms

"role," "character," and "hat" (as in "I was using my critical thinking, job-seeking hat"

and "it was more my academic sort of hat"), and they discussed at length the sources they

drew from and transformed to project the most effective character in their writing. In

Chapter 4 I discuss ways of thinking that help students cultivate a "transfer mindset." In

this chapter, I go one step further, and present the various sources that students report

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drawing from to transfer an effective *ethos* into the writing they compose. I also show

that students seem to develop a greater awareness of *ethos*, and how to project an

effective *ethos*, through their experiences of writing online.

Transferring *Ethos*

In any given day, college students write in many different roles: as family

members, biologists, rappers, mentors, salespeople, historians, poets, and friends, to name

a few. Moving between these different locations of writing requires more than just skills:

it requires the writer to be able to project a persona that is credible for and appropriate to

the situation. That is, it requires the author to project an effective *ethos*. But where do

students learn this *ethos*? Where does it come from? How do students build on *ethos* they

might cultivate in one scenario for other, different scenarios?

Research on writing-related transfer has not fully addressed this question of how

students "sell" their writing by transferring or transforming prior experiences or

knowledge to convince their audience of their authority. As I explain in Chapters 1 and 2,

I adapt Nowacek's definition of "selling connections" for my study. By "selling"

connections, I mean the general techniques students use to present a credible *ethos* for

various rhetorical situations in and beyond the academy. Instead of considering how

students transfer *ethos*, much composition research focuses on whether students transfer

understandings *about writing*—such as arrangement strategies, approaches to cohesion,

and source use—from previous learning situations or into new writing situations

(Bergmann and Zepernick, Carroll, Fraizer, Nelms and Dively, Wardle, "Understanding

'Transfer'"). Composition research also often addresses how students transfer broader

concepts, such as audience awareness, genre knowledge, and discourse community knowledge (Beaufort; Nowacek; Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak), as well as how dispositional factors, such as whether a student takes an open-minded approach to learning, impede or promote transfer (Driscoll, Reiff and Bawarshi, Sommers and Saltz, Wardle, "Creative Repurposing"). But how does a writer transfer understanding of persona or character? In any given context, where the relationship between the writer and reader is circumscribed by issues of status, medium, and sociocultural milieu, among other factors, the author must determine how to locate herself in a particular voice or role. How might she draw on her communicative experiences, or her *ethos* in other settings, to project *ethos* in a new situation? The first epigraph for this chapter calls attention to this question and exposes its complications: if *ethos* is situated, is it ever applicable in "broader rhetorical environments" (60)? In other words, is a situated *ethos* transferrable? If so, how?

I address these questions by describing three ways students in my study report figuring out how to situate or "sell" themselves as credible speakers: by drawing on their own prior experiences, by channeling the credibility of a real or specific person, and by imitating a more distant persona or situation. Students use these strategies to transfer *ethos* to new and unfamiliar writing situations. I organize these strategies so they move from more concrete to more abstract, beginning with recontexualization of knowledge from life experiences (in and out of school) and moving toward far-flung connections that a researcher searching for signs of transfer on her own terms would likely never see.

This examination of student transfer also underscores the importance of looking closely at students' non-school-based activities when trying to understand how they

develop the tools to project credible personas in their academic and non-academic writing. As this chapter shows, the sources that students draw on when figuring out how take on a certain voice, role, or position, come from a wide array of locations: online writing for internships, writing for student clubs, communications with professors, and self-sponsored writing, among others. Had I limited my interview and focus group questions about sources of *ethos* to the academic realm, I would not have learned about the majority of the sources that students report drawing from to help them compose credible *ethos* in new situations. The same is true for the places where students deploy their transferrable *ethos*: while academic writing contexts serve as sites where students practice exercising credible personas, they only comprise a relatively small amount of the total experiences students report in their discussions of *ethos* development. In other words, when students learn to take on situated personas and registers, academic writing situations are only a small piece of a much larger pie. We need to look beyond the academic to see the full picture, from students' perspectives, of how they cultivate and transfer *ethos* across locations of writing.

In this chapter, I first define *ethos*, examining whether (and if so, how) it may function as a type of transferable knowledge or capacity that students craft to "sell" themselves as credible speakers. I then discuss three ways students report transferring *ethos*: by drawing from personal experiences, by channeling the *ethos* of real or specific people, and by extrapolating from imagined scenarios. Finally, I look closely at students' online writing as a means of fostering *ethos* awareness or encouraging a sort of "*ethos* calisthenics." I suggest that students' online writing may help them develop the ability to transfer *ethos* independent of their academic education. The majority of the chapter is

directly concerned with transfer: I discuss possible sources of *ethos* and ways students draw on those sources to project *ethos* in new situations. The remainder of the chapter—the section on *ethos* calisthenics—discusses sites of writing, primarily extracurricular, that may compel students to exercise their *ethos* transfer strategies.

Ethos Across Contexts: Projecting "A Certain Kind of Person"

The notion of transferring *ethos*, like the notion of transferring anything, may seem contradictory at first. David Russell's arguments about writing in the disciplines suggest that writing is always situated (and, by extension, possibly stuck)—that, much like learning to play tennis does not equip an athlete to play basketball, learning to write in one discipline does not equip a student to write in another ("Activity Theory"). While both tennis and basketball would qualify as "ball sports," they are not nearly close enough for someone to transfer skills smoothly (or perhaps at all) between them. The same might be said for *ethos*. Learning to assume the character expected of a chemist on the east side of campus seems far from learning to assume the character of a musician on the west side. Though many scholars have challenged the implied threat to transferability of situated *knowledge* between seemingly disparate contexts (Beaufort, Bergmann and Zepernick, Nelms and Dively, Wardle), the concept of transferring *ethos* seems a bit more complicated. To what extent does *ethos* derive from one's own personality or experiences, and to what extent can it be invented and projected independently of some sort of deep-rooted character? How does one draw on and transfer the *ethos* created in one situation to perform in another?

Aristotle's definition of *ethos* provides a useful way to approach this question. Whereas Cato and Quintilian connect *ethos* with the "good man speaking well," one who maintains a laudable character and stellar reputation, Aristotle's version of *ethos* is based on an orator's abilities to inspire trust in the audience, regardless of the orator's morality or "well-lived existence." For Aristotle, *ethos* is more about artistic achievement than about attaining a virtuous character (Hyde xvii). What is important in Aristotle's conception, then, is not that the speaker actually holds certain values, but that he *appears* to hold certain values (Christoph).[41] With this version of *ethos*, the concept of transfer seems more plausible: the goal is to construct and display a certain persona, which need not link to one's "fundamental self" or be constrained by the antecedent question of what it means to be virtuous. In Aristotle's version of *ethos*, the rhetor is limited only by his capacity to project credibility (by whatever means necessary) in a given context. In other words, Aristotle's version of *ethos* suggests a rhetor might transfer elements of his *ethos* construction from one context or performance to another.

Others who view *ethos* as something the author can construct link the concept with its etymological origins in place and dwelling. In his introduction to the essay collection *The Ethos of Rhetoric*, Michael Hyde draws heavily on Heidegger's version of the term, which connects *ethos* to "the way discourse is used to transform space and time into 'dwelling places' (*ethos*, pl. *ethea*) where people can deliberate and 'know together'" (Hyde xiii). This version of *ethos* also focuses on the concept as something to be *constructed* (in order to create a shared locale) rather than as something someone

---

[41] While it is thus possible in Aristotle's conception of *ethos* for a speaker to learn to become good—"a speaker might, through speaking *as if* he had a certain character, develop the habits associated with that character and eventually possess that character" (Christoph 664)—being good is not a precondition for projecting a credible *ethos* in Aristotle's conception.

possesses or does not possess. Much like one can dwell in many different spaces at different times, so too can one inhabit many different sites of *ethos*.

The *Progymnasmata* exercises of *ethopoieia* and *prosopopoieia* also support the notion that *ethos* is something a young rhetorician can develop and transfer through practice. In the version of the *Progymnasmata* attributed to Hermogenes, the exercises of *ethopoieia* and *prosopopoieia* help students learn to create *ethe*[42] (or "ethoses") by requiring the student to practice assuming the character of another person. While both exercises require "an imitation of the character of a person supposed to be speaking," the first, *ethopoieia*, requires students to "imagine words for a real person" whereas the second, *prosopopoieia*, requires students to "imagine a non-existing person" (Kennedy 84). In his later version of a *Progymnasmata*, Aphthonius the Sophist breaks down the exercise further, into three different forms: "apparation making (*eidolopoiia*), personification (*prosopooiia*), and characterization (*ethopoiia*)" (Kennedy 115). These approaches to character-imitation represent varying degrees of abstractness: whereas in *ethopoiia* (the most concrete), the person the student is attempting to imitate actually exists, in *eidolopoiia* the person is dead, so the student must work harder to imagine what he might say (Kennedy 115). The most abstract version, *prosopooiia*, is the most extreme: the student must invent the entire situation, as the speaker might not even be a person (Kennedy 116). As I will show, these progressive levels of abstraction also map to a degree on to the moves that college student writers make as they attempt to transfer *ethos* across contexts.[43]

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[42] Following George Kennedy's model in his translation of Aristotle's *On Rhetoric*, I use *ethe* to represent the plural of *ethos*.
[43] Other rhetoricians left behind additional definitions of *ethopoieia* that are worth noting: Emporias defines it as "impersonation" through which the speaker "express[es] in every phase of

These various versions of *ethopoieia* are meant to help a speaker construct *ethe*—

to help him, by providing practice with imitation in various forms, develop the ability to

take on a particular character more nimbly. The assumption here is that with practice, the

young rhetorician will be able to enact whatever character he needs to present, stepping

unproblematically (as an upper-class male, an "acceptable speaker") into an array of

roles. Yet while this construction of *ethos* (and the ability to develop *ethos* through

exercises) is useful, it has a fundamental flaw in our twenty-first century context: it

assumes a rhetor can control all aspects of his *ethos* (Christoph 664-65). This assumption

does not take into account the limitations on speakers coming from various subject

positions—which, in our postmodern pluralistic society, is everyone (Christoph 662). We

need to reconceive of *ethos* to take into account the fact that all speakers are

circumscribed by their sociocultural backgrounds, genders, degrees of expertise, and

relative clout (just to name a few conditions) in a situation.

Johanna Schmertz, Nedra Reynolds, Julie Nelson Christoph, and Risa Applegarth

address the issue by approaching the concept of *ethos* through a feminist lens. Instead of

defining *ethos* as a quality or tool that a speaker can deploy unproblematically to fit the

rhetorical situation, for example, Schmertz's definition of *ethos* highlights the multiple

positions from which rhetors speak (83). In her words, *ethos* is "neither manufactured nor

fixed, neither tool nor character, but rather the stopping points at which the subject

(re)negotiates her own essence to call upon whatever agency that essence enables" (86).

This definition is based on the feminist concept of situated knowledge, the notion that

everyone must acknowledge her always-partial perspective. Schmertz explains that by

the life-style of him whose words are being created" (Miller, Prosser, and Benson 34) and
Priscian defines it as "when the speaker is given a personality contrary to its true nature" (Miller,
Prosser, and Benson 64). See also Swearingen (126).

admitting, as rhetors, that we never know precisely what position we speak from, we can "refigure *ethos* as an evershifting point of intersection" (89). Reynolds similarly foregrounds the multiple positions and points of intersection from which one speaks. In "*Ethos* as Location," Reynolds argues that it is by identifying one's location as a speaker and writer that one lays the groundwork for establishing *ethos*. Since the concept of *ethos* encompasses both the individual rhetor and the position she takes, Reynolds argues, it shifts over space, time, and across different texts (326). Reynolds explains, "locating *ethos* in written texts requires attention to the mediation or negotiation that goes on in the spaces between writers and their locations" (333). Both Reynolds and Schmertz focus on the "spaces between" or "intersections" between writers and the locations they inhabit as rhetors. These approaches to *ethos* foreground the notion of constant motion and recalibration that accompanies writers' attempts to project credible selves across various situations—concepts key to thinking about the transfer of *ethos*.

While Reynolds and Schmertz provide feasible alternate definitions of what *ethos is*, the question still remains of where the *ethos* comes from—that is, how a writer locates or invents sources of *ethos* and reallocates them to suit her needs. As I explain above, the *Progymnasmata* presents imitation exercises as one way of developing transferrable *ethe*. In "Reconceiving *Ethos* in Relation to the Personal," Christoph presents another. Christoph urges readers to think about how each writer's life experiences might inform her writing and ways of knowing, even (and especially) in writing that is not autobiographical (661). She asks how writers "call upon" their various experiences as they try to present themselves as a "certain kind of person" in different circumstances:

What is lacking among discussions of the personal, Aristotelian *ethos*, and poststructuralist theories of subjectivity is a theory of how individual writers compose and present versions of themselves as living people within the texts they write. How does a writer call upon lived personal experience in depicting himself or herself as what Aristotle calls a "certain kind of person?" How do subject positions enter into this depiction? How does the material context of a writer's life infuse his or her own writing?

(662)

Christoph's study of *ethos* is based on the premise that rhetors build *ethos* by transferring from and building on their "lived personal experience." The study findings I share below link *progymnasmatic* imitation with Christoph's notion above. That is, in forging their *ethos*, writers draw on their "lived personal experience," channel the *ethos* of real people, and imitate imagined people/situations. These three sources provide a range of options and models from which rhetors might choose as they craft their *ethos*.

Before turning to examples of *ethos* transfer in student writing, I should point out that actually seeing *ethos* at work in a piece of writing, especially when that writing is divorced from its circumstances, can be difficult. Here again we look to Christoph. She argues that, though it can be difficult to look for or read *ethos* when a text does not explicitly present anything about the writer, we *can* identify the "self-positioning moves" writers make (669). In her study of late nineteenth and early twentieth century female pioneers, Christoph identifies three "strategies of placement" that writers call on to position themselves relative to forces both within and beyond their control (669). These "strategies of placement" are tools the writer uses to construct her *ethos*, to present

herself as a certain kind of person who might appeal to an audience with certain predispositions (670).[44] Christoph explains that these strategies provide starting places for teachers and students to talk about ways to draw on personal experiences and positions to construct *ethos* (678). In my own analysis of students' writing, I point out "strategies of placement" that students employ to locate themselves, whether speaking as a version of themselves or as a mouthpiece for an organization or larger body.

Finally, we might also take a moment to remember the connection between transferring *ethos* and Nowacek's concept of "selling connections." As I explain in Chapter 1, my discussion of *ethos* both draws on and is distinct from Nowacek's concept of "selling connections." Nowacek traces the specific connections students draw to the particular documents where they attempt to "sell" those connections, showing ways that students are or are not able to successfully convey or translate their thinking processes to compose an effective piece of writing for their audience. In my study, I do not trace the connections students forge to their ability to successfully "sell" or present those connections in a text. Instead, I investigate the array of techniques students use to "sell" their compositions by developing a credible *ethos*. How does a student learn to project an *ethos* that will "sell" her compositions by appealing to their intended audience? Where does a student learn to approximate a certain voice, persona, or register to demonstrate credibility or authority in a given rhetorical situation? To address these questions, I turn to my results.

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[44] The three "strategies of placement" that Christoph identifies in female pioneer writing are "identity statements," "moral displays," and "material associations" (670). Although the students I profile do not draw on these specific strategies, they invent other "strategies of placement" appropriate to their rhetorical situations.

Sources of *Ethos*

In the sections below, I draw on interviews with eight of my focal participants (see Chapter 3, Figure 3.3) to present the three primary ways that students report inventing and transferring their *ethos*. These three approaches move from concrete to abstract. In the first section, students report ways they transfer their *ethos* from personal experiences, including social experiences, academic experiences, and self-motivated blogging experiences. This is the most concrete and direct type of *ethos* transfer: students draw from their experiences constructing their stance in one setting to do so in a different setting. This method of transfer draws on "lived personal experience" in the ways that Christoph explains above. In the second approach, students transfer *ethos* from beyond their own experiences by embodying the *ethos* of a specific person or organization. This method is akin to *ethopoieia* in that students attempt to channel the *ethos* of a real person or character.[45] Students who transfer *ethos* in this way do so with one of two primary (and largely divergent) ends: either they appropriate someone else's *ethos* but still speak "as themselves," or they embody the *ethos* of another person to serve as a mouthpiece for an organization. Finally, the most abstract method of transferring *ethos* is similar to the *Progymnasmata* exercise of *prosopopoieia* and it entails embodying or drawing an analogy to an imagined person or situation. Students who develop their *ethos* by drawing on these far-flung sources see how and why they are imitating a certain *ethos* or approach; the connection makes sense to them. A researcher, however, would not likely locate or identify these as possible sources of *ethos* transfer. In other words, these idiosyncratic places students draw from to transfer their *ethos* are ones I would not have

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[45] It differs from *ethopoieia* as well in that students do not imitate a person entirely. Rather, they try to adopt or adapt someone's *ethos* specifically.

thought to ask about, making them particularly interesting for writing scholars to understand.

These examples, and especially the more idiosyncratic examples, show us that students construct and transfer *ethos* in unique and particular ways and that the connections that work for one person often would not work for another. Thus my approach to locating students' sources of *ethos* in this chapter parallels my approach to examining students' relational reasoning strategies in Chapter 4: I let the students tell their own stories of transfer, however unexpected they seemed to be. The fact that students' accounts were not what I, as a researcher, would have predicted, stresses the importance of expanding the pool of "what counts" as valid sources of possible transfer, and allowing individuals to locate and assemble sources of transfer for themselves.

"Lived Personal Experience"

When asked how they figured out how to act or sound a certain way in a particular piece of writing, many participants in my study cited something akin to Christoph's "lived personal experiences." These "lived personal experiences" range from academic writing experiences to personal relationships and communication with professors. Students also transfer their *ethos* in various directions, such as from their personal experiences to their academic writing and from their academic writing and communications to their professional writing. In this section, I profile four students (Erika, Nkem, James, and CJ) who draw on "lived personal experiences" to craft a credible persona in writing scenarios that seem unrelated to (or at least distant from) their cited experiences.

Erika uses "strategies of placement" to craft an easygoing, relaxed, non-expert tone in the two websites she created and maintains, one of which offers tips and strategies for students with learning disabilities and the other of which provides information about AVM (arteriovenous malformation, see Chapter 4). In her interview, Erika explained that the *ethos* she is expected to assume in her academic writing would be ineffective on these sites because it would come across as too "authoritative" and even "boring." Rather than drawing on her experiences with writing in academic settings to craft an effective *ethos*, then, Erika says she figured out how to adopt the right *ethos* by imagining talking with her friends about these issues. In order to appeal to her AVM web audience, she mimics the way she talks with her peers, trying to present herself as approachable and her information as easily digestible and occasionally humorous. With any voluntary reading, she explains, "if you want people to come back, you need to be able to write something that people are willing to read"—and, unlike her professors, who "have to read what I write," her peers are only spending time on her websites if they are, in Erika's words, "engaging enough."

In addition to drawing on her social experiences, Erika connects to her own personal experiences with learning disabilities and AVM to consider how she might not alienate readers, as she was once alienated, by authority figures who come across as off-putting experts. She explains how she sees her position:

> I'm writing as a person who has gone through the same things they are
> going through right now. So I'm like, I know this . . . it's not like I'm an
> expert, but expert in the sense that I'm doing this too. It's not a teacher

writing it or a professional writing, it's like hey, I'm like you, I've gone

through what you are going through right now.

When confronted with decisions about how to portray herself on her websites, Erika

draws on the *ethos* she cultivated by being in the shoes of her readers. Erika accomplishes

her goal to identify with readers by taking advantage of her own experiences in similar

situations as well as her experiences talking with friends about the issues that matter to

her.

Erika draws on specific "strategies of placement" to convey this approachable

peer status in the informational posts on her AVM website. In the "Dos and Don'ts" that

follow (Figure 5.1), we see Erika's attempt to write with simple syntax and diction that

has humorous undertones (as she says, "if there's humor involved, I put humor in it").

Through these strategies, Erika positions herself as a knowledgeable peer rather than a

textbook robot. The goal of the post below is to present information about what to do if a

loved one or person nearby experiences a grand mal seizure (which can be associated

with AVM):

How to Deal with a Grand Mal Seizure

This short guide is going to be by no means be complete, and won't be able to help every single case, but having some information is better than none, and taking a few moments to read may just save you, your friend, your family, or some random stranger from pain or even death. **Seizures can happen to** *anyone* **given the "correct" circumstances!**(This guide is written for "Grand Mal Seizures"- the "stereotypical" seizure that involves fainting and convulsion of the entire body.)

DO:

- **DO** *put the person having the seizure on the floor, laying him on his side.* If he were standing, unfortunately, he probably ended up there on his own. Try to cushion the fall if possible, taking special precautions to his head. If he is sitting on a chair, then carefully (trying to not get hit), bring him to the floor and lay him on his side in an open space where he does not have any danger of knocking things over or hitting things to hurt himself.

- **DO** *turn his head to the side on the floor.* Many people having seizures vomit during the seizure, so do not put him on his back, or he may choke.

- **DO** *loosen any collar or tie or anything constricting his body/neck/throat if possible.* If the convulsions are too violent, don't bother- you might end up hurting yourself or him.

- **DO** *put something soft under the person's head* (a jacket or pillow if you have one) after you put him on his side so he does not damage his head while having the convulsions.

- **DO** *keep track of how long the seizure was, where it started* (his left leg? right arm?), *the color of his skin* (was his face turning green? purple?), *and anything else that stuck out to you* (what was he doing right before he got his seizure? where did he fall on? was there blood in the corner of his mouth (indication that he bit his tongue)?) so that you can convey it to the medical specialists who come.

- **DO** *call the ambulance if the person is not known to have epilepsy or seizure disorder.* If he does have seizure disorder/epilepsy, but the seizure continues for more than a few minutes, call the ambulance anyways. Especially if the color of his skin changes (could mean oxygen is not getting to the brain and rest of body).

DON'T:

- **DON'T** *try to "stop" the seizure by hugging him or holding him down.* It's not going to happen. Let the seizure run its course. You can hurt either or both of you by clutching the person, whether it be the other person pulling muscles or you getting punched in the face.

- **DON'T** *put anything in the person's mouth.* Those movies that tell you to stuff a piece of cloth into a seizing person's mouth? Don't. He can choke on it and die, or bite pieces of whatever it is and die. Some people vomit during seizures, and that and whatever is stuffed in the mouth will not go well together either- the fluid needs to come out, not get stuck in the mouth behind well-meaning but harmful towel.

- **DON'T** *stick your finger or spoon or anything into the other person's mouth,* even if they have something in there. At best, your finger is going to get bitten very badly, and at worst, the person is going to chip his tooth on the spoon or slice up his mouth.

Figure 5.1: "Dos and Don'ts" from Erika's AVM website about how to handle a Grand Mal Seizure

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Erika's instructions reveal moments of slight irreverence that remind the reader of her lighthearted approach to this serious issue. She writes in the introductory blurb that "taking a few minutes to read this might just save you, your friend, your family, or some random stranger from pain or even death." The "some random stranger" addition indicates to the reader that the writer wants to come across as fairly casual and youthful. Erika continues this lighthearted tone in her first entry under "Do," noting that if a person is having a seizure on the floor, "unfortunately, he probably ended up there on his own." In her "Don'ts," Erika also uses colloquial language to project her intended *ethos*; she explains, for example, that a bystander should not try to intervene while the seizure is happening: "Don't try to 'stop' the seizure by hugging him or holding him down. It's not going to happen." The final "it's not going to happen" conveys a playful, lightly derisive tone. Toward the end of the "Don'ts," she presents the same tone when she remarks that, if a bystander tries to be helpful by putting her finger in the victim's mouth, then "at best, your finger is going to get bitten very badly." To project an effective *ethos* for this piece, Erika attempts to approximate and transfer the tone she might take when communicating with her friends about this issue in a social setting. Erika works to "sell" her "Do and Don'ts" about Grand Mal Seizures by adopting a joking, lighthearted persona from her personal life and interactions.

While Erika draws on her personal and social experiences to craft an appropriate *ethos* for her extracurricular writing projects, Nkem, James, and CJ find ways to transfer *ethos* from their academic experiences to non-academic writing. Nkem is a senior Arabic and government and politics double major who volunteers to tutor local kids at a "Saturday Academy" and leads service trips with the Alternative Breaks program. She

also interned for a summer at a non-governmental organization in Ghana, where she has family. During the school year, Nkem works as an administrative assistant for the director of an honors program on campus. In her job as an administrative assistant, Nkem reported, she is required to write the rejection letters for the students who are not admitted into the honors program. Nkem explains that these letters can be difficult and frustrating to write, particularly because she is also an undergraduate student and not the authority on who gets admitted to the program.

In order to project the appropriate persona in these letters, then, Nkem explains that she transfers *ethos* from her academic writing. She describes the tone she uses for the letters as "formal and detached" and says she learned how to assume such a tone from various academic assignments: "the professional, kind-of formal writing that I do in school, like in research papers and different things, help me when I'm at work." Nkem goes on to explain that she writes with the same "formal" tone in the rejection letters because it helps her to "keep in mind like, it's not personal, don't get sentimental, just like kind of [clap]: it's all about business." We see that Nkem transfers the non-sentimental, "all about business" tone from her academic writing to "sell" her authority in these letters and help her compose a potentially difficult document.

James also transfers *ethos* from various personal experiences with academic communications, in his case emailing and talking with professors. James is a senior bioengineering major. He also reviews music, writes poems, and serves as the president of the undergraduate Society of Bioengineers on campus. James explains that he is able to transfer the *ethos* he developed through communicating with professors in school

situations to his application essays and cover letters because he has to assume the same stance in both types of writing. James says,

> I think writing emails to professors and seeking internship opportunities here and just like doing research here and communicating with professors on a regular basis has helped me understand how I should write application essays and cover letters. Because it's writing to somebody of status that you admire and just kind of the parameters of that. I think emailing helped me more than anything with cover letters.

James learns the "parameters" of communication with someone of a higher academic status and transfers that understanding to writing meant for others with whom he has a similar relationship. He learns to "sell" his understandings of the genre by complying with the "parameters" of the relationship he has with the reader.

CJ transfers "*ethos* moves" or "strategies of placement" from his academic writing to his non-academic writing as well—in this case, to his blogging. Though CJ tends to see his online writing and his academic writing as antithetical to one another (see Chapter 4), one exception is in the way he locates an opportunity in both (somewhat ironically) to enhance his *ethos* by qualifying his status, explaining that he has a limited perspective. He claims that he developed this use of "qualifying language" from his experiences with academic writing, where he learned what it means to have "lowly stature in a conversation":

> So when I write for myself there's, there's always, without exception, there's always a paragraph that is a qualifying paragraph. That is always like, "Look, I'm in college," or "Look, I'm 21." Or, "I don't have any

professional experience here." I think having to do that in school definitely came over into me writing personally because I'm just like so aware of it now, which is probably not like . . . I mean, it's probably a good and a bad thing. Like being aware of your lowly stature in a conversation [laughing].

Due to his sense that, as a student, he only has "lowly stature" in an academic conversation and must qualify his assertions accordingly, CJ qualifies his credibility in his personal writing as well. As a result, when writing blog posts, he makes sure to present another viewpoint and qualify his status as a writer: "I do this in every single one of my posts. I try and give some weight to the other side and explain that I'm in college, so whatever location that means." Below, we see an example of this move in one of CJ's first blog posts for the site UnSectored, a community blog that focuses on issues related to social change in the DC area. In his post, CJ argues that readers need to think "Beyond Work/Life Balance" (the title of the post) and consider ways that their careers can be truly meaningful. I excerpted the first two thirds of this post in Chapter 4 (see Figure 4.4 on page 146) and print the final third here (Figure 5.2). The excerpt begins with CJ qualifying his status and perspective as a credible speaker on this issue:

> Now to be fair, I'm 21 years old and maybe haven't had enough lessons in the school of hard knocks. Maybe life after college really is as difficult and unappealing as so many of my parents' generation make it out to be. There's a possibility that I'll eat my words and regret not taking more time to enjoy the time I had in college.
>
> But despite that possibility, I have absolutely no intention of making these the best years of my life. I'm driven by the belief that it's only going to get better from here on out. I'm going to accomplish things and solve problems and make a positive impact in the lives of others. I feel that I've only scratched the surface of what I'm capable of doing and experiencing in my life. And besides, I've been working too damn hard up until this point for it to go any other way.
>
> A former teacher once told me if you live for the weekend, you waste 5/7th of your life. I think millennials understand this better than most. Armed with a firm grasp of an interconnected world and a growing number of new and exciting possibilities in social change, more of us will take a pass on careers that only offer a paycheck. As far as I'm concerned, the days of the split between working and living–working and pursuing your passions–have passed. Businesses and organizations that realize this and adapt will flourish – the rest will fail.

Figure 5.2: Part II of CJ's Blog Post, "Beyond Work/Life Balance"

By conceding that his youth might limit his perceptions, CJ is able to address a possible counterargument to his *ethos* and present a more credible character overall. The ultimate benefit of this, for CJ, is the ability to speak to an audience that might take him seriously *in spite of* his "lowly status" as an undergraduate. Unlike academic writing, where CJ explains he will never (or at least not for a long time) be seen as an equal in the conversation, blogging provides him a way to speak as a person whose opinions people might value. CJ transfers his understanding of the "qualifying paragraph" move from his academic experiences to his extracurricular writing in order to enhance his *ethos*.

Channeling Another Person's Ethos, *or* Ethopoieia

Whereas the students I profile above transfer their *ethos* from personal experiences, the students I discuss in this section transfer *ethos* by attempting to inhabit

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the stance of a real or specific person that is not them. This *ethopoieia* requires an extra

degree of abstraction, especially because the person whom the student is trying to

embody may be dissimilar from or in conflict with the sense of self that the student

identified in the interview. Students who practice this type of *ethos* transfer draw from

one communicative experience, one they have observed, and try to repurpose it for their

own rhetorical situation. While this type of *ethos* transfer requires more imagination than

drawing directly from personal experiences, it is not always a "second resort." Many

students report that, especially in the case of attempting to serve as the mouthpiece for an

organization, this approach is the best way to approximate the *ethos* required of them and

"sell" their writing to its intended audience. In this section, I present two examples of

students who use *ethopoieia* or mimicry to develop and then transfer *ethos* from a

specific person for a purpose that was self-motivated. I show how Robert channels his

grandfather's *ethos* to compose a blog post for his semester abroad program and Diddy

channels the *ethos* of people who "wear button downs" to compose his pre-med

application materials. I then present three students (Preston, Nkem, and CJ) who try to

transfer a specific person or organization's *ethos* to appropriately compose a document

that was assigned to them.

Robert and Diddy both seek and adopt the *ethos* of other people in order to

successfully compose documents about their own experiences. Robert, a senior

anthropology major, is also a trail club hike leader and an active blogger. He spends

summers working as a farm and ranch hand and spent part of his senior year studying

abroad in the Grand Canyon. During his semester away, Robert kept an active blog of his

experiences that merged class assignments with his self-sponsored writing. In many of

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his blog posts, Robert explains, he channeled his grandfather's *ethos* to best convey his reactions to being in such a spectacular place. Robert feels that his grandfather (Fred) projected a wise *ethos*, one that he admires and wants to inhabit. One place he channels his grandfather's *ethos* is in the introduction to a poem he wrote, titled "sü-pər-ˈsti-shən." The introduction is printed below, alongside Robert's commentary (Figure 5.3):

Introduction to "sü-pər-ˈsti-shən"	Robert's commentary
I separated myself from the group after dinner and some fun-and-games, and wrote a bit. I was contemplative; someone was on my mind, but I couldn't write about her [a woman he had an interest in dating]. So, I wrote about the view I had. It was almost 20:00, but the moon was rising fast – waning just two days from full. The stars were sparse, partly due to the beaming light of Artemis, and partly due to the burning lights of Phoenix (not the bird itself, but the metropolitan city). The Superstitions protected us, looming overhead like the mysterious guardians of old.	When I talk, I can hear, I can kind-of see all of the different symbols in my mind, but I feel a semicolon kind-of allows me to say that I was contemplative. And it's almost as if an old man sitting by a fire kind of pauses. It's almost like the dash allows me to think. I take a lot from the way my grandfather spoke. He . . . was a storyteller. And so just the way I spoke was very much Fred coming through me.

Figure 5.3: Robert's blog post and explanation of how he channels his grandfather's (Fred's) *ethos*

Robert sees this excerpt as "very much Fred coming through me"—he derives his style and way of speaking from his memory of his grandfather's way of speaking. He links the flow and rhythm of his prose in this case to the flow and rhythm of his grandfather's speech style. He connects his grandfather's spoken pauses to semicolons and dashes and adopts the rhythm of his grandfather's storytelling approach. In this way, Robert develops a stance by channeling a particular way of speaking that comes from having listened to his grandfather tell stories and internalizing their patterns.

While Robert transfers *ethos* by imitating the speech patterns of someone he admires, Diddy attempts to develop his *ethos* by mimicking the *ethos* of a group of

people he does not feel a particular affinity toward. Diddy, whom we met in Chapter 4, is an aspiring doctor, but finds himself struggling with his pre-med packet (to prepare for admissions to medical school). The packet is difficult, he says, because "it's . . . show-offy. It's like, it goes against everything that I kind of personally strive to be or stand for." Even so, he is committed to medical school, so he proceeds with the application materials in spite of his difficulties. He is willing to do what it takes to ensure his *ethos* is credible in these materials because he values the outcome they may bring. Without relevant personal experiences to draw from, however, Diddy looks elsewhere to derive his *ethos*.

Diddy reports transferring his *ethos* for these application materials from multiple sources, one of which he describes as "people who wear button downs." Diddy knows people who wear button-downs, he says, so he can try to impersonate them. Like the students in Freedman, Adam, and Smart's "Wearing Suits to Class," Diddy assumes a "stance and ideology" through his clothing that is "more like [those] . . . common to the work world to which [he] aspired" (220). Although he does not feel comfortable or like himself in the role of a button-down-wearer, Diddy recognizes that in some scenarios it may be necessary. We see here that he does not feel good about his attempt at *ethopoieia* even as he performs it:

> Yeah, to be honest, I've been lying a lot. I feel really bad. Like, when I go to talk to my pre-med advisor, I have to put on a complete façade. Like, I don't wear the same clothes, even. Yeah, I mean like . . . I guess I've been changing up my style. I've been wearing more button-downs now.

By dressing in "button-downs" and trying to act in a manner consistent with that identity, Diddy manages to fool his pre-med advisor (as he sees it) into thinking he is a viable medical school candidate. When he tries to transfer an effective *ethos* into his cover letters and resumes, he does so by imagining himself as one of the button-down wearers, stepping into their (shirts and) shoes.

Diddy and Robert transfer *ethos* from a specific person or type of person as a way to address their individual needs or interests. Many other students in my study reported transferring *ethos* from a real or specific person in order to fulfill the requirements of a class assignment, job, or internship. In these examples, the students know that the persona they have to take on is new and different from their own experiences, so they try to channel someone else's *ethos* in order to appropriately represent the organization they are a part of or message they are trying to convey. Depending on the situation and persona, students report varying levels of comfort with this attempt at *ethopoieia*. For example, Preston is assigned to write an action memo for his upper-level public policy class about how to resolve the Egyptian crisis of November 2011 (the "Tahrir square" protest, see Chapter 4). For this assignment, Preston is required to compose a text that mimics an actual document that someone in a governmental agency would write.

In order to compose and "sell" his action memo, Preston says he channels the *ethos* of a "state department analyst." To figure out the stance that would be most sensible to approximate for the task, Preston researched which bureau would be in charge of the matter and found that, in his words, "the Egyptian crisis would be handled by the Bureau of East Near Eastern Affairs." From there, he decided his most likely role within the bureau would be as a "state department analyst," so he researched and attempted to

embody that persona. Preston explains that writing this memo for his class requires the same *ethos* transfer required of someone in the State Department itself: "[Writing a policy memo is] like if you're working for the State Department and you kind of have to assume a new identity when you go into your workplace because you can't go in with your own opinions, you have to go in with the opinions of the United States." Preston's memo tries to adopt the "state department analyst" voice in its entirety, including through mimicry of genre conventions. This is the opening of his Action Memo (Figure 5.4):

ACTION MEMO FOR SECRETARY HILLARY CLINTON

FROM: Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs – ▮▮▮▮

SUBJECT: The United States' Position on the Egyptian Crisis

Recommendation

    That you urge the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and Field Marshal Tantawi to adhere to the June deadline for a substantive transition to a civilian president and government; and that you urge President Obama to attach penalties in military aid to failures to adhere to that deadline.

       Approve _____   Disapprove _____

Figure 5.4: Excerpt of Preston's Action Memo where he tries to channel the *ethos* of a state department analyst

The rest of this document, which includes a Background section and an Options for Resolution section, is similarly concise and direct. To craft this document, Preston draws on more than genre analysis skills: he also transfers the *ethos* of a very specific person whose role he researches and tries on.

      Nkem exercises this same strategy—channeling the *ethos* of a specific person or organization—for the writing she composes in her job (as an administrative assistant) and as an Alternative Breaks trip leader. While academic writing experiences do help Nkem

adopt a tone appropriate for the rejection letters she writes (discussed above), her academic writing is not the only source from which Nkem transfers *ethos*. She also constructs her *ethos* as author of these letters by imitating her boss. This, however, is easier said than done; because she does not always agree with her boss's decisions, she finds herself occasionally having to embody a role that, like Diddy, she does not feel personally aligned with:

> I write them on behalf of my boss . . . I'm her assistant . . . so I kind of like, I write them as myself . . . they know it's coming from me, her assistant, but, of course, she makes the decision as to who gets in the program and who doesn't. So sometimes I find it really awkward to write them. I'm like, this wasn't a "we" decision, but I'm writing on behalf of the two of us, as coordinators of the program. So, sometimes . . . I always use the "we," because I'm like, I never made the decision.

Even though she finds this to be "awkward" and acknowledges that she feels conflicted about conveying a message that she does not personally agree with, Nkem channels her boss's way of speaking and writing because she understands she is representing the decision of the program and not her personal opinions.

Nkem follows the same principle when assembling the orientation packet for participants in the Alternative Breaks trip to Ecuador that she co-led. Nkem is able to inhabit an appropriate *ethos* for the packet by modeling it after other similar information guides assembled by the same office. The informational packet Nkem composes for her participants is an amalgam of resources and information that is meant to help students prepare for their service trip abroad. Nkem explains that this packet was easy to assemble

in part because the LCSL office had "set the tone for it already." As a co-author of that packet, Nkem explains that her job was to transfer that same tone from the office's other materials to her version:

> [The Leadership and Community Service-Learning Office] really set the tone for it already . . . like, you're going somewhere new, it's supposed to be outside of your own culture and daily experience and you're supposed to be doing service. I feel like that set the tone versus, like, us having to kind of set the tone . . . I mean, we did set the tone for our trip, but . . . it was already, you know, pre-set. Yeah, so keeping everything very in this tone, very . . . stuck to logistics.

Nkem explains that she will be most credible and her packet most effective if it is in the dry, informational "stuck to logistics" tone that the organization presents with its opening policies. The packet itself is in fact quite direct and informational with very little personal input (with the exception of an all-bolded "Positive Attitude!!!" in the middle of the packing list). In order to project a credible *ethos* to her future students (and their parents), Nkem imitates the tone of other official LCSL office documents.

Finally, and similarly to Nkem, CJ transfers his learning about his internship site to embody the *ethos* expected of him when representing the organization he interned for. As a part of his internship at the Calvert Foundation, a nonprofit that connects investors with underserved communities in the US, CJ is assigned the task of blogging on their website. While his goal in his personally motivated blog posts (such as "Beyond Work/Life Balance," above) is to "be that person that could be a little more out there, and . . . hopefully get some discussion going or just get people thinking," his role as a writer

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for the Calvert Foundation, as he explains it, is to write non-contentious posts that present the organization in a positive light. Instead of inspiring discussion as he does in his self-sponsored blogging, then, CJ writes posts for the Calvert Foundation that promote the organization but are otherwise neutral, not particularly inspiring of debate. We can see this in the opening paragraph of a post CJ does about universities investing their endowments in ethical ways (Figure 5.5):

UNIVERSITY ENDOWMENTS AND IMPACT INVESTING

by _____, Intern, Calvert Foundation on August 08, 2012

College and university endowments, which represent $400 billion in combined assets under management in the United States, have a diverse group of stakeholders competing for a say in how they are managed. Increasingly, these stakeholders – students, alumni, trustees, university staff – are pressuring endowments to incorporate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations into their investment practices.

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Figure 5.5: Opening of CJ's blog post written while an intern at the Calvert Foundation

The opening of this post is straightforward, presenting a topic that might be of interest to readers who appreciate the Calvert Foundation's mission. To write this post, CJ embodies the constraints on what the organization can and cannot say:

> Calvert Foundation was limited in things that they could say because they are a registered broker dealer. So the laws of FINRA apply to them, and they can't go out there and be like, you know, "Bank of America sucks

because of this, this, and this," and "City First Bank, the community bank in DC, is awesome because of this and this."

Though CJ would have loved to criticize the likes of Bank of America and praise the likes of City First, he understands that he must embody the *ethos* of the organization he is working for. He reports doing this by observing *ethos* construction in the Calvert Foundation's other press releases and public-facing blog posts and then approximating that *ethos*. As a result, when blogging for the Calvert Foundation, CJ is able to assume *their* voice, even if that voice does not resonate with his own beliefs or the tone he would otherwise take.

For the students drawing on *ethopoieia* or channeling another person's *ethos* to craft a credible and appropriate persona, the concept of genre is especially relevant. Embodying a particular role was the students' response to the need to balance "the constraints of social norms" with their own "individual, strategic performance" (Applegarth 45). Much like some students trying to approach a new genre might draw on their knowledge of antecedent genres to guide them, students trying to approach a situation that demands a new *ethos* might try to base their *ethos* on someone else's, modeling their approach after someone who (or an organization that) has demonstrated success in that realm.

Embodying an Imagined Person or Scenario

At the most abstract end of *ethos* transfer spectrum are students who, finding themselves in unfamiliar writing situations, transferred *ethos* by extracting useful elements from far-flung scenarios—situations that might not seem, on first glance, to be

related whatsoever to the new writing event. Students who transferred *ethos* through this imaginative act either drew an analogy to a hypothetical situation and the principles it teaches or embodied an imagined person and situation. In this way, the participants who transferred *ethos* from imagined situations forged unexpected, idiosyncratic connections that nonetheless serve them well. I profile two such cases below: Diddy's attempt to establish an effective *ethos* in his pre-med application materials and Izzy's attempt to project an appropriate *ethos* in an email to her student club.

The first case brings us back to Diddy and his struggles to present an effective *ethos* in his pre-med application packet. In addition to trying to embody and project the *ethos* of a "person who wears button-downs," Diddy also draws on principles he extracts from what he sees as an analogous situation to understand why he needs to establish credibility in the first place. Here, Diddy explains how he comes to terms with the concept that his *ethos* is the key to having "all the power" in a situation:

> One thing I kind-of realized for this [pre-med application packet], like in most other things, this is a means to an end. . . . You kind of have to work your way to the top . . . because like, there are people that say the world is ending, and they're bearded, and they have nothing to substantiate it, with their little cardboard signs. But if someone goes through the motions, does this kind of stuff, gets to the top, goes on TV as . . . a televangelist or something . . . yeah, then they have all the power. There are masses cheering for them, and they might be corrupting people's minds, they might be enriching people's minds. . . . This is like going through the motions. Because I mean, I want to be a doctor. I don't want to do half the

stuff I'm doing right now. Although I'm learning from it, and it's a great

time learning from it . . . I guess I just have to be patient, and deal with it.

Here, Diddy concedes that for a rhetor to actually be trusted and have an audience, he

needs to "go through the motions" that such a credibility requires. While the bearded man

on the street with a cardboard "the world is ending" sign has no credibility, the

televangelist who says the same thing manages to convince thousands of people. Diddy

processes his approach to his medical school application packet through the analogy of

the "bearded" men with their "little cardboard signs" versus the "televangelist" with

"masses cheering for them." While Diddy does not actually adopt the *ethos* of a

televangelist, this imagined scenario gives him the tools he needs to process what it

means to be credible in the first place. As a preliminary step to embodying the "button-

down" *ethos*, then, Diddy transfers his understanding of *ethos* by imagining the contrast

between a credible (if "corrupting") televangelist and non-credible (if innocuous) guy on

the street. This seemingly distant and rather idiosyncratic analogy would likely never

have occurred to an outsider. For Diddy, however, this analogy is useful. Diddy's source

of *ethos*, then, comes from more than imitating a person who dresses and acts a certain

way: he also transfers a more fundamental understanding of how rhetors earn credibility

from their audiences.

Izzy constructs her *ethos* by imagining herself to embody the role of a distant

model: a composite of the president of the United States. As president of Active Minds, a

mental health club on campus, Izzy finds herself having to respond to an emergency that

arose during a club meeting. One evening, an unknown male intruded on the meeting and

told the story of a rape that he committed. He also explained, in some detail, why he

thought the rape was the fault of the victim. The group called the campus police, but the

intruder left before the police arrived. Izzy decided that her leadership position required

her to do something to address the group's justified fear and stress. She chose to respond

via email, a medium she knew would reach all club members quickly. The message she

wrote to her club is printed in full below:

> Hey guys,
>
> I am writing this email to check in again because I know that this meeting was incredibly hard and uncomfortable for everyone.
>
> Active Minds is supposed to be a safe place, and I understand that tonight many of you did not feel safe. I want you all to know that we are taking action to prevent a situation like this from happening again, and we will try our hardest to make sure that every member of Active Minds feels safe at our meetings and events. We respect other people's opinions, but we do not condone individuals that make our members feel unsafe or uncomfortable to this degree. This individual will NOT be attending the Project Unbreakable event next week. We will have our Adviser, Chloe, with us to make sure that everything goes smoothly.
>
> We commend all of you for how you handled the situation. You were all wonderful, and we thank you so much for sticking with us through this troubling experience. We appreciate all of you. Also, I want to make sure that everyone knows it is NEVER the victim's fault.
>
> Again, do not hesitate to get into contact with any of the board members if you want to talk. Feel free to text or call my cell – [number here] or email me at [email address here]. Also, if you know of someone who attended this meeting who I haven't included, please forward this to them.
>
> With love,
> Izzy & Fatima, Co-Presidents

This message presents a reassuring tone, one that suggests Izzy and her co-president have

the situation under control. Throughout the email, which Izzy explains she wrote herself

but co-signed, Izzy repeats the word "safe" (in some variation) four times. After

immediately addressing the club members' concerns, Izzy segues into reassurances that

they are supported and do not have to experience something similar again. She also

praises the group, keeping her comments vague but upbeat. While speaking on behalf of

the entire leadership (including the board, their advisor, and her co-president), Izzy

makes clear that she is ultimately willing to be accountable by providing her own contact

information. She uses short, direct sentences that express certainty. She also writes in a

way that puts her on equal footing with the group—using "we" and non-hierarchical,

simple language, even while she asserts herself as a confident authority. These "strategies

of placement" enable Izzy to project an *ethos* that maintains authority while minimizing

the distance between herself and her group members.

      While this email reads smoothly and clearly, Izzy explains that writing this email,

and figuring out how to situate herself and cultivate an *ethos*, was tough. In fact, Izzy said

it—and not twenty-page English papers nor complex psychology research reports—was

"the hardest thing I've ever had to write." When talking about this writing task at first,

Izzy speculates that she figures out how to write it by "trying to copy some things that I

had read before." Shortly thereafter, Izzy pauses and changes her mind. This is the

conclusion she reaches:

> For the email. I don't really know where I got that from. Maybe like
>
> presidential speeches, you know what I mean? That's exactly where I got
>
> it from, is presidential speeches. That's exactly, yeah, that's exactly where
>
> I got it from. Is after catastrophic events, the President comes out and tries
>
> to show, you know, we're actually safe . . . oh my gosh. That's really
>
> funny. Replace "I'm writing this email to" with like, "I'm here to speak
>
> today" and "because I know that this meeting was incredibly hard" with

"because the country has faced this traumatic event," and appeal to the

people and be like, "I know everyone's going through this right now."

Here we see Izzy retroactively discovering ways that her phrasing was informed by

phrasing and patterns she had picked up in a very different, non-academic arena.

As an experienced writer—a double major (across the humanities and social

sciences) and veteran writing tutor—Izzy is surprised by this connection. She explains:

I thought I really knew, that I knew all my writing, but then I looked at it

again. It's like, "what was I talking about?" I was just thinking of . . . my

parents put on presidential speeches when I was younger. That's definitely

where I got this from. Now we know . . . but really, after a traumatic event

especially . . . because everyone's going to go and try to turn on their TV

and like having this person . . . because it's someone to look up to,

someone who you can trust, and well if you trust the person . . . so that's

what I was trying to go for.

Izzy links her ability to write the email directly to her experience watching presidential

speeches as a young person. Both she and the president, she goes on to point out, must

speak as authority figures, responsible for reassuring the audience that looks up to them.

Izzy explains that she wants to show that "I'm responsible for taking care of this. I put the

members first and I put their safety and their feelings first. I want them to feel

comfortable." She adds that she is able to assert "Active Minds is supposed to be a safe

place," as she does in her email, because she has the authority to do so as its president.

She explains that her goal is to show "we're in the position to take care of it and that we

knew what we're doing." She wants to appear, she explains, both as "an authority but

also as someone that they can talk to, that's warm and friendly." The *ethos* that the president exudes in these speeches is a valuable source of transfer from Izzy's point of view. It is not, however, likely to be the first place an outsider would have advised Izzy to look for inspiration and guidance.

Moreover, like Erika, Izzy points out that this scenario requires a different type of credibility than the one she is accustomed to conveying in her academic writing. In her psychology papers, she notes, the source of authority is having "knowledge" and "background information":

> To be an authority in psychology, you're basically showing that you have this knowledge and you have this ability to critique a study. You have this background information. You're able to analyze this from the perspective of a psychologist, so it's really about knowledge, whereas the authority in this [email] comes from being a leader, and that's more personal interaction with people. It's all about taking responsibility for and being the person in charge of taking action, stuff like that.

The *ethos* she needs to project for a psychology paper is different from her source of *ethos* for the email, Izzy explains. Being able to distinguish between these types of *ethos* helps Izzy zoom in on the exact persona she wants to present in a given context.

Izzy repeatedly emphasized the importance of imitation to her ability to project the right *ethos*. She claimed that "it's all about copying people. It's all about reading and then imitating." Later, she says, "basically, you just see things in real life, and then you just imitate them for whatever you're doing. It's just trying to be aware of the tone that other people use and the style that they have and then imitating it." Imitation—of real

people and of imagined or remembered scenarios—is a key element of how Izzy transfers *ethos* into new writing situations. In addition, Izzy's mention of "real life" as a source of this knowledge corresponds with other students' accounts of drawing from "lived personal experiences," even if far-flung genres or scenarios, some not obviously linked or connected to the specific context she is writing in or the text she is composing.

Taxonomy, But Not

My examination of *ethos* in this section, in which I move from the most concrete and direct sources to the most abstract and indirect sources, seems to correspond to a taxonomy of easiest to hardest, or first approaches to final attempts. That is, the way I divide these three approaches to transferring *ethos* suggests that a student might always begin with "lived personal experience" and then, if that fails, turn to *ethopoieia*; and then, only if that fails, finally turn to the imagined *ethos* of an invented person/persona. However, in practice, that was often not the case. Robert, for example, imitated his grandfather not due to a lack of personal experience, but due to his desire to pay homage to his grandfather's way of speaking. Nkem drew on two sources of *ethos* transfer— experience writing in a detached, academic tone and imitation of her boss— simultaneously. Diddy's lack of personal experience caused him to both imitate a real person and embody an analogous role from an imagined scenario. And Izzy claims to have drawn on *ethos* she picked up from presidential speeches without first having assessed her personal stockpile of lived experiences. This is all to say that, while in some cases students may progress through a flow chart of *ethos* transfer strategies, moving from most concrete to most abstract, in many cases—and especially when serving as a

mouthpiece for a larger cause or group—students jumped straight to the more abstract

sources of *ethos* at their disposal or invented sources or models of their own.

Online Writing and *Ethos* Calisthenics

In this section, I describe ways that students' online writing might compel them to

practice or improve their *ethos* transfer strategies. I show here that writing in online

spaces might help students develop greater audience awareness, consider the potential of

unintended audiences, and negotiate status differentials. My survey data, focus groups,

and interviews point to the idea that online writing may play a special role for students by

providing a kind of "*ethos* calisthenics" or opportunity for students to exercise different

versions of their *ethos*. Writing in different online spaces, including email, Facebook,

blogs, and blog comments, seemed to heighten students' awareness of audience and *ethos*

by requiring them to think explicitly about exactly who (in terms of individuals and/or

groups) might be reading what they write. I observed that students' shifts between writing

for different audiences seemed to encourage them to recalibrate their *ethos* accordingly.

In addition, some students had experiences where they wrote something intended for one

audience that instead reached alternate audiences. These occasions called students'

attention to the importance of *ethos* and the possibility (or impossibility, in some cases)

of crafting an effective *ethos* in online writing spaces. Finally, multiple students reported

learning how to craft their *ethos* as a result of their experiences with online writing,

particularly with email. This may be due to their perceived need to use email to negotiate

status differentials and their heightened awareness of the stakes of the exchanges. In this

section, I offer examples of ways that different participants in my study developed their

ethos through written communication facilitated by technology. These practices put students in an *ethos* "transfer mindset" that teachers might be able to capitalize on to help them explore *ethos* creation and recreation. While my conclusion will develop pedagogies along these lines, this section sets out how students' experiences with online writing help them hone this mindset.

Developing Audience Awareness in Online Writing

Multiple students reported that writing in online spaces made them hyperaware of their audiences and therefore *ethos*. James notes during his interview that he believes the stakes and audiences of online writing affect people's rhetorical awareness. He explains his theory:

> I think technology has definitely had a big impact on how people view the act of writing. The audience is so much broader and the implications of what you're writing are much larger, and people on a regular basis think about how to define themselves through their words . . . it ultimately has to promote a culture of self-awareness, it absolutely must.

The "culture of self-awareness" that James claims comes from writing with technology, due to larger audiences and potentially higher stakes, forces students, he explains, to think of their *ethos* from more than one angle. James points specifically to Facebook as an example: people ask themselves, he says, "is this witty enough for me to get 20 likes so people can still think I'm cool when they go to my Facebook?" James insists that the notion that students learn to write exclusively in school "is definitely becoming more and more ridiculous to think that now the internet exists and people are writing all of the

time." Indeed, it is possible that students become more attuned to considering various readers and secondary audiences, and adjusting their *ethos* accordingly, as a result of their experiences writing online.

James himself exhibits self-awareness when it comes to his online writing. In one example, James claims that writing on Facebook gives him practice thinking about how his work will be received and judged by multiple audiences simultaneously. James is a frequent Facebook poster. When he wants to communicate something publically but in a private way, he said, he often does it through poetry intended for a particular recipient. While other readers on Facebook might get a hint of what James is trying to say, the fact that the message is hidden in a poem means that he and the reader have access to a coded correspondence that is simultaneously private and public. In this way, James can simultaneously present two *ethe*: one appropriate for the individual he intends to reach, and one for the wider base of readers who might encounter his work. One poem that James submitted to the study was meant for a woman he was interested in dating. James explains that "it's slightly ambiguous and it just relies on metaphors" to say what he wants to say to her. This ambiguity is intentional: he wants the woman to know what he really means, but he also wants to share some of his sentiment with his friends and larger community. The only way anyone might know it was intended for her, James said, is "her like on this is still on Facebook." This is the poem:

> Sometimes I'm afraid to go to bed; to sleep…
> the monster is the one who takes today.
>
> Thoughts are recorded but never played back—
> hi-fi is low-fi to the slow reeling mind.
> Stuck in delay that's overlapped my layers,
> I speak and the sound is intangible to my ears.

> Wash this strip in the static of your life-force;
> I want to blare you into the context of my life—
> To vibrate the blame and fear from my bones
> while softening the sound of your absence.
>
> You play your minds heart as I record mine.
> Peak again on this paper-thin backdrop
> as it is fills with the warmth of age
> and decreases so well in perfection.

This poem, like the other five that James submitted to the study, is dense and difficult to unpack. This is James's goal: for his poetry to be clear only to its particular recipient and possibly interesting to, though not fully penetrable by, other audiences. If he chooses his words for online spaces carefully, James suggests, he might be able to reach multiple audiences simultaneously. By writing his message in a coded poem form, he is able to project two *ethe*, one for private purposes and one for a more public readership.

James also considers audience closely in his online writing for the Society of Bioengineers. As club president, James improves the *ethos* of his organization by changing the mode of delivery of email communications about club events. James organizes the Society of Bioengineers' listserv mailings, which go to 126 (dues-paying) members. When he took the role of president, James had to re-think how to get members of the club to actually read the emailed announcements. He explains that "we'd previously done it [the listserv] through our Gmail account and it was just like bazillions of old emails that are bouncing and stuff like that. And nobody had ever really cleaned it out or really kept up with that, so I made the decision to switch to a new platform using group spaces." By James's estimation, the original mode of delivery of the text was ineffective. To address that, James decided to take a new approach:

I had to think about what is the best way to organize people to coming to this listserv. Like how do I retain my audience? The way I chose to do that was by charging five bucks for dues and we do offer some good deals throughout. We just went paintballing for fifteen bucks this past weekend. And so by being on our listserv, these people were privy to sign up for stuff like that. . . . It's been working out because people, by having to pay for it, they're not going to send it to their spam folder every time they see it.

James goes on to explain that club membership and attendance at events has been strong recently in part because it seems as though club members are actually opening and reading the emails. His awareness of how online writing gets read—sent to spam versus carefully reviewed—led him to adjust the way he sent the listserv to members. By altering the method of delivery, James alters the *ethos* of his organization.

Ethos *Construction with Unintended Audiences*

Multiple students report having had an online writing experience where their original text, meant for one audience, ended up reaching unexpected audience(s). Such an experience in turn heightened students' awareness of the possibility (or impossibility) of constructing an *ethos* that would be appropriate for multiple audiences simultaneously. The first example I share shows how Preston's experience with comments on his re-posted blog forced him to question and reconsider his *ethos*. In Chapter 4, I introduce Preston's Somaliland blog post and show ways he draws on comparative and contrastive reasoning to relate it to his academic essay on the same topic. Here, I return to Preston's

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Somaliland blog post to show how Preston's interactions with readers' comments on the post force him to locate his own position as a writer. By having to determine precisely where he is coming from, Preston develops "strategies of placement" that he can transfer into future writing scenarios.

Preston has to consider how his *ethos* is perceived by various audiences because his blog post, "You Think You Know Somalia? Meet Somaliland," was re-posted in dozens of places (and translated into multiple languages) beyond its original posting on PolicyMic. The article was intended to introduce the autonomous region of Somaliland to a relatively uninformed audience of American readers. Surprisingly to Preston, what he deemed an "information[al]" post actually tapped into a heated debate in the horn of Africa about Somaliland's potential for statehood. When Preston wrote the post, he did not expect it to be taken up by unintended readers and audiences and was surprised that this happened. He explains, "the language is clearly speaking to an American audience . . . speaking to a low level of knowledge about the area. It's basic information." Because he thought the intended audience was clear, he developed his *ethos* for the piece assuming a friendly reader base of like-minded (if somewhat ignorant) Americans. The fact that the post was available online and could be easily translated (with some nuance lost in translation), however, meant that his words could serve multiple purposes—some of which were unrelated to his intentions—and his *ethos* could be compromised through no "fault" of his own. As the piece got re-posted all over the web, on sites both aligned with and opposed to Preston's point of view, Preston discovered that his piece was not just "basic information" or neutral, but that it conveyed a clear argument that many

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would find contentious. His *ethos* could similarly not be "neutral," since his words might be read, and read differently, by those who have a real stake in this issue.

Preston explains in his interview how the blog's unexpected re-postings made him reconsider the level of control (or lack of control) he has over how his readers perceive him and his intended *ethos*. Preston eagerly tracked down many of the re-postings, including ones that were translated from English into another language. He says, "whenever I knew about the article, and whenever . . . the comments weren't in Arabic," he would respond to them. Responding to readers' comments, and in particular responding to adversarial comments, seems to help Preston articulate where he stands (or where others think he was coming from). In this way, Preston (who happens to be a white male) comes to exemplify the feminist understanding of *ethos* as "a situated practice, neither fully and freely chosen nor yet thoroughly determined, but shaped through the interaction between individual rhetors and the social and material environments within which they speak" (Applegarth 49). In other words, Preston learns that his attempts to present himself as "unbiased" are impossible—many readers see him otherwise. They read his cultural background (American) as part and parcel of his words or views. Instead, he needs to qualify and explain his position to create a new kind of *ethos*, based on each reader's own specific stance.

Below, we see Preston's response to one accusatory comment from Allemagan on a re-post of his original article on the *Somaliland Press* website. The comment-response exchange (Figure 5.6) is as follows:

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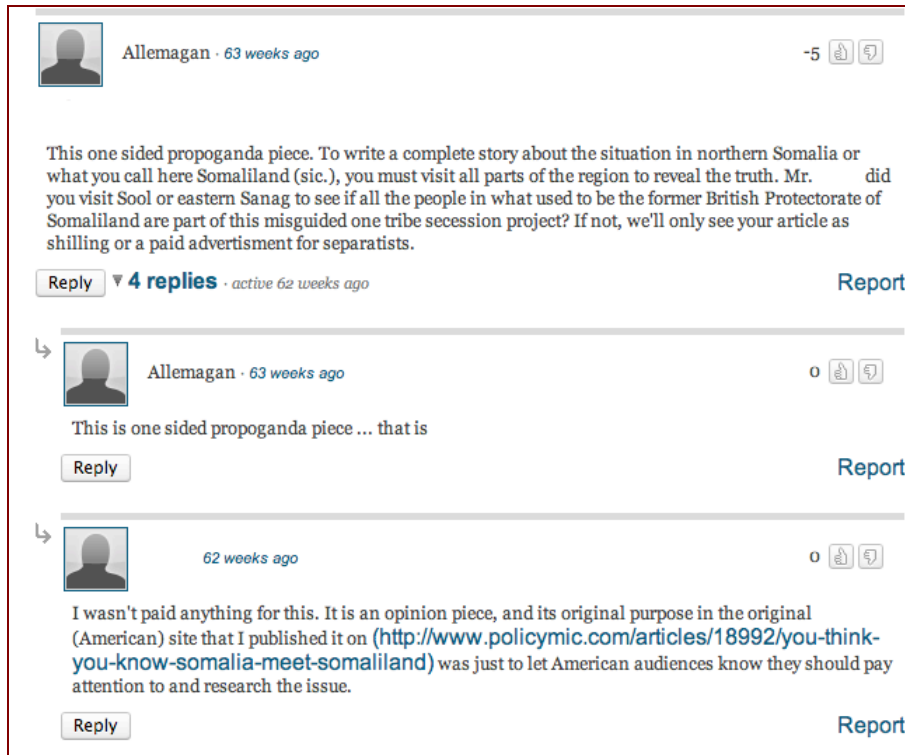
Figure 5.6: Preston's exchange with one commenter on his re-posted blog post, "You Think You Know Somalia? Meet Somaliland," on the *Somaliland Press* website

In response to the accusation that he was "one-sided," Preston clarifies his position,

noting that the original publication site was "American" and the goal was "just to let

American audiences know they should pay attention to and research the issue." This

explanation forces Preston to make clear not only for commenter Allemagan but also for

himself what exactly his intentions are and where exactly he stands—not just as himself,

as a college student interested in politics, but in a larger geopolitical context, where he is

perceived in a certain light.[46]

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[46] Other posts are less pernicious than Allemagan's but still give Preston reason to locate himself and defend or reconsider his position. One returned Peace Corps volunteer, for example, claims that Preston, having never been to Somaliland himself, has no right to comment on Somaliland's viability as an autonomous nation-state. Preston does his best to respond that never having been to Somaliland can be both a disadvantage and an advantage because, though he lacks first-hand experience, he is less likely to be swayed by personal factors. Having to respond to comments

Like Preston, Laurel, a theater and marketing double major, explains that she gained audience awareness when an email she wrote got forwarded beyond her intended audience. Laurel composed an email to attempt to address a conflict she had with a faculty member. When the email got forwarded to the person's superior, she was especially grateful she had crafted the note carefully. She explains,

> I had an interesting scenario where I had to write a complaint about a faculty member after something had happened . . . I was spoken to in a way that felt—inappropriate isn't quite the right word—it was just disrespectful. . . . I remember calling my mentor and talking to her about it and her saying "well, just make sure you write it in an email." . . . I took the time, I calmed down, and I was just like this is what happened . . . and then making sure that I included a clause at the bottom of like, I'm trying to be as objective as possible. . . . Then I found out that that had gotten passed on up and I was like, oh that wasn't quite my intent, but I'm glad that it was as diplomatic as I could have made it.

In retrospect, Laurel appreciates the time and effort she put into constructing her *ethos* in a way that portrays her as a calm, responsible student rather than an angry complainer. The fact that her email got unexpectedly "passed on up" highlighted to her just how important it is to write in a manner that is appropriate to many possible readers. Examples such as Preston's and Laurel's show how students learn about *ethos* construction when their online writing, easy to re-post or forward, reaches unintended audiences.

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like these, Preston explains, forces him to imagine himself as his readers see him, and respond from a position that both accurately represents him and would appeal to them.

Ethos *Construction Across Status Lines: Email*

Finally, like Laurel, many students in my study seemed highly aware of the nuances and special dangers of email writing, particularly in cases where they have to communicate with people in positions of power.[47] Email was the most frequent type of writing that students report composing in both their personal lives and extracurricular activities. Many survey takers expressed a sense that email is primarily a "professional" means of communication (whereas communication with friends is more likely to take place via text messaging). Many participants also indicated that they see email as high stakes and something they want to get "just right." This is because, as students report, email is often used to "get something" from someone, and making a mistake in an email could damage their reputation. In focus group conversations, many participants remarked that email also makes them hyper-aware of their status—or, in most cases, lack thereof. Students report working especially hard to project a credible *ethos* when writing to those who have more power than they do. Interestingly, students also report working especially hard to project an appropriate persona when they happen to be at the opposite end of the totem pole, writing from their own positions of power (such as from the position of president of a student club).

In the examples that follow, I show ways that students attempt to craft their voice or *ethos* in their emails to negotiate power differentials. The first set of examples discusses cases where students write from positions of low status to people in positions of

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[47] Certainly, that does not mean students always compose successful emails; teachers of writing are very familiar with emails simply addressed to "Hey," and there is a reason many professional writing courses and textbooks contain an assignment or section on email writing etiquette. Indeed, some writing centers, such as the writing center at UNC Chapel Hill, provide extensive information online (and via handouts) about how students might compose an effective email. My population, however, seemed especially attuned to the need to construct effective and "professional" (in their words) emails.

power. The second set of examples addresses situations where the student holds more status or power than their email's intended recipient(s) and tries to write in a manner that minimizes the power differential between her and her correspondent(s). In many cases, and in both of these scenarios, students' rhetorical moves revolve around their attempts to project *ethos* by cultivating the right tone.

Mary and Charley both struggle to write emails from their positions of low status to those in positions of higher status. In a group discussion, Mary, an English major who plays the trumpet, describes having to strike the right tone in follow-up emails to an interviewer as well as in emails to a professor whose class she needed to take in order to graduate (and who was not responding to her messages). She explains:

> You have to sell yourself without seeming desperate, but still be adamant, like "let's meet next week or let's talk." And so I end up reading through it ten times to make sure I don't sound crazy or like I'm stalking them, but . . . so just yeah, finding that balance. It's kind of like writing a letter for grad school. You have to sell yourself, but not sound like you're full of it. . . . kind-of like being adamant but not annoying.

In a follow-up to Mary's comment, Charley noted that she also struggles to project a certain *ethos* when communicating with people who know more than she does. Charley is a broadcast journalism major who enjoys creative writing and watching live sports. She explains that "trying to present yourself as someone who, you know, should be respected—I feel like it's hard." She explains that it was especially difficult writing an email to someone who has "been in the [journalism] business for 25 years," as she

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imagines them thinking, "how dare you try to talk to me in this way." Like Mary, she

notes that "I think it's important to be assertive, but . . . there's a fine line."

Many participants in my study report being self-aware in their emails as a result

of a previous negative experience (or what Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak might call a

"critical incident"). Multiple students reported having a bad experience with an email-

gone-wrong—a message that ended up offending someone inadvertently or containing an

embarrassing typo. Nora's story reflects many similar stories about a critical moment

when a student realized just how important one email could be. She explains that she

approaches email differently after a bad experience:

> I am so careful . . . because one time I sent one off without really reading
>
> it and it came off the wrong way and the guy sent an angry reply back and
>
> it like scarred me for life. [Now] I'm always super careful with the
>
> wording.

In Mary's, Charley's, and Nora's cases, the students realized they were writing from

vulnerable positions and needed to establish their *ethos* through extraordinary care and

precision. They explain that they had to choose just the right words and balance on the

"fine line" of projecting a specific tone. Nora points out that she transfers this awareness

to other emails she writes.

On the other end of the spectrum, multiple students reported putting tremendous

effort into emails because they, in a position of power or communicating to large groups

of people, were also determined to get their tone just right. In her position as stage

manager, Laurel connects everyone who is involved in a show: designers, production

staff, shops, actors, directors, etc. She explains that it is difficult to communicate with

one of these individuals or groups when someone is off-target. She tries to do it as nicely as possible: "I kind-of subtly hint hey, what you designed is really impossible, while not coming across as obnoxious." Similarly, Izzy explains that, even when her emails for Active Minds do not pertain to traumatic events, she spends a lot of time crafting them. When she writes these emails to the group, she says, "even while I [try] to sound approachable, I'm also trying to sound more formal because I'm coming from this place of authority." The need to write potentially touchy or authoritative emails seems to give students practice with establishing their *ethos* carefully.

Erika's email submission also attempts to simultaneously establish a sense of authority while coming across as approachable and peer-like. In the example I share below, we see Erika trying to qualify her authority through the use of humor, personal asides, and apologies for her own limitations. The email is addressed to a stranger who had recently had brain surgery and whose sister was looking for help in an online forum. In Erika's words, she wrote the email for a man who "was losing his will to live after brain surgery." The message, which is two and a half pages long when copied into a Word document, details Erika's own experiences with depression, seizures, brain surgery, and a long recovery.

Erika establishes her *ethos* in the email by drawing on strategies similar to those she uses in her website: writing in a casual tone that draws on humor even when dealing with a difficult subject. She also establishes her *ethos* by drawing heavily on her personal experiences, which helps her identify with her correspondent's experiences. For example, Erika opens this serious email with two lighthearted paragraphs:

Dear _____,

> My name is [Erika], and a special education major at a university in the United States that your sister randomly befriended on the internet tonight!
>
> Most people that know me from the internet call me "[Eri]" and many of my close friends call me that as well (easier, I guess). I don't have an "American" name, because I moved to the US when I was 7, so "Easy for Americans to say," was not on the list of priorities when my mother named me. We also don't have a custom of adopting "Western" names when we move around, so I have always been "[3 mispronunciations of the author's real name]" or whatever other variation people managed to come up with.

Later in the email, after Erika shares her experiences with brain surgery and includes advice for the reader, she qualifies her writing:

> I don't mean to be preachy- but all I could do after surgery was just will time to pass faster so the pain and nausea and sickness would pass. People who came to wish me well all kept telling me "Two weeks!" so I held out for two weeks, and thankfully, it did get better over time (though I do not think it was two weeks . . . especially since they were talking from experience of child birth). All we can do, as living creatures, is to go day by day, trying to do whatever is possible.

Here, Erika continues to use her sense of humor, interspersing her serious meditations on how people manage to live their lives with a joke about childbirth. Again, after dispensing some more thoughtful, caring advice, Erika closes with a final qualifying paragraph.

> I think I wrote a little too much. I hope you didn't get a headache, and I hope you would excuse me for my erratic writing. I am getting very tired, as it is finals week. I know you have a sister who is very worried about you, and I am assuming friends and family who are equally cheering for your recovery.

While Erika knows very little about this anonymous man, she draws on their shared struggles to forge common ground. She also qualifies her statements and includes a number of asides, some humorous, in parentheticals. These "strategies of placement"

function to reduce the sense of "preachiness" or authority the email might otherwise convey. Erika's casual use of punctuation, include parentheticals inside parentheticals, double question marks, and a lot of ellipses, is a far cry from her formal academic writing and even her more casual website writing.

For this email, Erika cobbles together an *ethos* that will minimize the power differential between her and the man she is trying to reach. Opportunities such as these might present Erika and other students with a reason to finely hone their word choice to project "a certain kind of person" by using various "strategies of placement." In that way, online communication may work much like the exercises of *ethopoieia* and *prosopopoieia* in the *Progymnasmata*: it encourages students to closely consider how they position themselves vis-à-vis their correspondents and thus provides a sort of calisthenics of *ethos* development.

Conclusion

The paradox of transfer—that situated knowledge cannot move, but that learning cannot happen if it does not move—applies to *ethos* as well. *Ethos* seems, on first glance, to be something a rhetor develops only for particular situations and in particular communities. If that is the case, it is not possible for *ethos* to "move"; writers would be unable to deploy an effective *ethos* in a new or unfamiliar situation without complete immersion into that new context. Student-writers outsmart the seeming contradiction, however, by transferring *ethos* from "lived personal experiences," imitation of real people, and imitation of imagined scenarios. They also continually reframe, rethink, and transfer their *ethos* in the fertile arena of online communications. While the connections

students make may seem strange to outside researchers, what matters is not the connections themselves but how students interpret and repurpose those connections. Looking for sources of *ethos* from students' perspectives underscores the importance of letting students forge their own links to possible sources of knowledge, including not only writing knowledge from various domains but also experiences from seemingly unrelated situations. Doing so reveals the myriad non-academic experiences that contribute—or have the potential to contribute—to students' ability to approximate an *ethos* suitable to the rhetorical situation.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

> We as writing teachers are not the sole and perhaps not even the main
> source of students' rhetorical education.
> —Doug Brent, "Crossing Boundaries" (589)

> The writing I do for extracurricular activities, particularly student
> organizations, incorporates writing I have done for academics and in my
> personal life. In organizations it is necessary to have writing that is more
> personal, such as Facebook and [T]witter statuses, and more formal, such
> as grant proposals and business emails. This calls for dynamic skills and a
> wide variety of background experiences in different forms of writing.
> —Survey Respondent

In this dissertation, I have considered the ways that college students relate their

writing experiences from across contexts and the sources they draw from to project

credible personas in new writing situations. I drew on survey data to present the range of

genres that students report composing during their college years, in and out of the

classroom, and showed that students consider their writing in multiple contexts to

"influence" or be relevant to their writing in other contexts. I then analyzed data from my

study's focus group discussions, interviews, and writing sample submissions to present

two sets of strategies that experienced college writers use to "see connections" between

their writing (Chapter 4) and "sell" themselves as credible speakers in their written work

(Chapter 5). In Chapter 4, I present five relational reasoning strategies that students use to

relate their varied writing experiences: comparative and contrastive reasoning (or "not

talk"), metageneric reasoning, antithetical reasoning, a fortiori reasoning, and analogical

reasoning. In Chapter 5, I explain three strategies students use to transfer *ethos* into new

writing situations: drawing on lived personal experiences, channeling the credibility of a

real or specific person, and imitating a more distant persona or situation. Taken together,

these strategies offer evidence that students can and do see relevant connections among their many experiences that they might transfer into new writing situations. These sets of strategies also offer insight into the mental processes behind transfer and what sorts of practices might constitute an effective "transfer mindset," or orientation toward transfer in any writing situation.

In this chapter, I present the various interventions my study has made to the existing research on writing transfer and outline the primary contributions this dissertation makes to the field of composition studies. Based on my study findings, I offer implications for pedagogy, including classroom activates and assignments, and writing assessment. I also present ways my study might inform writing programs that aim to help students cross contextual boundaries in their writing. I then raise questions that my study leaves unresolved and consider new approaches I might take were I to reconsider my project, in retrospect. Finally, I close by suggesting several productive directions for future research.

Contributions to Existing Research

My study makes four specific interventions and three overarching contributions to existing research on writing transfer in the college setting. First, my study intervenes at the level of method and in the types of questions that I ask. My research takes an "actor-oriented perspective" (Lobato) and values students' perspectives of their own transfer experiences, first and foremost. In addition, my study asks *around* transfer, rather than directly about it. Because, as Doug Brent suggests, students might "apply the same narrow definition of transfer [to their own writing experiences] that many writers have

argued to be inadequate," I did not ask students how they moved or repurposed their writing knowledge from one experience to the next ("Crossing Boundaries" 567). Rather, I asked students to discuss specific texts that they wrote and consider whether those texts were related in any way. In the case of the interviews, students submitted and reviewed specific texts to guide the discussion and their ideas. This text-based process ensured that students' comments were grounded in specific experiences and documents rather than general memories. In addition, I did not focus my study exclusively or even primarily on vertical transfer. By not asking directly what "skills" or knowledge a student transferred forward to compose a particular document, I left open the possibility that students would discuss unexpected ingredients that contributed to their written "apple pies" (Wardle, "Understanding 'Transfer'"). In other words, by asking students about relationships between their writing experiences, rather than the movement of knowledge from one document to the next, I opened the possibility that students would consider and share ideas with potential relevance to transfer rather than limit their responses to only clear narratives of vertical transfer where they repurposed a specific skill from one setting for the next.

All of these moves I make—asking around transfer, inquiring into how students "see connections," and taking the student's perspective—contrast or stand apart from research that inquires directly into transfer (e.g., Clark and Hernandez; Wardle, "Understanding 'Transfer'"), focuses on vertical transfer (e.g., Beaufort, Bergmann and Zepernick, Carroll), and puts the researcher or teacher in the position of identifying transfer (e.g., Nelms and Dively). My methods instead build on the tradition of asking students for their own perceptions of their writing experiences. They also further develop

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approaches that help researchers identify students' ability to move and transform knowledge as they move back and forth across different contexts or domains. By asking *around* transfer, rather than directly about, I also gather data on students' sometimes idiosyncratic ways of forging connections. In these ways, my study offers a new model for researching transfer.

Second, my study intervenes in existing research by broadening the scope of what it considers potentially important to students' understanding of transfer. Many studies of transfer focus on students' academic writing experiences (e.g., Bergmann and Zepernick, Carroll, Nowacek, Wardle, "Understanding 'Transfer'"). My study, in contrast, prioritizes students' vast non-academic writing, including their personal, extracurricular, and professional writing experiences. This method does not discount the potential value of academic writing or the ways that students learn about writing in first-year composition and upper-level writing courses. It does, however, shed light on large swaths of unexamined territory where students compose. In her review of transfer literature, "Mapping the Questions," Jessie Moore notes that "existing studies [of transfer] primarily focus on academic contexts, overlooking students' many non-academic activity systems." My study considers students' compositions from across *all* the contexts where they write, thus broadening the scope of what researchers might learn about students' entirety of writing knowledge.

My chapter on relational reasoning (Chapter 4) calls attention to the mental work behind transfer, or how students draw connections that constitute a "transfer mindset." Existing research investigates *whether* students connect their various writing experiences, including their experiences from across domains (e.g., Reiff and Bawarshi; Yancey,

Robertson, and Taczak). By asking students to talk through the ways they reason relationally between texts, my study delves more deeply into the details of *how* students connect their writing experiences. As a result, my study builds on existing research by presenting a taxonomy of moves behind the connections students draw: comparative and contrastive reasoning, metageneric reasoning, antithetical reasoning, a fortiori reasoning, and analogical reasoning. Chapter 4 also contributes to conversations about reflection and metacognition. Metacognition is lauded as a key strategy to foster transfer in writing (Beaufort; Clark and Hernandez; Downs and Wardle; Fishman and Reiff; Nelms and Dively; Rounsaville, Goldberg, and Bawarshi; Wardle, "Understanding Transfer"). However, though scholarly calls for "reflection" and "metacognition" sometimes recommend certain activities that foster metacognitive thinking, they for the most part do not present the precise metacognitive strategies that successful students already use. Similarly, while many studies suggest the value of mental mapping, they do not indicate exactly *how* students might map or relate their writing. My taxonomy of relational reasoning strategies provides detail on the specific types of metacognitive moves that students make.

Finally, my study expands existing research on transfer by exploring an unexamined element of the transfer puzzle: how students draw on prior knowledge to develop a credible *ethos* in any given writing situation. Many studies examine how students transfer knowledge about writing. Other studies discuss the "performativity" of writing or ways that student writing is linked to practices of performance (Fishman, Lunsford, McGregor, Otuteye; Lunsford, Fishman, Liew). Assuming a student understands the importance of performing a certain character for a given audience or

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discourse community, then, how does she transfer from her other life experiences or knowledge to perform that character? My study sheds light on the sources that students draw from as they work to write in an effective voice or tone. In particular, I show that students transfer *ethos* by drawing on "lived personal experiences," channeling the credibility of a specific person, or imitating a more distant (or even imaginary) persona or scenario.

As a result of these interventions, my study makes three overarching contributions to the field of composition studies. First, and contrary to multiple studies that suggest students do not transfer, my study shows students *do* connect and transfer their writing knowledge. In my literature review, I note potential limitations of the term "transfer." If researchers think of transfer in terms of the application metaphor, where students' prior knowledge and their application of that knowledge look similar, then we indeed may not find much evidence of transfer at all. If, however, we consider transfer more broadly, as a mindset that facilitates valuable connection making, then we see various important behind-the-scenes metacognitive connections that students make. By asking students to relate their writing experiences, as I do in my study, I learned that there are multiple ways that experienced students make use of a "transfer mindset" to map their writing experiences in relation to one another (Chapter 4). As Diddy says, "every single experience seems to just reaffirm or contradict an assumption I had before." Diddy approaches writing experiences as potential checkpoints against which to measure and better understand his other writing experiences. Diddy's quotation suggests a mentality such as his, which is one example of a "transfer mindset," may orient students toward

making the most of their prior knowledge.[48] Through their relational reasoning, many students in my study demonstrate that they are attuned to seeing potentially relevant connections between their writing experiences.

Second, my study offers insight into students' robust writing lives. Through this dissertation project, we get a glimpse into the copious writing that students compose for personal, extracurricular, professional, and academic purposes. My study shows that students' writing lives are thriving and complex. Especially interesting is the extent to which writers who seem to identify with one area of interest or field of study actually write quite widely for other reasons. For instance, James, the bioengineering major and president of the Society of Bioengineers, writes poetry (often accompanied by photographs he takes himself) quite frequently. The single piece of writing he is most proud of is the eulogy he wrote and delivered for his best friend, who passed away unexpectedly. Yuri, the focused pre-med student who relentlessly pursues research opportunities and internships in the medical field, was thrilled to share a piece of creative nonfiction he wrote about his love of running that was accepted by a campus journal of student writing. A number of students' writing interests also change over their college years. Erika, who wrote considerable amounts of fan fiction in her early college years, says her health challenges and brain surgery led her to want to compose more purpose-driven documents, such as a poster that raises aneurism awareness. In addition, some students claim to write only for externally motivated reasons whereas others create as

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[48] Indeed, though I cannot prove that students' relational reasoning abilities lead to successful transfer, they do seem to correlate with successful texts. Ninety-three percent of the texts submitted to my study appear to be at least mostly successful—or able to accomplish their intended purpose in the particular rhetorical situation—and many are superb. The students who composed these texts were able to practice relational reasoning, suggesting that relational reasoning could help other students who have not experienced as much success as writers.

many self-sponsored writing opportunities as possible. Laurel, a theater and marketing double major, says, "I very rarely write without some external prompting or purpose . . . it's because it's for an assignment or it's a research paper. . . . a lot of the writing that I do outside of class is because I choose to be a stage manager in theater." On the contrary, the majority of the writing that CJ and Robert compose, they report, is comprised of personally-motivated blog posts. My study reminds us that individual writers are *people* first, with a wide array of interests and passions, and their writing reflects that. Contributing to the conversation initiated by Anne Gere, Kevin Roozen, and the Stanford Study of Writing, to name a few, then, my study shows how important students' non-academic writing is to their many activities, aspirations, and daily lives.

Third, and as I discuss in the section that follows, my study's methodology can be repurposed to serve pedagogical and programmatic ends. As I discuss later in this chapter, many students report that my focus group and interview questions helped provoke ideas that they might not have otherwise considered. Teachers of writing might consider asking a number of these questions in class discussions or as part of reflective writing prompts; when students discussed the relationships between their compositions in group settings, the discussion itself seemed to spur many participants to practice relational reasoning. Teachers may even decide to create robust assignments around the questions of transfer, relational reasoning, and *ethos* that I ask in my study. In addition, and as I also discuss more fully below, my study's emphasis on non-academic writing may be something that writing teachers can repurpose for class assignments, discussions, and activities. Finally, my study's findings about the strategies that students use to connect their writing experiences offer implications for writing programs, classroom

practice, and curriculum development. In the next section, I offer specific pedagogical suggestions for how writing teachers might incorporate relational reasoning and *ethos* development exercises into their classes.

Implications for Pedagogy and Writing Programs

As I discuss above, I found through the research process that not only did my research prompt new pedagogical ideas and practices but that many of my research methods could also translate well into the classroom setting. Based on my research into students' transfer across domains, I propose several approaches that teachers of writing might take to maximize the likelihood that students forge valuable connections between their writing across contexts. First, I make a case for bringing students' non-academic writing into the classroom. I then offer several suggestions for prompting relational reasoning among students. I conclude this section by proposing classroom activities that may help students develop a transferable *ethos*. The various activities I propose include textual analysis, group discussions, in-class projects, reflective writing, informal exercises, and variations on familiar assignments. They also target a range of audiences, including students in first-year writing classes, WID and WAC classes, and professional writing classes.

Invite Students' Non-Academic Writing into Class

My study reveals that students write prolifically and passionately in their lives outside of school; they value the writing they do for personal and extracurricular reasons very highly. In many cases, students report learning more from writing in these settings

than from writing in our classes. Other scholarship in composition studies, particularly scholarship on public and extracurricular writing, supports this notion (see Cleary, Courage, Gogan, Grabill and Pigg, Lamberton, Sternglass, Weisser, Wells). With this finding in mind, writing teachers need to honor and be open to learning from students' non-academic writing experiences. Teachers also need to encourage students to see connections and leverage their learning from one context to the next. Initiating that growth begins with finding a way to bring students' non-writing experiences into our FYW, WAC, WID, and professional writing classes. It also includes asking students what, why, and how they learned from these writing experiences.

My survey data shows that large percentages of students write across many genres for personal, work-related, and other extracurricular reasons. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of students report composing emails and text messages for both personal and extracurricular reasons. Many students also compose in other genres and macro-genres for personal reasons: 53% write letters long-hand and put them in the mail, 47% tweet, 44% write comments on blogs and other online spaces, 40% keep journals, 37% maintain personal blogs, 26% write poetry, and 25% post reviews online (such as those for Yelp and Amazon). Similarly, in their extracurricular activities, 40% of students report creating posters, signs, or flyers, 31% report writing speeches or presentations, 25% report writing memos, and 19% report composing mission statements. Students—and not just a few students, but many—write in multiple genres to achieve goals that have nothing to do with school.

My survey data also suggests that students learn quite a bit from their many non-academic writing experiences. As one participant noted, "I find I write very little within

my academic life—the majority is within the extracurricular activities." Another

attributes more learning to her extracurricular than her academic writing:

> The writing that I learned in my extracurricular activities helped most with
>
> my work life. I suppose the writing in my academic life helped at some
>
> point to improve my writing style as I grew up, but at this point in my life,
>
> I wouldn't say that my academic writing has too much of an impact.

We hear an echo of that sentiment in another comment: "I would say that as I have

progressed in my college career, more of my writing has taken place in extracurriculars,

and I can see that having a greater influence on my writing style now." One frustrated

student explains a similar experience in more detail:

> The writing I do for my classes rarely involves creativity (think lab reports
>
> and memos). On top of that, the teacher never gives meaningful feedback
>
> on how to improve because teachers just don't have time to talk with every
>
> student about their writing. Also, grading for writing in my classes is so
>
> lax that there's not incentive to put in your best effort. I believe that it's
>
> only when a student puts in their best effort and receives criticism that
>
> they will improve. . . . For these reasons, writing in classes . . . is
>
> frustrating and I don't learn much from it. . . . Writing for extracurriculars
>
> and for myself is where I put in my best effort and where I seek out
>
> criticism from others.

Many students, including this one, see quite a bit of value in their extracurricular writing

pursuits.

Not all students view writing for school as negatively as the last student I quote, however. Fortunately for writing instructors, dozens of survey-takers sing the praises of their academic writing experiences and the transferability of those experiences to extracurricular and non-academic spaces. In other words, transfer happens in both directions: from non-academic writing to academic writing, and vice versa. One student notes, simply, "I really enjoy when I can apply techniques I have learned from school to other areas of my life." Another student remarks, "the writing from academic/school has given me skills that I am able to carry over into extracurricular activities and my personal life." Four students note specifically that their academic writing has helped them in their internships. Another survey taker points out that his academic writing has taught him the importance of the rhetorical situation: "Academic writing has taught me things about how I should write in many different situations so it influences how I write in extracurricular things." Students point out ways that their academic writing has positively influenced the writing they do in other areas, and ways that learning how to write in college is not just a one-way street. Students repurpose learning from our classes for their non-academic writing; they also bring valuable understandings into our classes from their non-academic pursuits.

Teachers might pay attention to the specific reasons that students report learning from their extracurricular writing so that we might implement activities that mimic those benefits in the classroom. Many students report learning from their personal and extracurricular writing experience because those experiences, students explain, provide the opportunity to work with an editor or get feedback from readers on a high-stakes text. Students report learning from any situation in which they worked with an editor—

whether they were writing for a community blog, an internship, or their job. They valued the feedback they got from that person and report drawing on it for writing tasks beyond the specific text the feedback was on. Notably, this differs somewhat from how many students report feeling about peer review, which they do not value as highly. In Charlotte Brammer and Mary Rees's study, "Peer Review from the Students' Perspective," college students consider peer review to be helpful, but only one-third of their survey respondents found *in-class* peer review to have value (77).

In contrast, in my study, CJ notes that working with an editor on his self-sponsored blogging had a significant impact on him. He reports that it provided a transferrable ability: the ability to give better feedback to his classmates when positioned as a peer reviewer himself. CJ explains, "I think that getting my own writing ripped apart by editors has helped me edit classmates' papers, especially when we're in a group. I think I'm much better at helping other people write better than I was ever before because I've seen my own posts get ripped apart so many times." According to CJ, his experience working with an editor in his online, extracurricular writing taught him how to conduct more effective peer reviews himself. Based on CJ's experience, there might be value in connecting students to outside editors for a given assignment, particularly an assignment that calls on students to simulate a real-world genre. Similarly, many survey respondents, focus group participants, and interview participants expressed gratitude for the comments unknown readers made on their online writing, whether they composed that writing for personal or professional reasons. Those comments provided suggestions that the writer truly took to heart and called to mind even in future writing situations. This finding offers a good rationale for assigning students to write for public-facing locations such as

Change.org or their own websites. Teachers also might give students the task of commenting on other writers' public writing (for spaces beyond the class).

Students also reported learning from their extracurricular experiences because those experiences required them to think beyond what they were familiar with and seek out model texts to imitate and adapt. Participants said they sought out model texts for a variety of genres, including blog posts, student council resolutions/constitutions, and grant applications. Doing so, according to participants, helped them develop into more flexible writers by giving them practice figuring out how to compose in an unfamiliar genre. For example, CJ explains that in order to learn more about blogging, he "nerded out" and "read blogs that are about blogs." He found model texts and practiced metareflection. Bethany, a psychology major who volunteers with America Reads, says that she sought out model texts and feedback from others when faced with the task of writing a constitution for her student club:

> I had to re-write our constitution for . . . a club I'm a part of. And I had no
> clue how the person had done it before. I was like, I don't really know
> what's supposed to happen. . . . So I was just like, let me Google
> search . . . how to write a constitution. So, that's pretty much what I did,
> and I just used what [I found]. . . . And then I had a bunch of people re-
> read it . . . and I was like does this look okay?

Bethany explains that the examples she found online were effective because, in the absence of a template or prior knowledge, she had no idea what to do. She also actively sought out her peer's feedback on the document she composed.

Other students likewise reported following these procedures when trying to compose certain documents in personal and extracurricular settings, and many reported learning quite a bit from these practices. Some even reported making a habit of using these practices in (or transferring these practices to) other situations. Teachers might engage students in a similar process in a classroom setting, requiring them to research the conventions and moves of an unfamiliar genre by seeking out model texts and analyzing those. Such an assignment resonates with many of scholars' existing suggestions for facilitating transfer, such as Elizabeth Wardle's proposal of "hard" and "fun" assignments ("Understanding 'Transfer'") and Rebecca Nowacek's idea of "push" assignments. Assigning students to seek out model texts to determine how to compose an unfamiliar genre might also help "disengage autopilot" (Reiff and Bawarshi, Soliday) and enable students to approach their writing from a new perspective.

Speaking more broadly, my study shows that students have the potential to learn quite a bit from their non-academic writing. Writing teachers should, as a result, ask students to draw out the connections that span the boundaries of their writing experiences. One way to do this would be to ask students to bring several personal, professional, or extracurricular compositions into the writing classroom in order to rhetorically analyze them. Students might ask what the purpose is of each document and how each document's arrangement, style, and delivery suit that purpose. Doing so could help students see and forge unlikely connections, develop insight into the different goals of various communities of practice, and become attuned to the *ethos* expected of authors in different environments. For a first-year writing class, the teacher might encourage students to bring writing from high school in addition to writing from other college

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classes, writing for personal reasons, and writing for jobs or clubs. For a professional writing class, the instructor might encourage students to bring writing from professional or internship activities as well as the texts that students composed for their more recent college classes. In this setting, such an activity could also lead to a discussion among students about similarities and differences between self-sponsored, worksite-based, and school-based writing. The goal of this analysis project would be for students to seek out possible connections that link their writings in unexpected ways—for students to develop a "transfer mindset" through relational reasoning.

Foster a "Transfer Mindset" through Relational Reasoning

My study shows that students can and do relate their writing across contexts. However, drawing connections is not necessarily easy for students and might not occur spontaneously without any guidance. My focus group and interview participants remarked, in many cases, that my research questions sparked them to think differently— and though difficult, these new ways of thinking were helpful. In this way, the methods of my study provide a useful pedagogical strategy. After explaining in more detail some of students' specific struggles to relate their writing from across contexts, I outline two ways we might repurpose the research methods of my focus groups and interviews as a pedagogical tool to help students draw the same tough connections as my participants.

While my study shows that students are able to draw connections between contexts, several survey respondents and focus group participants explained that moving between different contexts of writing and trying to forge connections between those contexts was still quite challenging for them. One survey respondent reported the

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following: "Once you start writing a certain way, it's hard to write completely different for other aspects of your life. It's hard to go from writing papers for a literature class to writing business styled papers. You have to be very conditioned in order to switch the style of your writing on a whim." While the student acknowledges that shifting styles is difficult, she also hints that being "conditioned" might help students move between different writing situations with more success. A focus group participant, Lex, expressed a similar experience of struggling to move between different contexts of writing. Lex, a theater major, found it particularly difficult to transfer her writing knowledge into her business class:

> I took Business Writing last semester because I wanted to do something not artsy. I thought maybe it will help do something in life I have no idea. I found that I disliked it extremely at first. They use a lot of jargon. I call that "BS." For me, I had to figure out how to not be as concise. . . . I'm used to my teachers being like, "Strip it away, get to the core" for acting. It was so hard. I just found myself writing the same thing over, and over and over for my business paper. It was no way to deal with it except for fake it until I made it. I ended up not doing bad in the class, but I didn't do that great either. I was "Ah, this is not for me."

Lex's experience with business writing was not catastrophic, but neither was it pleasant. We can attribute her struggles in part to the potentially unarticulated expectations of writing in that field or to Lex's discomfort with the business environment. Part of Lex's difficulty, however, is due to the fact that moving between contexts of writing, and trying to repurpose knowledge from one context to another, is itself a difficult thing to do.

While Lex reports difficulty moving knowledge across these different fields, in some cases interview participants expressed difficulty with the antecedent step as well: drawing the connections that might facilitate transfer across different fields. To be clear, I am not arguing that students cannot or do not see connections between their writing experiences. On the contrary, the students in my focus groups and interviews drew dozens of connections. I am suggesting, however, that my interview and focus group questions may have helped students think differently about their writing and therefore encouraged connections. For example, Izzy, the experienced writing tutor, said that discussing her various compositions in relation to one another was "more difficult than I thought it would be." She goes on to explain: "I think even someone like me . . . I focus on writing so much. I talk about it so much. Even for me, it was kind of difficult to think about my own writing and really . . . try to figure [it] out." Here we see Izzy admit that, though she was successful in drawing meaningful connections between her writing experiences in the interview, the process was not easy for her.

Whether they found the process to be easy or difficult, many participants expressed, in both focus groups and interviews, that *talking about* and in some cases explicitly thinking about their compositions in comparative ways was a new experience—and one that they appreciated having. Toward the end of his interview, Diddy remarked, "I don't think I've thought about [writing this way], like out loud before, so this is pretty cool." Certainly, Diddy had put plenty of thought into his writing, but he admits that this is the first time he was asked to share his ideas aloud. Similarly, about halfway through his interview, James said, "this has been an awesome discussion," later adding, "Thank you for letting me have a forum . . . and helping me think about

myself in this way." Silver (who I introduce below) also remarked, halfway through the interview, "I am really enjoying myself," and said at the end of the interview, "I really liked this," explaining that he appreciated the opportunity to reflect aloud on his own writing.

While participants report that moving between different contexts of writing may be difficult—and in some cases report that even talking about connections between different contexts of writing is difficult—participants found it rewarding. They report valuing the chance to think about themselves and their writing experiences in a new way. The study itself gave students an opportunity to talk about writing differently from how they discuss it in class. It also prompted them to draw connections between their writing and themselves that they may not have explicitly or consciously drawn before. CJ asked about this prompting in a follow-up email: "By asking students if there is any influence or relationship among writings across genres, do you think that pushes students to find something?" Certainly the answer is yes. However, as Nowacek notes, prompting students to draw connections does not nullify the connections they do make, particularly when the connections they draw are legitimate and sensible (12). In other words, although the connections my focus group and interview questions prompted do not occur spontaneously, they are still meaningful products of the participants' own thought processes.

As I mention in Chapter 4, my focus group conversation protocol seemed to provide an especially fertile ground for relational reasoning. This seems to be due in part to the fact that the conversations were *group* discussions with many participants. During focus groups, participants sometimes drew connections across genres or contexts based

on what another participant had suggested rather than in direct response to any of my

questions. Students seemed eager to connect their ideas to the group conversation and

found ways to do so. The following group discussion about arrangement reflects one such

instance of this:

> Preston: Both my policy pieces and blogs. You're supposed to put the
>
> conclusion at the first . . . at the beginning. It's the smallest biggest
>
> thing about policy pieces that completely blows your mind
>
> from . . .10 years of writing these things. You have to first write a
>
> conclusion paragraph and then explain how you got there.
>
> Chanel: It's like a flashback in a movie.
>
> CJ: That's how a lot of journalism works too, right?
>
> Jackie: Wait so you like capture their attention?
>
> Preston: Yes. We were actually told while you're beginning to do this, why
>
> don't you just write it how you'd usually write it, put the
>
> conclusion at the bottom and then just copy-paste to the top.
>
> CJ: Nice.
>
> James: It's like [in my bioengineering reports] I always write the abstract
>
> last, cause that's when you've actually worked out all of the
>
> inconsequential details versus the consequential details.

In this case, Preston's example of opening a policy piece and blog with the "conclusion"

initiates a group discussion about similar arrangement strategies across genres and fields.

Each participant seems to want to find a way to connect their experiences, in whatever

genre and field, with the "conclusion first" move that Preston identifies. They want to

participate in the focus group conversation by connecting their experiences with the conversational thread and, as a result, think of some relevant similarities across contexts that might not have otherwise occurred to them.

Another instance of group-inspired connection-making occurred after Izzy explained, in a focus group conversation, how several of her compositions, including a grant proposal and a research paper intended for publication, fit into the metagenre of "I'm trying to get something from [the reader]." Silver, who was also participating in the focus group, responded to her: "I got a follow up for that. Do you think doing scholarship essays prepare you for grant writing?" Here we see Silver speculating that experience in one genre might be good preparation for another. Though Izzy had not thought of this connection, she found it worthwhile: "I hadn't really considered it when I was writing the grant application. I could see the connection more now." Continuing the thread, Nkem began to speculate about common features of scholarship essays and grant writing. In both, she says, the writer has to

> brag about yourself a little bit, cause you do have to explain why, either
> you as an individual getting the scholarship or your organization getting
> the grant, are the best fit for that grant, and how you're going to prosper
> the most if you are to have that opportunity, so I guess . . . I think [writing
> scholarship essays] kind of helps you learn to talk freely about your
> accomplishments and how you have the potential to make this opportunity
> go the greatest.

Nkem's commentary here, in turn, inspires Silver to reassess his original question.

The conversation continues to build as students attempt to draw connections to each other's ideas. After Nkem shares her thoughts, Silver explains his understanding of genre conventions for scholarship essays, ultimately connecting that learning to grant writing:

> One thing I've noticed is in writing for scholarship[s], it's okay to talk about yourself, but I realize it's even more effective when you talk about yourself in a community manner. Which you say yes, I'm important, but I'm only important because I benefit the community. And by benefitting the community, the community they end up benefitting me and we work in a real reciprocity. . . . Those who do are very effective . . . in getting the scholarships and grants.

Silver's initial question may have been prompted by something he thought about before the conversation. By raising the topic, however, he helped Izzy and Nkem consider it as well, and we see Nkem take the time to think through the connection in her own terms. Silver then is able to revisit his own question, expanding his preliminary ideas.

Conversations like these could be just as effective for pedagogical purposes as for research purposes as they would open up moments for teachers and students to talk together about how experiences with one genre might inform a student's approaches to another. One way to foster such a conversation in class would be to challenge students to think about the writing they do in multiple contexts and devise, individually, categories that they might use to group two or more of their compositions. Those categories might be quite idiosyncratic, like those in my study, including things like "the conclusion comes first" (Preston) or "reactionary writing" (Robert). The students would then share their

own categories with their peers, and members of the class might consider other categories that would also be relevant or appropriate for their own compositions. This could even be an active process, where students walk around the classroom and physically add their own (printed) compositions to relevant categories. Most importantly, after categorizing their texts, students then discuss their takeaways, considering what features led them to categorize a document in a certain way, or why a text might fit into more than one category. The conversation that ensues from the activity might prompt the sorts of discussions that occurred among participants in my focus group discussions. Such discussions, in turn, might help foster the "transfer mindset" that could prompt students to, in the words of Robertson, Yancey, and Taczak, "rethink writing altogether."

Another way to help students practice relational reasoning is by giving them the time and space to map out their own writing experiences in relation to one another. Specifically, I propose instructors consider replacing the traditional literacy narrative with a literacy map. Literacy narrative assignments encourage students to write about their development as readers and writers in a chronological pattern, in turn encouraging writers to see their writing histories and experiences in terms of forward motion or even vertical transfer. Repurposing and building on the findings of my study, I suggest that students map their experiences instead of narrate them. In other words, students could engage in relational reasoning among their various writing experiences and chart their conclusions in a non-linear fashion. This literacy map assignment would encourage students to see the many varied connections they make across different genres and locations rather than only focusing on a single trajectory of expertise. In a first-year writing class, this literacy map might be a good way to begin the semester, helping the

students get to know themselves as writers. In a professional writing class, the literacy map might look similar to an end-of-semester portfolio, giving the students the opportunity to reflect on how their "literacy map" has changed now that they have incorporated a deeper understanding of professional genres. Teachers could vary the goals and mediums of these literacy maps based on the type of writing class students compose them in.

Develop Practices to Transfer Ethos

My study shows that experienced college writers transfer their *ethos* into new writing situations in three primary ways: by drawing on lived personal experiences, by channeling the credibility of a real or specific person, or by imitating a more distant persona or situation. Teachers can maximize students' ability to draw on their prior knowledge to project a credible persona by attuning them to these potential sources of transferrable *ethos*. I propose two pedagogical interventions that may facilitate students' *ethos* awareness and their ability to transfer *ethos* successfully: a revision assignment that asks students to modify their *ethos* for a new audience and an array of assignments focused on students' online writing experiences.

One way to draw students' attention to *ethos*, and give them reason to transfer *ethos* from other sources, is by assigning a targeted essay revision assignment where the goal is to address a new intended audience. It is common for instructors to assign a revision from one genre into a new genre or medium. In this case, I propose that students revise a document specifically for a new audience. For instance, a student might compose a research-based essay partway through the semester on the current vaccine controversy

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(that is, how school districts should respond to parents who have intentionally not vaccinated their children). Then, the student would revise her essay for *Parents* magazine or as an open letter to Los Angeles area school districts. In order to do this, the student has to consider how she will shift and develop her (new) *ethos* for the new audience. An assignment such as this—one that asks the student to revamp her writing for a new rhetorical situation—is ultimately an exercise in *ethos* development. To help students make this transition, teachers could engage them in rhetorical analysis of a set of texts that circulate among their target audience, noting how authors of those pieces establish credibility. As a part of this activity, instructors could call attention to the ways that students in my study transferred their *ethos*, by drawing from "lived personal experiences," channeling the credibility of a specific person, and imagining more distant models. From there, instructors could ask students to explore their *own* sources of *ethos*, including those they drew on to compose their academic essay and those they might draw on to compose their targeted revision. Calling attention to *ethos* in an assignment like this helps students wrestle with the difficult work of how to construct a credible persona in different communities—and primes them to practice thinking about possible *ethos* sources for any new writing situation.

Second, I propose that we help students learn about projecting a credible *ethos* by calling their attention to *ethos* construction in their online writing, including email, Facebook, and online reviews or comments. I hypothesize in Chapter 5 that online writing may be a particularly useful tool for engaging students in what I call "*ethos* calisthenics." I note that online writing may be especially instructive because it is often embedded in specific rhetorical situations and can highlight power differentials. We

might also look to work in linguistics, particularly in Language Style Matching (Ireland and Pennebaker) and interactive alignment (Baron, Cleland and Pickering, Garrod and Pickering), to think about why dialogic online writing might provide an especially fertile ground for classroom activities related to *ethos*. Studies in interactive alignment suggest that dialogic interactions, usually through speaking but occasionally as mediated through writing (as with instant messaging or letter correspondence), promote the use of similar phrases, words, or sentence structures between the two interlocutors or correspondents (Baron, Cleland and Pickering, Garrod and Pickering). Much of this alignment happens unconsciously, as the dialogue participants try to match each other's styles and tones. Research in these areas suggests that it is natural for dialogue participants to adopt or imitate the others' affectations and speech features. As a result, we can draw the hypothesis that the dialogic nature of much online writing may help writers approximate another person's style more easily than a monologic essay or another one-way written product—one that carries no expectation for a back-and-forth.

Based on this research, and the other reasons I name above, I propose that teachers of writing leverage students' experience with online writing for classroom activities. One way to bring students' online writing constructively into the classroom is to ask students to locate an email chain from their inbox, one that includes several back-and-forth messages they exchanged with someone in a position of power (or someone who had more power than the student, at least). Students could then analyze their own (or their peers') moves in the email chain, as well as the moves of the correspondent, to determine what sort of *ethos* each party projected, what moves each writer made to project that *ethos*, and whether the student's *ethos* was appropriate. This analysis

assignment has the potential to help students identify specific "strategies of placement" that may have either aided or hindered the student's projection of *ethos* in the exchange. A second idea would be to assign students the task of actually composing fictive emails in response to messages from authority figures. For instance, the president of the University of Maryland sent a number of campus-wide messages about high-stakes issues (including budget crises and discrimination on campus) during the spring 2015 semester. Students could practice developing an effective *ethos* in class by responding, for an assignment, to one of these emails.

Students in my study spoke thoughtfully about online writing, suggesting that they have learned—whether through practice or "the hard way" (as in Nora's story in Chapter 5 of getting an angry email that "scarred me for life")—the importance of projecting an appropriate persona in a given online writing situation. Online writing may be an especially valuable medium for students to practice *ethos* development. The activities I propose above call to students' conscious attention their potentially tacit understanding of *ethos* construction in writing facilitated by technology.

Implications for Writing Programs

In addition to pedagogical interventions, my dissertation offers implications for writing assessment and writing programs that aim to help students cross boundaries, particularly from secondary to post-secondary writing environments. Below, I explain the importance of integrating students' non-academic writing into writing assessment. I then discuss ways that writing programs might facilitate students' movement across contexts

of writing by fostering relational reasoning and helping students develop a "transfer mindset" in writing courses at all levels.

Writing Assessment

Assessment of student learning in higher education has been the source of significant controversy in the recent past. The rising costs of college have brought particular exigence to the issue of whether students gain transferrable knowledge from their (and their parents') investment in higher education. Recent polemics, such as Richard Arum and Josipa Roska's *Academically Adrift* and *Aspiring Adults Adrift*, argue that today's college education has little demonstrable yield for students, particularly in terms of transferable skill development. In *Academically Adrift*, the authors claim that "students are only minimally improving their skills in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing during their journeys through higher education" (35). Continuing in that thread, Arum and Roska argue in *Aspiring Adults Adrift* that graduates are entering the workplace woefully unprepared, particularly in writing:

> Recent surveys of employers have highlighted dissatisfaction with the preparation of college graduates, noting that only approximately a quarter of college graduates entering the labor market have excellent skills in critical thinking and problem solving, and only 16 percent have excellent written communication. (20)

The authors attribute these dismal scores to various factors, including misaligned faculty incentives and the "consumer culture" of today's universities and colleges. They also

attribute them to the overemphasis on non-academic pursuits that students get involved in during their college years. The authors explain,

> Rather than providing rigorous academic experiences to promote undergraduate learning and character formation, colleges and universities have embraced a model that focuses on encouraging social engagement and sociability, supporting students' psychological well-being, and catering to satisfying the consumer preferences of emerging adults.
>
> (*Aspiring Adults Adrift* 120)

This model, the authors argue, comes at the expense of students' critical thinking and writing development.

Arum and Roska's studies are so controversial because, in part, of their reliance on the Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) to judge student learning. The CLA assesses students' writing development through a three timed writing tasks: one document-based "performance task," one "break an argument" essay, and one "make an argument" essay (*Academically Adrift* 21). For the performance task, students have 60 minutes to compose a response to a series of questions about a set of documents related to a fictional "real world issue" (Klein et al. 6). For the other two essays, students have 30 minutes to critique an argument and 45 minutes to present and defend an argument of their own (Klein et al. 6).[49] The latter two essays are machine-scored. The CLA and other

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[49] Although the authors state in *Academically Adrift* that the entire 90-minute test is open-ended, and consists of two "analytical writing tasks" in addition to the performance task (21), the most current "CLA+ Sample Instrument" guide created and shared by the CLA+ parent organization, CAE, makes clear that students have 60 minutes to respond in writing to the "performance task" prompt and devote the remaining 30 minutes of testing time to a series of multiple choice questions.

similar assessments of writing, while almost universally criticized by those in composition studies, are still widely used.

I propose an alternate means of pursuing the important goal of assessing students' growth and future potential as writers. Specifically, I recommend that colleges and universities gauge their students' growth as writers over their college years by collecting portfolios of student writing that include submissions from students' extracurricular, personal, and/or professional writing experiences. Colleges and universities in the US are often residential and purport to develop the entire student through their offerings of copious academic and non-academic activities, including clubs, study abroad opportunities, and internships. My study suggests that students' involvement in these various extracurricular activities has a positive effect on their writing growth. Colleges would benefit, then, from being able to show ways that the entire "college experience," and not only academic coursework, contributes to a student's writing growth over her college years. In *Academically Adrift*, Arum and Roska claim, based on the CLA, that

> participating in student clubs on campus is not related to learning. And when students engage with their peers, either by studying with them or participating in fraternities and sororities, negative consequences for learning occur. Measures of social integration thus either have no relationship or a negative relationship to learning. (103)

A portfolio assessment that includes compositions from students' non-academic pursuits might suggest otherwise. It might also provide fodder for colleges to promote and even enhance the educational benefits of their many extracurricular offerings.

Such an assessment could look much like a typical portfolio assessment, in which a student compiles and includes various compositions and a reflective memo or cover letter providing an explanation of the compositions' impact on her understanding of and approaches to writing. The key difference between my proposal and a traditional portfolio is that my version would also include samples of students' extracurricular, internship, or informative non-academic writing. Students who have composed a literacy map in one of their upper-level writing classes (see above) might also include that in their portfolios. The benefit of encouraging students to include non-academic writing in their final writing records is that the writing program administrator or assessment committee could gain a better appreciation of the types of co-curricular learning happening at their school. Evaluators might also notice patterns in the types of genres and writing strategies students practice beyond the classroom.[50] These portfolios might disrupt the conclusions the authors reach in *Academically Adrift* and *Aspiring Adults Adrift* by gathering a different sort of data on the effects of students' participation in clubs and other co-curricular pursuits.

Boundary Crossings: Secondary-Postsecondary and Professional Writing

My study also has implications for the various sites where college students cross writing boundaries. If students lack a "mental map" that helps them see and make use of connections between the different contexts where they write, they run the risk of ending

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[50] The question of how to assess personal and extracurricular writing in such a portfolio assignment is a complicated one. Do we judge the success of the writing by the author's own commentary? By the reader's sense of its intentions? By its uptake (Freadman, Kill)? This question is one I have not yet resolved. In addition, these portfolios would be time-intensive to review. However, if the school's goal is to assess their program in general, rather than gate-keep individual students, portfolios could be randomly selected for review.

up like Lucille McCarthy's Dave, who sees each of his writing experiences as completely new and unrelated to anything he had written before. As teachers and administrators, then, we can facilitate students' transitions between discourse communities by asking them the questions that will help them draw productive relationships between their own writing experiences.

Relational reasoning can be built into a writing curriculum at multiple stages. In a first-year writing setting, teachers can prompt specific types of relational reasoning, particularly because students come to college with a wide range of educational backgrounds. In some cases, it is important for students to notice and call attention to the clear *disconnects* between their writing experiences in high school and college. For instance, students who attend certain public high schools in the US spend significant amounts of their time preparing for "test writing" in their high school English classes. In the most struggling schools, students may practice "test genres," such as on-demand personal or persuasive essays and short answer responses, to the exclusion of any other writing. For these students, it may be productive to practice comparative and contrastive or even antithetical reasoning (depending on the specifics of their experiences) in a first-year writing class. One way to do this would be for the instructor to ask students in the class to relate, through rhetorical analysis, a test writing scenario they experienced (could be a state-mandated exit exam, such as the Texas STAAR or the New York Regents, or a nationally-used exam, such as the SAT writing test), as compared with a college writing assignment. This might help heighten students' awareness of audience and rhetorical situation—and subsequently help them to recognize productive strategies from and abandon less productive aspects of their former writing experiences.

In other cases, it may be more beneficial for first-year writing curricula to encourage students to practice analogical reasoning, a fortioti reasoning, and metageneric reasoning to facilitate their transitions from high school to college. Many students come to college with a wealth of valuable high school writing experiences that they can transfer productively. If they do not draw on this hard-earned knowledge because they see it as disconnected from their college writing assignments, then it goes to waste. Many students in my study, even seniors in college, still draw heavily—and successfully—on lessons learned in their pre-college educations. Yuri, for example, referred constantly throughout his interview to lessons he learned from AP English. Because of his excellent experience in AP English, Yuri found many of the lessons on concision, organization, and clarity from his college writing courses to be redundant:

> I still attribute most of the skills that I've learned in my writing to my high school AP Lang and Comp class. I actually found that it was very interesting how in my [professional writing] class how they had to go over a lot of points that . . . I remember from AP Lang and Comp. . . . Our professor was saying how you had to learn how to write concisely and effectively and I remember . . . thinking to myself, well this isn't a problem at all. I've been doing this since I came here.

Writing teachers might be able to better push Yuri toward other areas of importance if we know that he feels confident drawing on his prior experiences to compose succinct and precise texts. Other students in my study referred to lessons learned from their high school English teachers about prose style, approaches to organization, research methods, and process strategies. These connections are ones that students may not make if

composition teachers do not ask the questions that help students see the potential

relevance of their pre-college educations.

In other settings where students cross writing boundaries, such as professional

writing courses, instructors can help students reason relationally between their existing

college and co-curricular writing experiences as well. Whether students are moving from

high school to college or college to a career, writing programs should prioritize the goal

of helping students, in Dan Fraizer's words, "'connect the dots' and expand their

conceptual writing maps" (53). If writing programs prompt students to consider possible

relationships between their many writing experiences, it is more likely that students will

"connect the dots," form valuable mental maps of their own writing knowledge, and

successfully cross boundaries between contexts of writing.

Questions and Concerns

My study addresses many of the questions about transfer I set out to pursue.

However, it also leaves me with a number of lingering questions and ideas for how I

might reconfigure a future study to address possible shortcomings of my research. In this

section, I explore three questions and concerns that my study raises. I then provide one

example to illustrate a phenomenon my study does not solve: how to explain a case

where a student, Silver, has a "transfer mindset" and all the tools for transfer but whose

writing samples are not successful. I close with two additional questions about

researching transfer raised by Silver's example.

First, the population of students who participated in my study may not be

representative of a less experienced or less motivated group. The students who

participated in my study turned out to be, almost to a person, highly motivated and highly involved. Not all were excited about academic writing, but all had some passion that they felt strongly about—and about or for which they composed written documents. I chose to target students involved with the Leadership and Community Service-Learning programs on campus because I could be assured that all would have some extracurricular involvement. However, my population of highly involved and community-minded students might very well have yielded a different set of results than a population of less motivated and involved undergraduates. It is possible that my findings contradict Arum and Roska's so starkly because of the population I gathered data from. In future versions of this study, it could be worth expanding the target population to include a broader range of college students, including those who may be less invested in extracurricular and co-curricular endeavors.

Another unresolved area for further investigation that remains at the conclusion of my study is what might promote transfer—and how researchers might determine that. I attempted to avoid taking a reductive view of transfer by tracing narrow skills across different writing thresholds. As Elizabeth Wardle notes, and as I quote in Chapter 2, research that takes an oversimplified view of transfer may be "looking for apples when those apples are now part of an apple pie" ("Understanding 'Transfer'" 69). However, if researchers (rightfully) resist taking a reductive view of transfer, we also limit our ability to learn about specific pedagogical interventions that might help promote transfer of learning. If we cannot separate transfer as a phenomenon working in isolation (which it never is), then how can we determine what impedes or promotes transfer? [51] My study did

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[51] Existing studies that attempt to determine effective pedagogical and curricular approaches to "teaching for transfer" exhibit a number of methodological limitations. For instance, Yancey,

not make the question of "what promotes transfer" its central area of inquiry. However, it would be useful to offer evidence-based pedagogical suggestions about how to "teach for transfer" to instructors and writing program administrators. One of my directions for future research (below) addresses this concern.

My study also raises questions that pertain to a characteristic of my data collection methods: the gap in time between when students composed a document and the interview where they discuss it. My study accounts for potential gaps in students' memories of writing by focusing interviews on actual, specific documents. However, my study does not account for the fact that students' interpretations of transfer might differ with significant temporal distance from their compositions. I prompt students in my study to discuss documents that they wrote in the past—and that they had time to step away from and reflect on. There may be limits to these retrospective accounts of transfer (Pigg et al.). Looking at a written piece as a whole is different from considering a piece in progress; when there is still the potential to make changes, the writer might see or take advantage of different transfer possibilities than she might after she completes the document. In addition, after a piece is complete, a student might erase from her mind moments of struggle or in-the-moment decisions she made. One way to reduce the potential bias of retrospective accounts is to gather students' thoughts on transfer in real time. Stacey Pigg et al. provide an excellent model of this in "Ubiquitous Writing, Technologies, and the Social Practice of Literacies of Coordination." The authors gather

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Robertson, and Taczak's study compares different curricular approaches and claims as a result that their Teaching for Transfer (TFT) approach is more effective at promoting transfer than other curricular models (*Writing Across Contexts*). However, their study's research methods make it difficult to support such a claim. For one, there are very few students enrolled in their study. Furthermore, there are many factors other than the curriculum, such as teacher quality, prior education, and non-academic experiences, that may have influenced the outcomes of the individual students they profile.

real-time data about students' writing practices, habits, and thoughts by prompting them, via SMS text message, to record notes in a "diary" at five pre-programmed times throughout the day (96). A study like mine might learn more about students' micro-connections, struggles, and real-time moments of transfer by gathering data using a similar protocol.[52]

My final concern has to do with the situations when students seemed to be predisposed to transfer but nonetheless did not compose effective pieces of writing. Most of the students in my study both demonstrate a "transfer mindset" and craft effective documents. One unresolved question, however, is how to explain the case in which a student seemed to engage in relational reasoning and have metacognitive awareness of his choices—but whose writing was largely ineffective. Silver, who I mention above, is a biological anthropology major, is active in his church, and participates in a university service program called "Beyond the Classroom." He also is a representative to the student legislature on campus and a captain of his club basketball team. He immigrated to the US from Guyana at age nine. Throughout my study, he presented evidence that he has a "transfer mindset"—he is attuned to seeking connections between his writing experiences, is predisposed toward "re-thinking writing altogether" (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak), and understands the importance of establishing *ethos* by appealing to a particular audience. However, his actual texts do not, for the most part, demonstrate evidence of his ability to translate these ways of thinking to a written product.

We see Silver's dispositional commitment to transfer in his open-minded attitude and persistent approach to learning. One of Silver's submissions to the study is a poem

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[52] Think-aloud protocols (Flower and Hayes) address this limitation to a degree. However, the presence of the researcher might alter the student's thought process.

titled "Failure???"; in it, Silver makes the argument that learning is a process that includes failing and trying again. In his interview, Silver elaborates on this attitude, explaining, "failure is not an . . . end product. It's a process." Silver's attitude is one of a "productive novice" (Sommers and Saltz), a student who is open to assuming the position of a dedicated beginner. Silver also demonstrates persistence by taking almost all of his essays and many of his non-academic writing tasks to the writing center, sometimes multiple times per assignment.

Silver also practices several types of relational reasoning, which I claim may be associated with transfer readiness. He demonstrates analogical reasoning as well as comparative and contrasting reasoning during our interview and focus group discussion. During the focus group discussion, for example, Silver distinguishes between academic writing and a personal essay in terms of arrangement. In particular, he equates his academic writing with "preparing for war" his personal writing with "having a picnic":

> With these [academic pieces], where you are studious . . . you go to the outline, and you say, "This is how we are going to set this." It's like preparing for war, for you are getting to set this up, like boom, boom, boom, boom. Now with this [personal essay], this is like having a picnic. You don't really need to set things up. You just know you have a basket and you put whatever you want to put inside.

Like Diddy's many analogies, Silver's analogy is idiosyncratic but makes good sense. I see where he is coming from, here: academic writing requires a strict structure with clear and direct points. Personal writing can be more leisurely and meandering, like a weekend picnic.

We also see Silver's "transfer mindset" at work when he talks about the importance of establishing a connection with his audience. Silver claims that, in his "Overcoming Poverty" essay, he establishes credibility and appeals to his audience by making a reference to the Declaration of Independence. He explains that the intended audience of his classmates, all Americans, would be more compelled by his argument as a result of his reference to a quintessentially American text. Based on his explanation, Silver seems to understand the relationship of *ethos* and audience.

However, much of Silver's writing, and one essay in particular, is not effective. I do not know whether Silver's "Overcoming Poverty" essay met the requirements of the assignment from the perspective of the professor or what grade it ultimately earned. Whatever the case, the essay has a number of weaknesses that I, as an instructor, would feel compelled to help him address. These include both global and local issues, such as problems with the scope of argument, logical reasoning, arrangement, citation, conventions, framing, flow, and use of metacommentary. The essay as a whole fails to make a clear, complex, well-organized academic argument.

When I asked Silver to explain aloud his essay and choices, however, his commentary suggested far more knowledge and ability than his writing demonstrates. For example, Silver is able to explain, quite clearly, what he intends to do at the beginning of his essay:

> This first paragraph is actually outlining what is the impact of poverty and how it influence people in the world. And I tried to actually give it a definition based on my background knowledge of it. . . . so I tried to define it in this paragraph and tell what it is. Then we talk about some

organization that is involved in ending poverty. So you give a highlight

and then you come about with possible solutions.

When I look back at the text, I can see how Silver's explanation matches with what I might call an aspirational version of the essay, or the version in his mind's eye. It does not, however, match the actual version he submitted to the study or his class.

One possible explanation for the disconnect between Silver's vision of his essay and the essay itself is what linguists identify as the gap between *performance* and *competence*. Whereas a student might possess competence, meaning she is in theory capable of doing something based on her internalized knowledge, she may not demonstrate that competence in performance, or in the "actual production of writing" (Brent 560). If that is the case, it stands to reason that, over time, Silver will continue to refine his knowledge until he ultimately is able to execute in practice what he seems to understand in theory. Alternatively, we might interpret Silver's difficulties here as evidence of his struggle to "sell" his writing. Perhaps the problem Silver encounters is that he cannot find a way to project the *ethos* that would be necessary to convey the connections he draws and knowledge he transfers.

The example above raises two final questions regarding my study and other studies that investigate transfer. We cannot pinpoint or know exactly what role transfer plays (or does not play) in Silver's process. Silver seems to have a "transfer mindset"— he seems to be predisposed toward transfer. Despite this, he is unable, when the rubber meets the road, to write a successful essay. This leads me to ask: when a student succeeds (or fails) at a writing task, to what degree can we attribute that success (or failure) to transfer, and to what degree might it be a result of other factors? It is possible that many

of the students in my study composed successful documents for reasons mostly unrelated to transfer: they might have had a strong literacy sponsor or copious experience in a particular discourse community. They might be exceptionally motivated and driven. They may have stronger educational backgrounds or greater access to extracurricular experiences as a result of privileged upbringings. These factors all might contribute to the students' ability to compose effective documents; I have no way of knowing whether transfer is or is not the "key" component at play when students do or do not write successfully. I can seek information on how students relate their texts across contexts, and how they trace their learning between documents, but I still need to ask: is this a matter of transfer or just a matter of learning? I cannot draw a neat line between transfer and *learning*, more generally speaking.

Attention to Silver's situation also points to the fact that researchers and writing teachers may sometimes be able to learn more from what does not work than from what does. What might I have learned had I collected more ineffective writing samples, like Silver's? My writing submission form and guidelines encouraged students to submit texts that they felt proud of. Were I to conduct this study again, I might also ask students to submit documents that, by their estimation, *do not work* or did not work. I collected so many successful texts that it was difficult to identify patterns among texts that were effective and those that were less effective. I simply did not have enough ineffective texts to serve as counterpoints. With examples of both effective and ineffective texts, particularly from the same author, I might be better equipped to determine what factors help the student succeed. Having the chance to compare and contrast effective and

ineffective writing submissions might have helped me gain a better sense of what works by illustrating what does not.

Directions for Future Research

There are multiple directions to take as a result of my study; I conclude by focusing on four. First, I intend to test out my claim that relational reasoning helps foster a "transfer mindset" by conducting multi-year, longitudinal teacher-research study that begins with my own students. To take up this project, after getting IRB permissions, I plan to create a FYW curriculum that includes a significant amount of relational reasoning. I would begin the semester with a literacy map assignment, include reflective writing prompts that call for relational reasoning before and/or after assigned writing projects, require a re-mediation project, and assign a final synthesis essay that asks students to discuss the ways their thinking about writing has changed and how they might carry relational reasoning with them into future settings. This mixed-methods study would then follow a cohort of students through their college years, periodically interviewing them about how they approach new writing tasks. I would also collect a selection of students' later academic and non-academic writing, with teacher comments when relevant, to gauge their learning. This project would enable me to get a better sense of whether (and if so, how) relational reasoning can support a "transfer mindset" and successful writing throughout college (and beyond). It would also likely provide insight into the question I raise earlier in this chapter about what pedagogical and curricular practices might *promote* successful transfer of learning.

Another productive project that builds from my study would entail analysis and assessment of an existing college-wide writing initiative that intends to foster transfer, particularly one that prioritizes students' non-academic writing. Elon University's Writing Excellence Initiative has three student learning outcomes: during their college years, students will write to learn, write in a discipline, and write as a citizen (1). Four campus units have been tasked with implementing this initiative: academic departments, the general studies program, the student life division, and the Center for Writing Excellence (which contains the writing center) (22). I hope to pursue a study that focuses on how students achieve the "writing as citizens" outcome in particular in order to learn more about the consequences of and relationships between students' civic writing experiences both in and out of school. To achieve this end, my first set of research questions would gather data on students' civic writing experiences: What types of "civic" documents are college students producing? What are students' perceptions of "writing as a citizen" across their college years? My second set of research questions would focus on transfer specifically. How might students move their civic writing knowledge across contexts? What specific learning from academic or non-academic sites do students repurpose to "write as a citizen"? What relevant connections do students forge between experiences "writing as a citizen" and other college writing experiences? This research project would enable me to pursue a study of students' civic writing within an existing program intended to foster transfer between writing in multiple domains.

Third, my dissertation alerted me to the untapped potential of students' non-academic writing as a site of inquiry. My study yielded far more data than I could possibly incorporate into this dissertation. I was only able to include a very small fraction

of students' writing—only about 20% of what I collected. I was unable to explore dozens of the extra- and co-curricular documents students submitted: a stage management guide for a bilingual production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a poster for a bioengineering conference on the "Binding of Surrogate Human Norovirus Capsid Proteins," multiple poems, bylaws for a student club, fan fiction, a eulogy for a best friend, and a poster raising aneurism awareness, to name a few. When I look back into the documents I collected, what strikes me is how oftentimes the same student is composing so many vastly different texts with such different registers and purposes. Building on these findings, I plan to pursue a focused study of students' extracurricular and co-curricular writing, unrelated to transfer. Where do students' non-academic documents circulate and who are their audiences? When do students seem to try to mimic genre conventions and when do they bend them? In what non-academic writing contexts are students most likely to pursue substantive revision or take risks, and where are they more likely to try to "play it safe"? The plethora of documents I collected offers many possible areas of inquiry.

Finally, my own study of the ways that students "see connections" among their writing experiences and transfer their *ethos* as writers might be replicated with different populations. As I mentioned above, one possible limitation of my study is its motivated, mature student population. What would happen if I carried out the same study with a less involved group of students? Less experienced students? Might the students forge fewer connections or different types of connections? Future studies might compare first- and second-year students with graduating seniors to see whether the two populations differ in their abilities to reason relationally or cultivate *ethos* based on other sources or experiences.

Conclusion

This project has provided insight into the specific strategies and tactics that experienced college students draw on as they attempt to relate and transfer their writing knowledge across contexts. It also highlights the very central role that college students' non-academic writing, including personal, professional, and extracurricular writing, plays in their writing lives and development. The concept of transfer is fundamental to our work as writing teachers: if our students do not transfer what we teach to future and alternate settings, then our writing instruction was for naught. Rather than try to trace evidence of writing teachers' pedagogical effectiveness, however, this study focuses on the ways that successful students practice, often absent pedagogical intervention, ways of thinking that may orient them toward transfer across many contexts. Said differently, rather than assume writing teachers to be the lynchpin of students' writing success, this dissertation steps back and asks what students already know and do well, and examines that. My project shows that researchers can learn just as much, if not more, from studying students' robust writing lives and ways of drawing connections as we can from tracing teachers' instructional influence on students' writing endeavors. I hope future studies of transfer will also take seriously students' various and idiosyncratic ways of making meaning—our goal as teachers, after all, is to build on what students already know and do well, rather than try to replace their knowledge with our own.

Appendices

Appendix A: Qualtrics Survey

Heather Lindenman
1205 Tawes Hall
301-405-3695
hlinden@umd.edu

Participant Rights:
If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:

University of Maryland College Park
Institutional Review Board Office
1204 Marie Mount Hall
College Park, Maryland, 20742
 E-mail: irb@umd.edu
Telephone: 301-405-0678

This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.

You may download or print a copy of this information as a PDF file here: Survey Informed Consent - Writing Transfer.

If you agree to participate, please press the ">>" button box below.

Types of Writing: Directions

Q2.1.
The next three sets of questions will be about three different areas in which you write: academic, extracurricular, and personal. Please follow these guidelines when deciding which is which. They are also reprinted on each page.

1. **Academic writing**
   - INCLUDES any writing assignment or project you did f**or a college class**. Anything you wrote **for school** (after high school) is appropriate. Writing you did in **community college or another university** (if you transferred) should be included.
   - DOES NOT include internship-related writing or writing you do for clubs or other organizations. Does not include personal writing or writing you did in high school.

2. **Personal writing**
   - INCLUDES any writing you did **for personal reasons**—either **"just for yourself**," to **communicate with friends/family**, to express something you care about, etc.
   - DOES NOT include writing for class, a job, an internship, etc.

3. **Extracurricular writing**
   - INCLUDES any writing task or project you did for an **activity outside of your academic responsibilities** on campus (e.g., **for an organization, a club, an internship, your job**, etc.) It might have also been writing that had **another public goal**.
   - DOES NOT include items you wrote "only for yourself" or for friends/family/interpersonal communication. Does not include writing for class.

Q2.2.
ACADEMIC writing

- Includes any writing assignment or project you did **for a college class**. Anything you wrote **for school** (after high school) is appropriate. Writing you did in **community college or another university** (if you transferred) should be included.
- DOES NOT include internship-related writing or writing you do for clubs or other organizations. Does not include personal writing or writing you did in high school.

Q2.3. From the list of options below, please indicate **ALL** of the types of writing that you have composed for **academic or school-related purposes** since you began college.

☐ Web articles or web text   ☐ Scholarship essay   ☐ Lyrics   ☐ Application essay or personal statement

☐ Text messages	☐ Test/quiz writing (short answer or test essay)	☐ Online dating profile	☐ Lab reports
☐ Instant message (G-chat, AIM, etc.)	☐ Advertisement (including to sell things online, Craigslist, etc.)	☐ Instructions or directions	☐ Letters (snail mail)/cards/notes/postcards
☐ Wikis/Wikipedia edits	☐ Poetry	☐ Lists (to-do lists, shopping lists, etc.)	☐ Video
☐ Blog or Tumblr	☐ Podcast	☐ Discussion board posts	☐ Poster, sign, flyer
☐ Cover letter	☐ Observational notes	☐ Meeting notes, minutes, or agenda	☐ Literature review or annotated bibliography
☐ Research paper	☐ Report (design report, work report, etc.)	☐ Reflection essay	☐ Memo
☐ Comics and/or graphic novels	☐ Mission statement	☐ Analytical essay (literary analysis, rhetorical analysis, etc.)	☐ Eulogy (or speech for funeral)
☐ Reviews (yelp, Amazon, etc.)	☐ Email	☐ Twitter/tweets	☐ Summary
☐ Personal narrative (nonfiction)	☐ Newspaper article	☐ Grant proposal	☐ Rules
☐ PowerPoint or Prezi	☐ Self-evaluation	☐ Translations or transcriptions	☐ Journal entry
☐ Speech or presentation	☐ Comments (YouTube, online newspaper, someone else's blog, etc.)	☐ Facebook posts, status updates, chats.	☐ Other [＿＿＿＿＿]
☐ Fiction (story, novel, fan fiction, etc.)	☐ Resume or CV		

Q2.4. What types of writing do you write **most frequently** for academic or **school-related purposes**? Choose the top 3.

- ☐ » Email
- ☐ » Memo
- ☐ » Scholarship essay
- ☐ » PowerPoint or Prezi
- ☐ » Mission statement
- ☐ » Reviews (yelp, Amazon, etc.)
- ☐ » Discussion board posts
- ☐ » Lab reports
- ☐ » Text messages
- ☐ » Lists (to-do lists, shopping lists, etc.)
- ☐ » Instructions or directions
- ☐ » Podcast
- ☐ » Resume or CV
- ☐ » Poster, sign, flyer
- ☐ » Instant message (G-chat, AIM, etc.)
- ☐ » Poetry
- ☐ » Summary
- ☐ » Web articles or web text
- ☐ » Test/quiz writing (short answer or test essay)
- ☐ » Newspaper article
- ☐ » Personal narrative (nonfiction)
- ☐ » Speech or presentation
- ☐ » Online dating profile
- ☐ » Facebook posts, status updates, chats, etc.
- ☐ » Eulogy (or speech for funeral)
- ☐ » Letters (snail mail)/cards/notes/postcards

- ☐ » Observational notes
- ☐ » Wikis/Wikipedia edits
- ☐ » Twitter/tweets
- ☐ » Meeting notes, minutes, or agenda
- ☐ » Self-evaluation
- ☐ » Fiction (story, novel, fan fiction, etc.)
- ☐ » Cover letter
- ☐ » Comics and/or graphic novels
- ☐ » Research paper
- ☐ » Literature review or annotated bibliography
- ☐ » Advertisement (including to sell things online, Craigslist, etc.)
- ☐ » Blog or Tumblr
- ☐ » Video
- ☐ » Application essay or personal statement
- ☐ » Reflection essay
- ☐ » Rules
- ☐ » Analytical essay (literary analysis, rhetorical analysis, etc.)
- ☐ » Translations or transcriptions
- ☐ » Journal entry
- ☐ » Lyrics
- ☐ » Grant proposal
- ☐ » Comments (YouTube, online newspaper, someone else's blog, etc.)
- ☐ » Report (design report, work report, etc.)
- ☐ » Other

[_____]

Q2.5.
2. **PERSONAL writing**

- Includes any writing you did **for personal reasons**—either "**just for yourself**," to **communicate with friends/family**, to **express something** you care about, etc.
- DOES NOT include writing for class, a job, an internship, etc.

Q2.6. From the list of options below, please indicate **ALL** the types of writing that you have composed in **your personal life** (not including school, work, internships, or service activities) since you began college.

☐ Podcast	☐ Comments (YouTube, online newspaper, someone else's blog, etc.)	☐ Online dating profile	☐ Translations or transcriptions
☐ Text messages	☐ Poster, sign, flyer	☐ Instructions or directions	☐ Report (design report, work report, etc.)
☐ Scholarship essay	☐ Self-evaluation	☐ Reviews (yelp, Amazon, etc.)	☐ Poetry
☐ Reflection essay	☐ Cover letter	☐ Letters (snail mail)/cards/notes/postcards	☐ Lyrics
☐ Journal entry	☐ Email	☐ Comics and/or graphic novels	☐ Facebook posts, status updates, chats, etc.
☐ Summary	☐ Personal narrative (nonfiction)	☐ Wikis/Wikipedia edits	☐ Lab reports
☐ Test/quiz writing (short answer or test essay)	☐ Fiction (story, novel, fan fiction, etc.)	☐ Video	☐ Web articles or web text

☐ Rules	☐ Literature review or annotated bibliography	☐ Mission statement	☐ Lists (to-do lists, shopping lists, etc.)
☐ PowerPoint or Prezi	☐ Memo	☐ Analytical essay (literary analysis, rhetorical analysis, etc.)	☐ Blog or Tumblr
☐ Twitter/tweets	☐ Advertisement (including to sell things online, Craigslist, etc.)	☐ Application essay or personal statement	☐ Resume or CV
☐ Meeting notes, minutes, or agenda	☐ Observational notes	☐ Newspaper article	☐ Instant message (G-chat, AIM, etc.)
☐ Grant proposal	☐ Speech or presentation	☐ Discussion board posts	☐ Other [_____]
☐ Eulogy (or speech for funeral)	☐ Research paper		

Q2.7. What types of writing do you write **most frequently** in your **personal life**? Choose the top 3.

- ☐ » Email
- ☐ » Memo
- ☐ » Scholarship essay
- ☐ » PowerPoint or Prezi
- ☐ » Mission statement
- ☐ » Reviews (yelp, Amazon, etc.)
- ☐ » Discussion board posts
- ☐ » Lab reports
- ☐ » Text messages
- ☐ » Lists (to-do lists, shopping lists, etc.)
- ☐ » Instructions or directions
- ☐ » Podcast
- ☐ » Resume or CV
- ☐ » Poster, sign, flyer
- ☐ » Instant message (G-chat, AIM, etc.)
- ☐ » Poetry
- ☐ » Summary
- ☐ » Web articles or web text
- ☐ » Test/quiz writing (short answer or test essay)
- ☐ » Newspaper article
- ☐ » Personal narrative (nonfiction)
- ☐ » Speech or presentation
- ☐ » Online dating profile
- ☐ » Facebook posts, status updates, chats, etc.
- ☐ » Eulogy (or speech for funeral)
- ☐ » Letters (snail mail)/cards/notes/postcards
- ☐ » Observational notes
- ☐ » Wikis/Wikipedia edits
- ☐ » Twitter/tweets
- ☐ » Meeting notes, minutes, or agenda
- ☐ » Self-evaluation
- ☐ » Fiction (story, novel, fan fiction, etc.)
- ☐ » Cover letter
- ☐ » Comics and/or graphic novels

- [ ] » Research paper
- [ ] » Literature review or annotated bibliography
- [ ] » Advertisement (including to sell things online, Craigslist, etc.)
- [ ] » Blog or Tumblr
- [ ] » Video
- [ ] » Application essay or personal statement
- [ ] » Reflection essay
- [ ] » Rules
- [ ] » Analytical essay (literary analysis, rhetorical analysis, etc.)
- [ ] » Translations or transcriptions
- [ ] » Journal entry
- [ ] » Lyrics
- [ ] » Grant proposal
- [ ] » Comments (YouTube, online newspaper, someone else's blog, etc.)
- [ ] » Report (design report, work report, etc.)
- [ ] » Other

Q2.8.

3. EXTRACURRICULAR writing

- Includes any writing task or project you did **for an activity outside of your academic responsibilities** on campus (e.g., for an **organization, a club, an internship, your job**, etc.) It might have also been writing that had **another public goal**.
- DOES NOT include items you wrote "only for yourself" or for friends/family/interpersonal communication. Does not include writing for class.

Q2.9. From the list of options below, please indicate **ALL** the types of writing that you have composed in **for your internship, job, service activities, or other professional work** since you began college.

[ ] Comments (YouTube, online newspaper, someone else's blog, etc.)	[ ] Poster, sign, flyer	[ ] Letters (snail mail)/cards/notes/postcards	[ ] Fiction (story, novel, fan fiction, etc.)
[ ] Report (design report, work report, etc.)	[ ] Self-evaluation	[ ] Literature review or annotated bibliography	[ ] Test/quiz writing (short answer or test essay)
[ ] Scholarship essay	[ ] Lab reports	[ ] Discussion board posts	[ ] Journal entry
[ ] PowerPoint or Prezi	[ ] Rules	[ ] Wikis/Wikipedia edits	[ ] Reviews (yelp, Amazon, etc.)
[ ] Eulogy (or speech for funeral)	[ ] Summary	[ ] Application essay or personal statement	[ ] Memo
[ ] Grant proposal	[ ] Observational notes	[ ] Blog or Tumblr	[ ] Research paper
[ ] Lyrics	[ ] Newspaper article	[ ] Instructions or directions	[ ] Reflection essay
[ ] Facebook posts, status updates, chats, etc.	[ ] Email	[ ] Text messages	[ ] Video
[ ] Resume or CV	[ ] Lists (to-do lists, shopping lists, etc.)	[ ] Translations or transcriptions	[ ] Speech or presentation
[ ] Podcast	[ ] Personal narrative (nonfiction)	[ ] Twitter/tweets	[ ] Advertisement (including to sell things online, Craigslist, etc.)
[ ] Comics and/or graphic novels	[ ] Instant message (G-chat, AIM, etc.)	[ ] Cover letter	[ ] Meeting notes, minutes, or agenda
[ ] Poetry	[ ] Analytical essay (literary analysis, rhetorical analysis, etc.)	[ ] Mission statement	[ ] Other
[ ] Web articles or web text	[ ] Online dating profile		

Q2.10. What types of writing do you write **most frequently** for your **internship, job, service activities, or other professional work**? Choose the top 3.

- » Email
- » Memo
- » Scholarship essay
- » PowerPoint or Prezi
- » Mission statement
- » Reviews (yelp, Amazon, etc.)
- » Discussion board posts
- » Lab reports
- » Text messages
- » Lists (to-do lists, shopping lists, etc.)
- » Instructions or directions
- » Podcast
- » Resume or CV
- » Poster, sign, flyer
- » Instant message (G-chat, AIM, etc.)
- » Poetry
- » Summary
- » Web articles or web text
- » Test/quiz writing (short answer or test essay)
- » Newspaper article
- » Personal narrative (nonfiction)
- » Speech or presentation
- » Online dating profile
- » Facebook posts, status updates, chats, etc.
- » Eulogy (or speech for funeral)
- » Letters (snail mail)/cards/notes/postcards
- » Observational notes
- » Wikis/Wikipedia edits
- » Twitter/tweets
- » Meeting notes, minutes, or agenda
- » Self-evaluation
- » Fiction (story, novel, fan fiction, etc.)
- » Cover letter
- » Comics and/or graphic novels
- » Research paper
- » Literature review or annotated bibliography
- » Advertisement (including to sell things online, Craigslist, etc.)
- » Blog or Tumblr
- » Video
- » Application essay or personal statement
- » Reflection essay
- » Rules

- [ ] » Rules
- [ ] » Analytical essay (literary analysis, rhetorical analysis, etc.)
- [ ] » Translations or transcriptions
- [ ] » Journal entry
- [ ] » Lyrics
- [ ] » Grant proposal
- [ ] » Comments (YouTube, online newspaper, someone else's blog, etc.)
- [ ] » Report (design report, work report, etc.)
- [ ] » Other

  [_____]

Effort and Meaning

Q3.1. Regardless of whether they are for school, your personal life, your extracurricular activities, etc., what types of writing or composing do you **put the most effort into**? Choose the top 3.

Note: the items listed below are those you chose in previous questions.

☐ Grant proposal	☐ Reflection essay
☐ Facebook posts, status updates, chats, etc.	☐ Speech or presentation
☐ Observational notes	☐ Test/quiz writing (short answer or test essay)
☐ Letters (snail mail)/cards/notes/postcards	☐ Instant message (G-chat, AIM, etc.)
☐ Journal entry	☐ Text messages
☐ Lab reports	☐ Email
☐ Video	☐ Meeting notes, minutes, or agenda
☐ Personal narrative (nonfiction)	☐ Cover letter
☐ Fiction (story, novel, fan fiction, etc.)	☐ Online dating profile
☐ Analytical essay (literary analysis, rhetorical analysis, etc.)	☐ Lyrics
☐ Podcast	☐ Rules
☐ Scholarship essay	☐ Comments (YouTube, online newspaper, someone else's blog, etc.)
☐ Newspaper article	☐ Wikis/Wikipedia edits
☐ Eulogy (or speech for funeral)	☐ Self-evaluation
☐ Discussion board posts	☐ Reviews (yelp, Amazon, etc.)
☐ Literature review or annotated bibliography	☐ Twitter/tweets
☐ Summary	☐ Poster, sign, flyer
☐ Instructions or directions	☐ Report (design report, work report, etc.)
☐ Comics and/or graphic novels	☐ Resume or CV
☐ Translations or transcriptions	☐ PowerPoint or Prezi
☐ Blog or Tumblr	☐ Web articles or web text
☐ Poetry	☐ Mission statement
☐ Lists (to-do lists, shopping lists, etc.)	☐ Research paper
☐ Memo	☐ Application essay or personal statement
☐ Advertisement (including to sell things online, Craigslist, etc.)	☐ Other [_____]

Q3.2. Why do you put the most effort into those types of writing? Explain for each: ${q://QID51/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices}.

Q3.3. Think back over the course of your college experience (so far). In the box below, **briefly describe** the writing task, assignment, or project you would identify as **the most meaningful to you**.
- You should feel free to choose something you did for school or outside of school, but please make sure it was something you wrote or composed since you started college.
- Please **choose only one**.

Q3.4. **What made this particular task, project, or assignment meaningful to you?** Please explain.

Influence/Transfer

Q4.1.
*The following 6 questions will ask you about ways that the kinds of writing you do in different areas of your life **influence each other**.*

- *Think of "influence" as meaning "taught you something that you apply, consciously or not, to the writing you do in the areas indicated."*

- *Please only consider the writing that you have done **while a college student.** You can count writing you did at a community college, the University of Maryland, or other college degree granting institutions (if you transferred to UMD).*

- *Please **do not** consider writing your did in high school or before college.*

Q4.2. My **academic/school writing influences** the writing I do in my **personal life.**

Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4.3. My **academic/school writing influences** the writing I do in my **extracurricular activities.**

Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4.4. The **writing I do in my personal life** influences the writing I do for **school.**

Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
○	○	○	○	○	○

○　　　　　○　　　　　○　　　　　○　　　　　○　　　　　○

Q4.5. The **writing I do in my personal life** influences the writing I do for my **extracurricular activities.**

Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4.6. The **writing I do for my extracurricular activities** influences the writing I do in my **personal life.**

Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4.7. The **writing I do for my extracurricular activities** influences my **academic/school writing**.

Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
○	○	○	○	○	○

Q4.8. Do you have any other thoughts about how or why the kinds of writing you do in different areas of your life influence each other?

Groups/Collaboration

Q5.1. I participate in **assigned group projects and/or collaborative writing for my classes**.

Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
○	○	○	○	○	○

Q5.2. I participate in **group projects and/or collaborative in my out-of-class activities**.

Always	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	N/A
○	○	○	○	○	○

Q5.3. Please list the **particular service-learning or extracurricular activities** you participate in **through a University of Maryland program or connection**.

Q5.4. Please list the **particular service-learning or extracurricular activities** you participate in that are **not affiliated with the University of Maryland.**

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Demographic Data

Q6.1.
The results of this survey are **anonymous**, so your name will not be connected to any of the collected data. We will identify you instead by a code.

All participants will be eligible to **win one of four $25 Amazon gift cards**.Your responses in this section will allow us to contact you in case you have won a gift card. They will also allow us to contact you in case you express interest in participating in future stages of the study.

Please enter your name, contact information, and other demographic data below.

Q6.2. Contact Information

First Name

Last Name

Email

Phone

Q6.3. What is your college standing?

Freshman	Sophomore	Junior	Senior	Other	Grad Student
○	○	○	○	○	○

Q6.4. What is/are your major(s)?

Q6.5. Are you a US citizen?

○ Yes

○ No

Q6.6. What is your country of birth?

Q6.7. Please identify your race/ethnicity.

Q6.8. Please select all the languages you speak, write, or use in your day-to-day life.

- ☐ English
- ☐ Spanish
- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Hebrew
- ☐ French
- ☐ Farsi
- ☐ German
- ☐ Russian
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Arabic
- ☐ Other

Q6.9. What language(s) are you most comfortable speaking in?

- ☐ » English
- ☐ » Chinese
- ☐ » Spanish
- ☐ » Farsi
- ☐ » Russian
- ☐ » Arabic
- ☐ » German
- ☐ » Korean
- ☐ » Japanese
- ☐ » Hebrew
- ☐ » French
- ☐ » Other

Q6.10. What language(s) are you most comfortable writing in?

- ☐ » English
- ☐ » Chinese
- ☐ » Spanish
- ☐ » Farsi
- ☐ » Russian
- ☐ » Arabic
- ☐ » German
- ☐ » Korean
- ☐ » Japanese
- ☐ » Hebrew

☐ » French

☐ » Other

Q6.11. What is the first language you learned to speak?

◯ » English

◯ » Chinese

◯ » Spanish

◯ » Farsi

◯ » Russian

◯ » Arabic

◯ » German

◯ » Korean

◯ » Japanese

◯ » Hebrew

◯ » French

◯ » Other

Q6.12. What language(s) do you use most in your home or personal life?

☐ » English

☐ » Chinese

☐ » Spanish

☐ » Farsi

☐ » Russian

☐ » Arabic

☐ » German

☐ » Korean

☐ » Japanese

☐ » Hebrew

☐ » French

☐ » Other

Q6.13. What language(s) do you use most in your extracurricular activities?

◯ » English

◯ » Chinese

◯ » Spanish

◯ » Farsi

◯ » Russian

◯ » Arabic

◯ » German

○ » Korean

○ » Japanese

○ » Hebrew

○ » French

○ » Other

Future Participation

Q7.1. Would you be willing to **participate in a follow-up discussion** with a small group of students? **Lunch will be provided** and the discussions will be arranged at a variety of times to **fit student schedules**.

○ Yes

○ Maybe

○ No

Q7.2. If you would be wiling to participate, what food would you prefer for lunch? Please rank your top 3 by typing in 1, 2, and 3.

☐ Chipotle

☐ Subway

☐ Potbelly

☐ Pizza (Ledo's)

☐ Jason's Deli

☐ Bagel Place

☐ Pizza (Papa John's)

☐ Noodles & Company

Q7.3. Would you be willing to submit writings to an online database for further study? You would submit writings you have already done. Your name will not be used in any published research. Participants who submit writings will receive $5 cash.

○ Yes

○ Maybe

○ No

Q7.4. Would you be willing to be interviewed? Interviews will take place in the spring semester. Participants who take part in interviews will receive $10 cash per interview (up to $20 total).

○ Yes

○ Maybe

○ No

Q7.5. Thank you for participating in this survey. If you won a gift card, you will be contacted by December 1. If you expressed interest in future participation, you will be contacted shortly.

Appendix B: Focus Group Protocol

I. Introduce Study; Provide Consent Forms
- The goal of this conversation is to learn about the writing you do in and out of school.
- This study has been approved by IRB and will be recorded.
- I will ask for pseudonyms at end.
- Please read consent forms and sign if you are interested.

II. Distribute food

III. Procedural Overview
- Conversation should be discussion style (talk to each other, not me).
- Note taker is here to ensure we get data in case recorder fails.
- Eating your burritos during the conversation is encouraged!
- Expected to take one hour total.

IV. Introductions (Opening Question)
- Name
- Major(s)
- Favorite and least favorite things to write

V. Introductory Question: Framing Writing in all Domains

You all write for your classes, but you also write in your personal life and possibly for other things outside of school. And when we say "writing," we don't necessarily mean essays—texts are writing, blogs are writing, videos and poems and emails and lab reports are writing.

Can you name types of writing that have been most important for you to do and do well since you've started college? They can be for class but don't have to be—they can be anything. Just list them / throw them out there.

VI. Transition Questions: Learning to Write in Different Domains

1. Let's start with writing that you did outside of school—either for an extracurricular, internship, job, personal reasons, etc.
    - *Think of a specific example something you wrote in the last few months—it can be formal or informal, something you did once or something you do every day. First can you describe it and make sure you mention what it was meant to accomplish or do.*
    - *Can you explain how you figured out or learned how to do it?*
    - *If you want, you can also say if you think it worked or not…*

2. Now let's choose something you wrote that's academic. *Choose something you wrote for a class (or academic reason) in the last few months that had something unfamiliar or new about it.*
    • *Can you describe the specific assignment and how you tried to figure out how to do it?*
    • *You can say if you think it was successful or not if you want…*

VII.   Key Questions

So we've talked about how you figured out how to do specific types of writing and how you learned to write in general. Now the last thing we're going to do is some comparing and contrasting.

1. So let's do some compare/contrast. Let's take the two things you just talked about. If they really don't work for this, you can choose something new, but try to stick with them.
    • *Do these pieces have anything in common? Or are they completely unrelated? Or both? Try to be as specific as possible. (If you come up with things that you didn't think of the first time, you can jump back in.)*

2. *Can you think of any ways that the writing you do outside of school influences the writing you do in school, or vice versa? Or are they totally separate? Can you explain? If you have any specific examples, that would be great.*

VIII.   Closing Question

The goal of this discussion was to talk how the writing you do outside of school and for school relate to each other, or not, as well as how you learned or figured out how to do writing that wasn't necessarily directly taught to you. Have we missed anything?

IX. Conclusion
    • Thank participants
    • Explain Wufoo writing submissions procedure and possible interviews
    • Remind participants to choose pseudonyms

Materials and Resources:
    - Food (burritos, chips, salsa, guacamole, cookies, and bottled waters), plates & napkins
    - Roster
    - Consent forms and manila envelope
    - Audio recorder and towel or handkerchief
    - Assistant for note taking
    - Index cards and sharpies for name tents and pseudonyms (on the inside)

Appendix C: Completed Writing Submission Form

UMD Writing Study: Writing Submissions   #**32**

Sample #1 **What type of writing is this? Please label it (research paper, poem, article, etc).** *	Playbill article–includes research elements
Please upload the file here:	playbill_article_dying_for_parts.docx 151.57 KB · DOCX
Or copy and paste the URL here.	
Why did you write this? Please (briefly) explain the context, assignment, and/or course. *	I was taking a Dramaturgy course and our final project involved us dramaturging a play. In addition to all the research I compiled, I had to write a sample playbill article that an audience would read before a show.
Why did you choose this piece to submit? *	The piece is a mix of an article, opinion and research paper. While I was delirious when I first wrote it, I find it's not as bad as I remembered it.
Sample #2 (optional) **What type of writing is this? Please label it (research paper, poem, article, etc).**	Research Paper
Please upload the file here:	fobdramaturgicalpacket.pdf 3.69 MB · PDF
Or copy and paste the URL here.	
Why did you write this? Please note context/course/assignment.	I was part of the Honors Humanities Living Learning Program and this was my final research project.
Why did you choose this piece to submit?	It was a two year independent research project that I presented sophomore year.
Sample #3 (optional) **What type of writing is this? Please label it (research paper, poem, article, etc).**	Business Analysis

Please upload the file here:

███████ individual_assignment_.docx
195.81 KB · DOCX

Or copy and paste the URL here.

Why did you write this? Please note context/course/assignment.

This was an assignment for a case in my sales management class.

Why did you choose this piece to submit?

I did well on the assignment and it shows I can be concise and to the point.

Sample #1

Grant Application

What type of writing is this? Please label it (article, proposal, presentation, etc). *

Please upload the file here.

2012_a2a_grant_application.doc
30.50 KB · DOC

Or copy and paste the URL here.

Why did you write this? Please be as specific as possible. *

I am currently president of the Undergraduate Theatre Artists Society and last year I created a new program to bring in young alumni to talk to current theatre students. I wanted the program to continue so I applied for a grant.

Why did you choose this piece to submit? *

I got the grant so presumably it was a good proposal! I am also proud of starting this program in the first place.

Sample #2 (optional)

Proposal

What type of writing is this? Please label it (article, proposal, presentation, etc).

Please upload the file here:

_student_season_proposal.docx
64.31 KB · DOCX

Or copy and paste the URL here.

Why did you write this? Please explain.

I am part of a task force creating a new student season for the theatre department.

Why did you choose this piece to submit?

While I was part of a committee, 90% of the ideas were mine and I wrote the entire proposal that was accepted by the department.

Sample #3 (optional)   Stage Management Paperwork

**What type of writing is this? Please label it
(article, proposal, presentation, etc).**

Please upload the file here: 📄 amnd_ch.sc_breakdown.pdf
                                                  54.53 KB · PDF

Or copy and paste the URL here.

Why did you write this? Please explain.   I want to be a professional stage manager and part of it involves staying
                                                  organized--for myself and the show. I create many forms throughout
                                                  the process for myself and the director with potentially pertinent
                                                  information about the show.

Why did you choose this piece to submit?   I'm proud that the document is aesthetically pleasing, succinct, and
                                                  contains a lot of information.

Sample #1   Study Abroad Blog

**What type of writing is this? Please label it
(poem, blog post, review, etc). ***

Please upload the file here:

Or copy and paste the URL here.   ███████████████.blogspot.com/

Why did you write this? Please explain. *   This was to partially fulfill a scholarship requirement but mainly so my
                                                  family could know what I was up to when I was abroad for a semester
                                                  and for myself to record the experience.

Why did you choose this piece to submit? *   It's one of the few pieces of personal writing that I've done.

Sample #2 (optional)

**What type of writing is this? Please label it
(poem, blog post, review, etc).**

Please upload the file here.

Or copy and paste the URL here.

Why did you write this? Please explain.

Why did you choose this piece to submit?

Sample #3 (optional)

What type of writing is this? Please label it

285

(poem, blog post, review, etc).

Please upload the file here.

Or copy and paste the URL here.

Why did you write this? Please explain.

Why did you choose this piece to submit?

What type of writing is this? Please label it (lyrics, poster, advertisement, etc).   Cover Letter

Please upload the file here.   centerstage_cover_letter.docx
132.12 KB · DOCX

Or copy and paste the URL here.

What category does this most closely fit into?   Extracurricular

Why did you write or create this? Please explain.   I'm applying for stage management apprenticeship jobs. I am very goal oriented--I rarely write without an explicit purpose. But I like to try and marry some artistic flow in my writing with brevity.

Why did you choose this piece to submit?   It's the piece of writing I've been spending the most time on as of late. I am decently proud of it, and hopefully employers will like it too!

Name   ██████████

Email   ██████████████

Name   ████████

Created		Updated
4 Mar 2013	██████████	**4 Mar 2013**
9:59:38 AM	IP Address	10:24:23 AM
PUBLIC		PUBLIC

Complete

Appendix D: Interview Protocol

<u>Before interviews</u>
1. Email interviewee 2 days prior to ask them to re-read their submitted pieces before coming in for the interview, if possible. Attach student's submissions.
2. Review students' texts myself.

<u>During interviews (45-90 min total)</u>

Materials
- Consent form, general protocol with questions, student-specific notes (if applicable), audio recorder, student pseudonym, $10 cash.
- Blank/unmarked (hard) copies of texts and/or texts on iPad, present and available

Consent Process
- Offer consent form.
- Step out of the room to "fill up my water bottle" while participants reads and chooses whether to participate.

Goals (say aloud)
1. to see ways that these very different writings might or might not relate to or inform one another;
2. to see how the different versions of you play out in these different pieces;
3. to see how learning from one piece of writing may have transferred (or been re-applied) in another—or not.

Interview Procedure

A. Ask student to choose one piece (from their array) they wrote for non-school reasons. Provide the student with a pen and tell him/her she can annotate if she'd like. Ask the following questions about that piece:

1. What motivated you to write this?
2. Can you talk me through this piece, paragraph by paragraph (up to one page)? What are you doing in the paragraph? Why are you doing that?
3. Who are you acting like or who are you trying to be in this piece? What character are you taking on?
4. How did you figure out how to write this? What other writing or things you've done in the past is it similar to or different from, if any?
5. Can you point out specific phrases that make you sound the way you wanted to sound? Or that make you sound "in character"?
6. Where did you learn to write that phrase or to sound like that? What were you drawing on?
7. Is there anything you would change in here, now that time has passed, to improve it?

B. Ask student to choose one piece s/he wrote for school.

Ask same questions as above; alter slightly when necessary so they make sense.

C. If time, ask student to choose any other piece s/he would like to talk about (can repeat as many times as time will allow; make sure 15 minutes remain for parts D-F).

Ask same questions as above; alter slightly when necessary so they make sense.

D. Place two or three pieces alongside each other; keep others on the table as well.

1. How, if at all, are these two/three pieces related to one another (besides the topic or being by/about you)? Or are they unrelated?
2. Can you point out specific places where you may have drawn on prior knowledge or writing experience? Places you might have drawn on something you understood from one of the other pieces?
3. Are there any ways that these pieces of writing have influenced each other? Or not? Other things you have written since? Are there things you learned or knew from doing one that you could or would apply to the other or something else? Or not?
4. Can you rank the "characters" of each of these from easiest to hardest to play? Why is it easier or harder (or were you more or less successful) to take on one character rather than another? How did you figure out how to take on the particular role you did?
5. Are there any other resources that you drew on to write these (that we haven't mentioned yet)?

E. Demographics

1. If I write about you in my study, I have to describe you, demographics-wise— and also include things that generally give an overview of who you are. Anything you'd like me to include or say there?
2. You gave X as your pseudonym during the group discussion you participated in. Are you comfortable with that still?

F. Closing

The main goal of this conversation was to talk about how your writings across your life relate to one another, or not; how you figured out how to write things, especially things that are not for school; and how you may have applied things you learned in one context to other contexts. Is there anything else important you can think of or that we left out?

*Give participant $10 cash.

<u>After interviews</u>
1. Send follow-up thank you email
2. Mark $ exchange in spreadsheet.

Appendix E: Codebook

Initial Categories

Category	Description	Example 1	Example 2
Description of text or writing experiences; provides context of writing experience.	Here the author is describing something s/he wrote, explaining the rhetorical situation, assignment, exigency, etc. She might also talk about her feelings about the experience. She explains why she made the rhetorical choices she did but without evaluating them (see category 3 for evaluation).	Yeah, so Honors 269 is a death penalty course, and this one 248H was incarceration, so then … this one literally, all of these honors seminars are like pick a topic that's sort of related, so and this one, the death penalty class, this was a mid-term paper, but she said she wanted something that's, you know, related, but doesn't exactly have to be the death penalty. But something that's related to the topic. And she gave us some, you know, like which ones we could possibly do. But then, I was just, I think this one I was probably just reading about it or something. [Erika]	Diddy: Yeah, it was like a review. Like, the station has like a Tumblr. It's like … I don't think they'd done a review in forever, which is why they asked me. Yeah, it's like one review in like a year. So … [laughter] Heather: Who reads the Tumblr? Like other people who are friends with the radio station, or like … Diddy: Yeah, they're like … it's a pretty old station. So there are like a lot of alumni, like still like kind of listening across the world, yeah. It's pretty cool.
Figuring Out how to compose a text	Here the author is describing how s/he figured out how to write a certain text. This includes tools she uses (model texts, instructions from teacher), human sources of learning (friends, roommates, conferences with instructor, writing center), past or current experiences she drew on, and classes she took or specific lessons she learned from school.	Yuri: So I, I put myself in like the … the shoes of sort of like a researcher, like a scientist, and I asked myself, you know, "what would they be looking for?" So, I decided to pull on three main experiences. The first of course was my previous lab experience, as a research assistant on campus. I … I, and it's um, I feel like it was essentially enough to say, you know, "oh I've worked there." I feel like they're really asking for what did you get out of it, what can, how are you better off than when you started. And so, I decided to focus more on the sort of skills I learned, the technical knowledge I learned. The second one I learned was as a microbiology TA. And that I focused on sort of the communication aspects, the lesson planning aspects. And then the final one I wanted to think, emphasize, was sort of my involvement with entrepreneurship programs on campus. And the idea was that because I could think creatively, I have an innovative mindset, and if you're doing research, you want to have that in case problems come up or you want to find a new direction for research. So those are the three I decided to focus on. [Yuri]	I had to re-write our constitution for…a club I'm a part of. And I had no clue how the person had done it before. I was like, I don't really know what's supposed to happen…there's not really…I didn't have a template. So I was just kinda was like, let me Google search some like…how to write a constitution [laughter]. So, that's pretty much what I did, and I just kinda used what I, I was like, okay, I guess that kinda works. And just really making sure that the language is like inclusive, and not like…excluding anybody or any group of people or anything like that. And then I had a bunch of people re-read it to make sure that…and I was like does this look okay? [Bethany]

Evaluation of one's text (and possibly why)	Here the author judges his/her text and evaluates its relative success. This may be specific, where an author critiques a specific phrase, word choice, or research source; or it may be vague, where the author expresses embarrassment at something she wrote 3 years ago or pride at something she did well. The author might also make specific suggestions for revision.	Um, if I rewrote it for myself, it would be a lot longer. There would be a track-by-track. And I would probably like try to find the little like Easter eggs, these like, little things that people don't really notice. I'd kind of like go through each track, and like probably use better adjectives.	Silver: Um, well, one thing I would do is actually, like, reword it a little differently and make it more concise and the next thing I will do is actually, um … I like it though because it, it comes to life, but I would actually like a lot more people to read it and see, get some ideas from them so I could know how to change it better. Because it explains so much that I wanted it to explain and I used certain words like eradicate, but I definitely would reword it so that it would be more concise and just put in some more famous people.
Relational Reasoning between two or more texts; a text and a concept; or a text and an experience (see below)	Here the author explains how two or more texts are related to one another, or how one text relates to an experience or (seemingly unrelated) concept. The student may or may not attribute their ability to write something to these relationships. She might compare or contrast, practice metageneric reasoning or a fortiori reasoning, or engage in "not talk." She might express frustration at the difference between writing in different scenarios or might discuss the differences and similarities with a neutral or positive tone.	I think they were similar because I had to, in both of them, kind-of explain my decisions [30.00], you know for the fellowship essay explain why I wanted to pursue a certain career path and why I was going to get my master's degree in those different things. And then for the white paper explaining why I thought this, you know, public policy or this action would be the best for the public and then how to go about…like, why I thought it would be best and how to go about implementing it, like that, so. Both of them are really like making a decision and explaining why, why I thought it was the best. [Nkem]	My relationship between the two things I wrote was kind-of similar to that cause I'm going to talk about confidence in writing, which is something that I hadn't developed in high school because I was kind-of like wishy-washy…during my AP tests, that all my AP teachers was like you just have to pretend like you know history. Like, if you have to make something up, then make it up and be very confident about it. So, at work, I'm not confrontational, like I'm not very aggressive, but it was getting to the point where I had to write notes like, guess what, if you don't clean up after your shift, I'm not going to put you on the schedule. Like that's it. Like, I have the power to do that. But with film writing it's the same kind of confidence. Like you have believe what you're saying. And a lot of it, like I write a lot of literary things too, like a lot of it is just making things up. Like, I could say they painted the room this color because it was warm, and that, like, helps develop open discussion [laughter]…or maybe they had leftover paint from the next room [laughter]. But you have to just— you have to just believe in the stuff that you're just making up. [Daisy]
Stance/Ethos (see *Ethos Source* below)	Here the author discusses how she positions herself *vis a vis* her reader and tries to take on a credible tone for the purpose.	When I write for myself there's, there's always, without exception, there's always a paragraph that is a qualifying paragraph. Um, that is always like, "Look, I'm in college," or, "Look, I'm 21." Or,	For like the email. I don't really know where I got that from. Maybe like presidential speeches, you know what I mean? That's exactly where I got it from, is presidential speeches. That's exactly, yeah,

	She might discuss tone, voice, register, credibility, audience, and/or style.	"I don't have any professional experience here." So I think that having to do that in school definitely came over into me writing personally because I'm just like so aware of it now, which is probably not like … I mean, it's probably a good and a bad thing. Like being aware of like your lowly stature in a conversation (laughing). [CJ]	that's exactly where I got it from. Is after catastrophic events, the President comes out and tries to show, you know, we're actually safe…Oh my gosh. That's really funny. Replace "I'm writing this email to" with like, "I'm here to speak today" and "because I know that this meeting was incredibly hard" with "because the country has faced this traumatic event," and like appeal to the people and be like, "I know everyone's going through this right now." I thought I really knew, that I knew all my writing, but then I looked at it again. It's like, "what was I talking about?" I was just thinking of…my parents put on presidential speeches when I was younger. That's definitely where I got this from. Now we know…but really, after a traumatic event especially…because everyone's going to go and try to turn on their TV and like having this person…because it's someone to look up to, someone who you can trust, and well if you trust the person…so that's what I was trying to go for. [Izzy]
Anticipated **Future Use** of learning (from a given writing experience)	Here the author discusses things she learned from a certain writing experience, anticipates things she will be able to do more effectively from having had the experience, or identifies a gap between her present writing experiences and her anticipated future writing.	I feel like all the time, when I write about anything related to Africa, it's always related to subjects … or immigration as well … related to subjects that I actually want to see happen in the future, so sometimes I look at it like can I submit this as, like, I don't know, an act or something … a real policy or something? So sometimes I want it to be more in line, more technical and in line with what you would need to submit if you were trying to pass an act or something like that. I think I'm happy with it as far as being just for academics, but like, I think my mind is always set to, like, I want this to be in line with something that you could actually submit to congress and try to see, you know, what will happen with it. It's not like … I don't have a problem with it as an academic paper. I mean there's probably some sentence structures or something, but I think when I	I'm taking a [bioengineering] grad class right now. … we have four assignments in the semester … well first of all we have to provide a concise summary in one paragraph, so that's just useful in general because like, I guess you can just rephrase the abstract but it takes a little bit more understanding that that. So like A, you have to critically read like this 10-page article on you know your current research in bioengineering design and so then you have to give a summary … then lastly, the most significant part is like looking beyond that and … or talking about the side effects that author has considered but also proposing other side effects and implications of the work they did not consider, just based on your understanding of the design that you just talked about right before that. That part was especially really challenging because, I mean it's just application but I thought it was really interesting. … I liked it though because…we got

		read them again, like I want them to be so professional, like I would just kind of think like how could I use this as a backbone for me writing something more professional and actually getting it into some type of government action type of thing. [Nkem]	into a class discussion about it afterwards. Like people present their papers like a couple people each day … and in those times it was interesting to see like how people could directly criticize a body of scholarly work and it really encouraged us to not take anything that we read for granted and actually think completely independently. I don't know, I feel like it will help me grow as a scientist.
Theories of Writing	Here the author explains her big picture theoretical views of and takeaways about writing. This includes beliefs on how writing works and/or how the author learned (and is learning) to do it. She might offer commentary on genre, audience, concision, revision, horizontal transfer, personal connections, illocutionary effect, medium, field, and more.	So basically, you just see things in real life, and then you just imitate them for whatever you're doing. It's just trying to be aware of the tone that other people use and the style that they have and then just imitating it. That's like all writing is. [Izzy]	Yeah, I think writing starts from the moment you like start communicating with people. Like when … you don't like learn grammar first thing. You kind of just learn to talk to people. And I guess grammar's like a tool that you kind of learn later on, and it just enhances. So I think what school does is like … I guess during like the formative years, like it might like point out things that you need to notice. And it helps … it basically helps you catch up, and brings you up to speed with the rest of the world. Which is especially happening now in college; like all these classes, to write research papers.

But I still … I think everything is just a personal development. And like writing is just one form of communication. Like a lot of people, from what I've noticed, or from my perspective at least, seem to think about it as like a subject, like English. And … but they don't think about it like when they're writing e-mail or something. And it's like the same case. It's just, it's all a form of communication. |
| Explicit comments on **Transfer** (see below) | Here the author explicitly discusses vertical transfer, explaining how writing one text taught him/her a specific skill or ability that she transferred to a future or concurrent writing situation. | [My non-academic writing] helps me analyze more deeply. My creative writing outside, whether it's a personal narrative or poetry or whatever, I think it helps me think outside the box more and be a little bit more creative with word choice and how I write. That can help me academically. If I get stuck, I just try to think of something else. [Eleanor] | I think definitely the work outside of school has influenced my schoolwork because starting my freshman year, I got an internship with Easter Seals Disability Service and I was doing event planning for them, so I did a lot of communication. I did a lot of grant writing for funds for the events and stuff like that and that, like they expect you to be on a professional level. And I was a freshman, so I had no idea what I was doing, so I had to figure that out really quickly, but then I got to keep that, everything professional that I |

			learned from that first year, and that kind of made everything much easier, like as I got up to job applications or scholarship applications…I'm just used to communicating to a more professional community [now]. [Catherine]
Process	Here the author discusses her process and habits as a writer, including possible changes in the writing process over time or due to specific triggers. This might also include collaborative writing practices.	I'll talk about the first time I ever wrote on the blog because that was first time writing for this specific community blog. I mean really the way I figured out how to do it was I just, you know, sort of like word vomited, just like wrote as much as I could, fashioned it together in a way that I thought made sense and then just sent it to like three or four people and was like does this make sense and how can I make it better. And obviously the editor of the community blog had the most valuable insight because he was the one that was definitely going to post it. But other people's feedback really helped too. It was hard because this blog doesn't have … like the blogs on there don't have like a set form, so it's not like I can copy off of someone else's or you know look at someone else's style. It's very individual, so getting that … several different people's feedback was helpful. [CJ]	One thing is that going to the writing center has helped me tremendous. And it just helped me to word certain things that I am digging in my head and putting down on paper. So it helped me to be like word things a certain way. So that's been tremendously very helpful. The other thing is that our professor give us an outline.

And all I was trying to do is to get words to fit the outline. So the writing center helped me to come up, think of words and ways to put things and then the outline actually tells me this is the way that section should be put together. [Silver] |

List of Codes (applied in Dedoose)
Note: parent codes come first and are italicized; child codes follow and are not italicized.

Parent Code: *Ethos* Source

Code	Description	Central Example	Peripheral Example
Ethos Source	Student discusses or speculates about the possible ways she could have developed the "character" or learned to project the credibility needed in a given writing situation.	For like the email. I don't really know where I got that from. Maybe like presidential speeches, you know what I mean? That's exactly where I got it from, is presidential speeches. That's exactly, yeah, that's exactly where I got it from. Is after catastrophic events, the President comes out and tries to show, you know, we're actually safe…Oh my gosh. That's really funny. Replace "I'm writing this email to" with like, "I'm here to speak today" and "because I know that this meeting was incredibly hard" with "because the country has faced this traumatic event," and like appeal to the people and be like, "I know everyone's	I'm writing as a person who has gone through the same things they are going through right now. So I'm like, I know this…it's not like I'm an expert, but expert in the sense that I'm doing this too. It's not a teacher writing it or a professional writing, it's like hey, I'm like you, I've gone through what you are going through right now. [Erika]

		going through this right now."	
		I thought I really knew, that I knew all my writing, but then I looked at it again. It's like, "what was I talking about?" I was just thinking of…my parents put on presidential speeches when I was younger. That's definitely where I got this from. Now we know…but really, after a traumatic event especially…because everyone's going to go and try to turn on their TV and like having this person…because it's someone to look up to, someone who you can trust, and well if you trust the person…so that's what I was trying to go for. [Izzy]	
"Lived Personal Experience"	Student explains that she was able to assume a certain tone, character, or stance in her writing because of other *experiences* in her life that informed her of how to project that *ethos*.	I'm writing as a person who has gone through the same things they are going through right now. So I'm like, I know this…it's not like I'm an expert, but expert in the sense that I'm doing this too. It's not a teacher writing it or a professional writing it, it's like hey, I'm like you, I've gone through what you are going through right now. [Erika]	So when I write for myself there's, there's always, without exception, there's always a paragraph that is a qualifying paragraph. That is always like, "Look, I'm in college," or "Look, I'm 21." Or, "I don't have any professional experience here." So I think having to do that in school definitely came over into me writing personally because I'm just like so aware of it now, which is probably not like…I mean, it's probably a good and a bad thing. Like being aware of your lowly stature in a conversation [laughing]. [CJ]
Ethopoieia	Student explains that she developed a certain *ethos* or stance by imitating a real person or character, either for her own ends or to serve as the mouthpiece for a larger body or organization.	[The Assistant Secretary of Administration] is an actual [position]… the federal government has one. So I [found] out what that position is...then I kind of was able to move forward from that." Hopefully if you're working all in the same agency, you all have some type of common ground as far as your outlook on policy issues, so that's the hope for it anyway. And it should sound very professional so people can kind of rally behind your suggestion or your recommendation…you don't really talk in first person, but kind of like, since they know it's coming from you, they know that you're interjecting, like, this is what I think is the best possible solution even though you don't say, "I think," or "I." [Nkem]	I'm having a lot of trouble with it [pre-med packet]. Like, I'm still working on my pre-health packet and everything…it's a lot more show-offy. It's like, it goes against everything that I kind of personally strive to be or stand for. So it's like, it's a little heart-breaking, writing something like this. But I do it. Because I don't really have any choice. […] Yeah, to be honest, I've been lying a lot. I feel really bad. Like, when I go to talk to my pre-med advisor, I have to put on a complete façade. Like, I don't wear the same clothes, even. Yeah, I mean like…I guess I've been changing up my style. I've been wearing more button-downs now. [Diddy]
Imagined	Student gleans strategies that help her develop and project a credible *ethos* by embodying an imagined person	For like the email. I don't really know where I got that from. Maybe like presidential speeches, you know what I mean? That's exactly where I got it from, is presidential speeches. That's exactly, yeah, that's exactly where I got it from. Is	One thing I kind-of realized for this [pre-med application packet], like in most other things, this is a means to an end….You kind of have to work your way to the top…because like, for example,

or situation; or by drawing an analogy to an imagined person or situation and extracting relevant principles from it.	after catastrophic events, the President comes out and tries to show, you know, we're actually safe…Oh my gosh. That's really funny. Replace "I'm writing this email to" with like, "I'm here to speak today" and "because I know that this meeting was incredibly hard" with "because the country has faced this traumatic event," and like appeal to the people and be like, "I know everyone's going through this right now." I thought I really knew, that I knew all my writing, but then I looked at it again. It's like, "what was I talking about?" I was just thinking of…my parents put on presidential speeches when I was younger. That's definitely where I got this from. Now we know…but really, after a traumatic event especially…because everyone's going to go and try to turn on their TV and like having this person…because it's someone to look up to, someone who you can trust, and well if you trust the person…so that's what I was trying to go for. [Izzy]	there are people that say the world is ending, and they're like bearded, and they have nothing to substantiate it, with their little cardboard signs. But if someone goes through the motions, does this kind of stuff, gets to the top, goes on TV as…a televangelist or something…yeah, then they have all the power. There are masses cheering for them, and they might be corrupting people's minds, they might be enriching people's minds. So…this is like going through the motions. Because I mean, I want to be a doctor. I don't want to do half the stuff I'm doing right now. Although I'm learning from it, and it's a great time learning from it…I guess I just have to be patient, and deal with it. [Diddy]	

Parent Code: Relational Reasoning

Definition: Student relates writing tasks or experiences that would otherwise seem unrelated. She may draw connections in any number of ways. See child codes below.

Code	Description	Central Example	Peripheral Example
"Not Talk"	Student identifies ways that two or more writing tasks or experiences are *both* similar *and* different. She may describe ways they are alike, but not completely; or different, but not entirely.	The difference between a blog and a policy piece. Audience is obviously the first one. You're speaking to somebody who already knows what you're talking about with a policy piece. You can't assume that with the blog, definitely. Of course one's a lot more formal, it's very informal to write in a blog setting, especially with a live blog on an election night, the live blog is all opinion, pretty much. The focus is on what your thoughts are and the policy piece has nothing to do with opinion. At the end you choose between a variety of options but you're expected to do so based on the rational weighing of costs and benefits and explain how you got there. It's not supposed to be your personal opinion. […] I forgot to mention about both…actually both my policy pieces and blogs, you're supposed to put the conclusion at the first…at the beginning. [Preston]	It's like the similar situations where I was saying about that journalism class I really struggled with where basically a professor going to like the front of the class and just be yelling out quotes and you have to basically just write them all down and write a story in like 30 minutes, basically and then turn it in at the end of class. And it's like super stressful, but um I also like I said I'm interested in sports so I'm a sports writer. So I got to cover the ACC semis for our soccer team this semester. So like I was at the field and I was essentially like live tweeting the game and like showing action like play-by-play through Twitter and it was so much fun. It's like the same environment where people are like reading over your shoulder and like all these people from watching me post are like oh that's awesome type of thing. Like you know, reading over your shoulder and stuff and it's like the same setting as where my professor is like reading over my shoulder, but it's a different setting. I'm more excited

			there.
			But it's totally also really different though too because like I said it's academic, so I know there's a beginning and a middle and the end type of thing where if you don't put it, lay it out in that way, like it's not correct on the journalistic standard, but for like Twitter, you know, it's more like open and free. You can say things and you have people re-tweeting you and like, you know, messaging you. Like oh thanks for, you know, saying what's going on in the game and stuff and it's very similar but also very different, but they're both forms of journalism. [Charley]
Analogy	Student draws a non-obvious comparison between two writing tasks or experiences, or between a writing task and an experience unrelated to writing. The student may explicitly point out a common feature that both elements share or she may simply compare them.	<u>Two writing experiences:</u> I'm going to talk about confidence in writing, which is something that I hadn't developed in high school because I was kind-of wishy-washy. […] So, at work [Ben & Jerry's], I'm not confrontational, I'm not very aggressive, but it was getting to the point where I had to write notes like, guess what, if you don't clean up after your shift, I'm not going to put you on the schedule. Like that's it. Like, I have the power to do that. But with film writing it's the same kind of confidence. Like you have believe what you're saying. And a lot of it, like I write a lot of literary things too, like a lot of it is just making things up…but you have to just—you have to just believe in the stuff that you're just making up. [Daisy] <u>Writing and unrelated:</u> I think the structure was good. I really like, just looking back on it, I think I did a good job, with the organization…it felt a little bit like a roller coaster ride. Like, there was the peaks, where it was like, really just gruesome descriptions. Like from a book where I … I guess the reader kind of gets kind of a little bit of a rush. And then lower portions, which are like more analytical. And you're quoting a source. [Diddy]	<u>Two writing experiences:</u> I think they were similar because I had to, in both of them, kind-of explain my decisions, you know for the fellowship essay explain why I wanted to pursue a certain career path and why I was going to get my master's degree in those different things. And then for the white paper explaining why I thought this, you know, public policy or this action would be the best for the public and then how to go about…like, why I thought it would be best and how to go about implementing it, like that, so. Both of them are really like making a decision and explaining why, why I thought it was the best. [Nkem] <u>Writing and unrelated:</u> So I just kind of like look through it [essay in draft stages], and I try to condense. Like, I think the way this relates is, I used to do computer programming in high school. So what happens is like, for code, it's … you're talking it out, and um, it's a form of communication. It isn't like this, where you're trying to influence someone's opinion, or this, where you're trying to inform someone, or that, where you're trying to inform someone again.
Antithesis	Student compares two writing experiences by framing them as antithetical to, or opposites of, one another. Note: this does not means the	I think the two biggest differences is the analytical, like essay writing … so there has to be a conclusion at the end, like there has to be a right answer and a point which is like … can be very confining and frustrating at times because … especially when there like isn't like	It is living in a separate universe a lot of times, but I feel like when I'm actually reflecting on, you know, my personal experiences, it does sort of show through the UTA portfolio. In that, I actually want to draw upon my past experiences, and elaborate on them a lot more. Maybe take a little different

	experiences are unrelated; rather it means that they are related in that they are opposites.	a right answer and you just like weighed some very good alternatives and then you have to decide and be like, so we should do this! With blogging it's nicer because you … what you do more often than not is you just like present options and you're like … so you always want to have sort of a tying in like of the possibilities and potential but it's more of a like what if we did this? Let's talk about, like let's talk about it in the comment section. You like try and have, like push some interaction as well. But you're not telling people what you should do, you're presenting options and opening up more like a discussion or a debate, which I like a lot more. [CJ]	direction. I really want to try and integrate it a little bit more into the academic stuff, just to sort of get that more vivid imagery and more interesting word choice in there. But, it's not … it's in a separate world, but there are sort of influences in some of the academic reflective writings that I do. [Yuri]
A Fortiori	Student compares two experiences but points out that one is "even more so" than the other, or one is a stronger or more salient example of the feature that the two experiences share.	This website is definitely like my research papers because I … well, it's even worse than the research papers because I actually have to make it legitimate because people are actually reading this, relying on the information. These ones, I don't really care if they're not really relying on the information. You know … it's like they read, and go "oh my gosh" and that's it. But this one, they're actually reading it to get information, so I have to really make sure that it's legitimate. [Erika]	I guess two big things for me and they're super different, but more similar than I thought at first is, I had to do a really big research paper for Psych 300 where essentially you get into like a group of three and you just pick a random topic. And you like narrow it down to a research question, you write out like a full-blown report, but you don't do any of the research on it. And then writing lyrics for a song in Mockapella and -- I mean obviously they're really different because the one's a lot more formal, it's very academic, you get graded for it. The other one's a lot less formal, it's super, you know, very creative, but they're both group work. They're both like, learning to work in groups and when to take someone's opinion into account and when to, you know -- when you think you should override it and then when you get overridden anyway, how to deal with that.
			Sometimes writing the lyrics for Mockapella is almost more difficult because you have to like keep within the -- like the lyrics of the song, make it singable, make it relevant and current and have shock value, but not be so distasteful that people are like, run away (laughing). And then of course with the big, formal, academic writing you have to make sure you follow all the different rules and do all the research, but, I mean I don't know. [Nora]
Metagenre	Student groups two or more writing experiences into a larger umbrella	For my…like all of my writing I feel like I'm very aware of who I'm writing to because I feel like most of my writing I'm trying get something	Both of my pieces that I just talked about were reactionary to my semester, for the past 8 months or 9 months or so I've been traveling a lot, and going

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category based on shared rhetorical moves, features, or purpose. When a student names a metagenre, it connects the writing experiences based on meaningful, not superficial, similarities. NOTE: differs from analogy (above) in that it's more developed and focuses on grouping writings together in some larger category rather than simply identifying a shared feature or comparing them with another related activity or concept.	from them. So like, I'd be really aware of like, what they want and how they view it. So like, with the examples that I gave, so the grant. So like there, you know. They're about to give me $2000, like I need to be able to really articulate why what I'm saying is important. And like who I am and what I bring to the table, and think about what they – what they would want from me, and like what-, why they should give me this money. And it's really similar to the research article, I'm trying to get that published, I'm trying to tell them that this is something that you should, like, really consider. And even the first thing I said, the email, even that I'm trying to get them to do something. So it's really being aware of who I'm writing to and what they want, I feel like it's really – it's really an important aspect of all the different types of writing that I do. [Izzy]	through a lot of mental changes, and kind of getting angry with myself for various reasons of the way I used to think and how I'm thinking now. Um, and so the museum piece was reactionary because I…I was one of the old- -- I was one of two seniors in this program of 13, I was one of two guys, I was the only one from a farm in Maryland, it was really like very, I felt secluded. And so this was my first way to outlet into writing in an academic fashion in the semester. And then on the train, it was kind of the same thing, where I was like, all of these people are only on this train to go to DC, and watch the inauguration, and like yes, I would love to be at the inauguration, but I'm an introvert, and I don't like people. [Laughter] And it didn't help that the train had three extra cars and was packed to the brim, unlike the train from LA to Chicago, which had three fewer cars and maybe half full. Um, so both of the pieces were fueled by some sort of internal pressure, you know, kind of bust the cap out of it. [Robert]

Parent Code: Transfer

Code	Description	Central Example	Peripheral Example
Transfer	Student discusses moving, repurposing, or recontextualing her knowledge from one situation to another.	see above	see above
Vertical	Student describes experience of transfer as forward-moving, where she draws on knowledge from a past situation and re-uses or re-deploys it in present or future situation.	I think definitely the work outside of school has influenced my schoolwork because starting my freshman year, I got an internship with Easter Seals Disability Service and I was doing event planning for them, so I did a lot of communication. I did a lot of grant writing for funds for the events and stuff like that and that, like they expect you to be on a professional level. And I was a freshman, so I had no idea what I was doing, so I had to figure that out really quickly, but then I got to keep that, everything professional that I learned from that first year, and that kind of made everything much easier, like as I got up to job applications or scholarship applications…I'm just used to communicating to a more professional community [now]. [Catherine]	I feel like since I journal a lot, or blog a lot, the journals that I have to write for my RA class are really easy to do. It's supposed to be two pages long and it's really easy for me to just write what I feel because I do that on a regular basis anyway. It definitely makes it easier to write in school. [Tara]
Horizontal	Student recognizes similarities between dissimilar rhetorical	Last semester I was on co-op with Johnson & Johnson and at our midterm and the final eval, we had to write up	Many different types of writing overlap. For example, resumes, cover letters,

| | contexts and the potential re-use and transformation of knowledge based on those similarities; student forges links *across* contexts, making connections between multiple contexts that may relate in ways only the student would see. | what we've done. So we were trying to summarize this as the last thing that they'll see in your folder before you graduate and they want them to hire you. So like how do you sell yourself and tell your story. In that experience I was making a list of all the things that I had done and trying to capture both the quantitative and the qualitative things that I accomplished and the process I had done to do that, the references that I could refer to. So trying to be concise but clear but also thorough.

And then around the same time, I was appealing a parking ticket that DOTS [Department of Transportation Services] had given me and, ironically that felt equally as important because I was so upset that I'd gotten parking ticket in the first place since I tried to ask them where I was allowed to park. So that appeal was very chronological, it was very much like, this is what happened, this is what I did, and this is why you shouldn't make me pay this. Both experiences were very much summarizing an event, summarizing a situation, but one was more me having the voice of like "I'm proud of this, look at all these awesome things that happened" and trying to sell them, whereas the other one was trying to persuade someone to not make me pay a ticket. So similar goals but because of who it was for and how I felt about it, my writing was very different. [Margaret] | application essays, and scholarship essays all are formal types of writing aimed at an unknown audience responsible for judging the writer as a person based on his or her writing. Additionally, various kinds of analytical writing, literature reviews, reports, and research papers require similar skills. Media writing, including news articles, op-eds, press releases, and blogs have many similarities in purpose, style, and audience. [survey] |

Parent Code: Rhetorical Velocity

Code	Description	Central Example	Peripheral Example
Rhetorical Velocity	Students become attuned to or learn about *ethos* and rhetorical self-presentation by considering the ways their work may be read, understood, or re-appropriated by unintended audiences, usually internet-based.	Preston's blog post on Somaliland was re-posted on dozens of websites, some in English and some in Arabic. Preston was surprised that this happened: "the language is clearly speaking to an American audience…speaking to a low level of knowledge about the area. It's basic information."

Response (written): "I wasn't paid anything for this. It is an opinion piece, and its original purpose in the original (American) site that I published it in [url] was just to let American audiences know they should pay attention to and research the issue." | I think technology has definitely had a big impact on how people view the act of writing. The audience is so much broader and the implications of what you're writing are much larger, and people on a regular basis think about how to define themselves through their words…it ultimately has to promote a culture of self-awareness, it absolutely must. [James] |

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