Course Designs

Eng 7980: Learning Transfer in History and Theories of Composition

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Course Description

ENG 7980: History and Theories of Composition (HTC) is a course required for all MA and PhD students in rhetoric and composition at Ohio University.[1] This section of HTC was designed with two specific goals in mind. The first was to introduce students to multiple theories of composition, and the second was to not only teach but also to facilitate learning transfer. Ultimately, students would each create their own "theory" of composition. Class content was designed to connect to contexts outside of the immediate classroom setting—specifically to students' other classes, research projects, and teaching. Class assignments were designed to draw outside content into the class as well as to push class content into teaching and research.

This course design has been co-written by the instructor of HTC (Ryan) and four graduate students who took the class in fall 2017 (David, Sue, Courtney, and Chris). What follows is an extension of class content. David, Sue, Courtney, and Chris helped Ryan to reflect on the curriculum and update it based on what they learned about learning transfer.

Institutional Context

The curriculum for both the MA and PhD is diverse, including content on teaching, research methods, and theory. Both programs include courses outside of rhetoric and composition, such as an introduction to English studies, a literature course, and a course in critical theory. The programs have also been moving toward a specialization in cultural rhetorics.

The decision to study and to facilitate transfer in HTC came from Ryan's observation that students often perceive content in different courses as unconnected. In particular, as a scholar in rhetoric and composition, Ryan often saw connections between his research, theoretical readings, and classroom practice, but he also observed that graduate students struggled to make those same connections. Ryan hoped that HTC might help graduate students do three

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1. You can find the syllabi and course calendars for each Course Design essay on the *Composition Studies* website at https://compstudiesjournal.com/.

things: recognize that a tension was taking place between their classes taken and taught; recognize connections across scholarly contexts; and seek out—or even create—those connections. Ryan saw this facilitation as an opportunity to connect the "delivered, lived, and experienced curricula" of graduate education as explored by Kara Taczak and Kathleen Blake Yancey (140) and designed the course content to include transfer from the very first day and to build toward more robust and critical connections as the semester progressed. The course highlighted learning transfer early in the semester, but students did not do readings on transfer theory until roughly the final third of the class.

Theoretical Rationale

The rationale for the course design grew out of Ryan's research into learning transfer at the undergraduate level (Shepherd) and the connections that learning transfer theory has with scholarship on teaching at the graduate level. Many studies have explored learning transfer models in first-year composition, such as Linda S. Bergmann and Janet Zepernick's exploration of disciplinarity in FYC, Ronda Leathers Dively's standardization of FYC for TA training, Douglas Downs and Elizabeth Wardle's theoretical framework for Writing about Writing (WAW), and Liane Robertson, Kara Taczak, and Kathleen Blake Yancey's earlier work that serves as a precursor to the Teaching for Transfer model. Many of these texts, and others written about transfer, note the benefits of reflection and metacognition for learning transfer. For example, Gerald Nelms and Ronda Leathers Dively position reflection as a means of helping students overcome roadblocks to transferring knowledge between FYC and major courses, and Rebecca S. Nowacek includes reflection as a major component of helping to make students "agents of integration."

Reflection is also often presented as a major component of graduate education, but this reflection is never explicitly expressed as a means of facilitating learning transfer for graduate students. For example, Michael Stancliff and Maureen Daly Goggin present reflection as a critical component of TA training. And Chris M. Anson and Susan K. Miller-Cochran expressly try to build "connections among disciplines, students, and the community while incorporating new approaches that will help make graduate education more relevant to the world outside of academia" (p. 39). In both cases, transfer theory can be easily connected to the methods for graduate teaching, but learning transfer is not directly referenced in either case. In the design of HTC, Ryan attempted to incorporate learning transfer into the class design while simultaneously attempting to keep these elements of reflection and connection. His hope was to use learning transfer theory to help graduate students make classroom learning more readily available and applicable in students' out-of-class scholarly pursuits, such as teaching and self-directed research.

The course design was particularly influenced by the Teaching for Transfer (TFT) model of first-year composition developed by Kathleen Blake Yancey, Liane Robertson, and Kara Taczak in *Writing Across Contexts*. In this model, students are introduced to several rhetorical concepts critical to composition studies and asked to develop their own theories of writing. HTC also followed a similar pattern. Course content was focused around several important concepts in the field, such as social construction, feminism, "error," multimodality, threshold concepts, and, of course, learning transfer. Students were then asked to use learning from the class (and outside of class) to build a theory of composition that included their positions on teaching, research, and theory as well as how those areas intertwined. This final project was very similar to the TFT model's theory of writing presented by Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak (56-58).

Also like TFT, course content was built around the "theory" assignment. Early in the course, Ryan asked students 11 questions related to composition and composition theory (see Appendix 1). These questions specifically encouraged students to take an inventory of their current knowledge and to recognize areas that they may not have considered in their own teaching and research. The questions focused on teaching, research, and threshold concepts prompted them to think beyond the immediate context of the course. Ideally, students would use examples from other classes, their own teaching, and their "extracurriculum" (Gere) to answer the questions early on. The intent was to draw on their delivered, lived, and experienced curricula: that is to say, class content, learning beyond the class, and self-sponsored learning, respectively.

Students in the course returned to these 11 questions about teaching and research regularly throughout the course in discussion, in activities, and in specific projects. The questions were asked on the first day of class and at the midpoint of the semester. They were often brought up in class discussions to keep them on students' minds. Ryan attempted to use these questions as a stand-in for the "key terms" that scaffold the TFT model (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak 33-35).

In addition to the final project, the course asked students to complete three smaller projects that connected their class studies to research beyond the class. These were also designed to facilitate transfer and to be "a wide-open space that graduate students feel welcome to explore" (Mack 435). The Expansion Project asked students to choose a single topic from the class and include additional articles on that topic. The goal of this project was to help with research skills but also to allow students to bring in areas of interest. The Context Project asked students to connect a single reading from the class to the context in which it was written. The goal was to get students to think about the influences (personal, institutional, social, and disciplinary) that influence how research and teaching are done. The Gap Project furthered these goals by

asking students to fill in a "gap" not covered in the assigned class readings. The goal was to encourage students to connect their own research interests to class material. All of these projects were designed to help students to expand beyond obvious class content and to think of their research and teaching as larger and more expansive. The projects were designed to give students agency in what they chose to learn. As Anson and Miller-Cochran point out, "[t]he scholarship of teaching and learning in higher education overwhelmingly supports instructional models in which students play an active role in the construction of their own knowledge and expertise through problem-solving activities" (40), and these three projects sought to do that. Ryan also saw these three projects as helping to build students' theories of composition by engaging with their own specific research interests.

These early documents were intended to allow for what Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak call "critical incidents" (5). Critical incidents are situations where students find that their current theories about learning or content are not working. While these situations may initially feel negative to a student, they ultimately allow them to retheorize the content (or their learning) and to create new theories that are more effective. Ryan had hoped that the class would be a safe place for critical incidents to occur.

Readings for the class built toward the focus on transfer and provided inspiration for their theories of composition. The first half of the semester focused on history and broader theories of composition. The goals of these readings were to prepare students to understand the later readings and to formulate their own theories of composition. Subsequent readings focused on contemporary theories of composition which then gave way to readings that focused explicitly on learning transfer (such as "Transfer of Learning" and excerpts from *Writing Across Contexts*) and readings that provided models for theories of composition (such as the "WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition" and the "Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing").

While no articles explicitly connect graduate education and transfer, this curriculum does build on articles that call for reflection as part of graduate education. Reflection is a key component of the "mindful abstracting" necessary for transfer (Salomon and Perkins 115). Dively calls for reflection as part of TA training, for example, stating that students should be able to "reflect critically on their pedagogical practices, to enact appropriate practices in future contexts, and to articulate the rationale behind these practices." The goal of the course in general, and the final project in particular, was to do these very things: help students connect practices and articulate why and how they are connected. Many others call for this type of reflection as part of graduate education—reflection is a critical part of suggestions from Dylan B. Dryer; Peter H. Khost, Debra Rudder Lohe, and Chuck Sweetman; Sally Barr Ebest;

and Anson and Miller-Cochran, to name a few. HTC was designed so that this reflective element was built into the class explicitly. Students were asked to make regular connections between areas of classroom content and to contexts outside of the classroom. They were asked to think about what they learned in the context of their own teaching and research in order to make the content more relevant to their learning outside of the class.

Critical Reflection

The five authors have approached this section not only as a personal reflection on the course but also as an opportunity to redesign the curriculum. Below, the four graduate student co-authors provide individual reflections on a key aspect of their experience of the course. By reflecting on class content, the student co-authors were able to continue to engage in learning transfer and consider how class content affected situations outside of the class. This reflection is followed by a section offering suggestions for improving the curriculum written by all five authors.

Critical Incidents - Courtney

As a first year PhD student in rhetoric and composition, this course was one of Courtney's first courses in the discipline. When Ryan had the class complete the eleven questions for the first time, she was confident. The first question was "How do you define composition?", which is a question for which she felt she had an answer. However, as the class continued through the questions, the sounds of her peers typing furiously around her became daunting. There were questions for which she didn't not have real answers, and that realization troubled her. Her initial perception of the questions was that they were a "test"—a test that she was certain she wouldn't pass. Even though the purpose of the questions was pretty explicit, Courtney couldn't shake the feeling of embarrassment as she turned in her seemingly subpar answers.

   As someone who was new to the discipline, Courtney felt there was really no way to know much about transfer or to completely understand what was happening on that first day of class. However, around the midpoint in the semester, the class revisited the questions again. While this was still daunting, she realized suddenly that she had a new language with which to answer the questions. This was the first moment where something "clicked" in her brain, and she was able to see how the readings and assignments were impacting her views of teaching and research. Though the questions were at first a very negative thing for Courtney, she believes that the initial negative experience made the final outcome more rewarding. Transfer typically involves a "critical incident"—a moment of failure where your previous knowledge just doesn't work (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak). At the time, Courtney didn't realize she

was experiencing such a moment because she was overwhelmed by the feeling of needing to perform a certain way—to "pass the test"—a feeling that stemmed from her prior experience in graduate classes. By the end of the semester she was able to see that it was never a test at all, but it would have been helpful if this had been made clearer earlier in the semester. Though failure can be an important part of learning transfer, Courtney believes she would have benefited from a better understanding of the questions at the start of the semester, which might have prompted her to mindfully reflect and make connections across contexts earlier on.

Future Teaching Transfer - David

David began HTC as a third-year doctoral student and assistant WPA who was familiar with the course design, having had parallel experiences with a similar framework in a prior graduate class. For him, the most effective part of the course was the pedagogical transfer he was able to identify and apply from his familiarity with the idea of the course and the threshold concepts as organizing principles.

Prior to the HTC course, David had been in a graduate course with a similar structure where students were asked to define good writing. He felt inspired to design and implement a similar FYC course with an approach grounded in a discourse/social-epistemic paradigm. The broader FYC course goals included:

- Having students write across contexts
- Helping students understand writing as a socially mediated, value-laden practice
- Helping students consider their own discursive relationships and literate practices across material and digital environments
- Helping students learn something about rhetoric and composition as a field of study.

From David's perspective, the FYC course had not been structured effectively and was not as successful as he had hoped, because he did not connect students' existing knowledge and writing practices to concepts like the social and rhetorical nature of writing.

After taking the HTC course, he revised the original FYC course with threshold concepts at its core. *Naming What We Know* gave David an accessible set of conceptual and organizing principles that he was able to use so that his students would be able to better identify and concretize the rhetorical awareness, genre familiarity, and writing practices in which they were already engaging and use this awareness to form connections to the new rhetorical situations in which they were being asked to perform. The threshold concepts

would become "baseplates" for revising assignments and his course structure, allowing David to refine the nebulous, decontextualized grounding from the original course for projects like literacy narratives and locally-grounded research proposals. In the terms outlined by Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak, the organization of David's course moved from an assemblage model to an integrated, remix model (5).

What David felt could be improved about the HTC course was a more directive push toward leaving his scholarly comfort zone. He understood and appreciated the scaffolding of the major projects to allow students to locate and fully contextualize a particular conversation of interest in the discipline; he did feel, however, that reframing the major assignments to allow for required, individual exploration of the development of the field could have been just as helpful toward a broader foundational knowledge base, particularly in a discipline where members are often expected to be "jacks of all trades."

Professionalization - Chris

Entering HTC as a first-year MA student, Chris did not have any substantive familiarity with rhetoric and composition as a discipline. This resulted in him experiencing a form of imposter syndrome and an embarrassment comparable to Courtney's when she faced the key questions on the first day of the seminar. It wasn't until these questions were revisited at the midway point of the semester that Chris realized the questions were not meant to serve as indicators of his competency as a scholar, but rather, were entry points into pivotal conversations through which the discipline has been gradually shaped and defined throughout its history. This revelation was engendered by readings and discussion questions which highlighted the evolution of key terms in the discipline over time (process, social construction, multimodality, etc.) and the disciplinary debates which shaped their meaning. Chris found that this approach helped him to articulate his own ideas and conceptualize the discipline as more than static historical events but instead as so many ongoing scholarly conversations. This resulted in a clearer sense of what being a rhetoric and composition scholar actually entails.

Where Chris encountered roadblocks, he learned a lot by getting feedback on his ideas from the more experienced PhD students in the course. Their participation in class discussions—and the continuation of these conversations outside of the classroom—supplemented his understanding of the historical disciplinary debates presented by the readings while also providing him with a model for how ideas are shared and discussed among those in the field. By the end of the semester, he felt that a type of community of practice had emerged. Through speaking to more experienced students, Chris came to place greater value on the cultivation of classroom relationships as useful learning tools, a

practice which he continued to employ in graduate classes beyond HTC. This transfer of knowledge was facilitated by small-group discussions, peer-review activities (both of which took place during the second half of the seminar), and the recurring course requirement that students reflect on three things: the effectiveness of past learning practices; how these may be successfully adapted for concurrent transfer; and how they might be adapted for future learning contexts. Chris's continued utilization of these social learning practices beyond HTC may well be the result of backward-reaching reflection practices demanded by the course's underlying transfer methodology.

That said, Chris believes that, especially as a newly-arrived student, he would have benefitted from having established these peer-to-peer relationships during the earlier, anxiety-ridden stages of the course. Perhaps integrating earlier and more frequent opportunities for mentorship into the course, and actively facilitating the development of such beneficial relationships from the beginning, would have helped mitigate Chris's initial imposter syndrome.

Reflection - Sue

A critical part of the course was the systematic reflection and feedback. The Reading Response postings before class provided a low-stakes, liminal space where Sue processed the weekly readings into reflective responses, measured her understanding against that of her peers, and eagerly looked for the instructor's dialogue regarding the connections she had made to the week's readings. The instructor's feedback encouraged her confidence in the ability to use the language of the discipline as a novice scholar just beginning the PhD program.

The Expansion, Context, and Gap projects were set up with sufficient flexibility and permission to just grapple with content. By the time she completed the Gap project, Sue could see her own distinct theoretical approach crystalizing. She discovered she had a lot more previous knowledge and practice than she had perceived on the first day with the 11 questions. Learning transfer is one example of a concept she felt she intuitively knew and had practiced in her composition classrooms for many years, but it was a concept for which she had little theoretical reference and grounding. She admitted that she was not always clear on the relationship between the first three projects. Reflecting back, she now sees this was by design—to provide space and time to work through that liminal space of her own theory formation. By the time the class reached the final theory project, she was more comfortable sorting through the messiness to figure out where her theoretical leanings fit together. At the same time, the expectation that the theory project was more of a starting point for future work (rather than an endpoint) proved a perfect challenge for Sue; as a novice, the project provided a valuable transition for her future growth as a

composition scholar. Now, some two years into her program, Sue recognizes that she gained confidence as a scholar through this course, and through the final project in particular. Having the additional opportunity to work with Ryan on this research project provided the space to critically reflect back on the course as she experienced it. She can see evidence of backward reaching transfer as she encountered subsequent courses in her PhD program. Having the opportunity for input on potential changes to the course further solidifies the value of this course design as a model for graduate education.

Redesigned Curriculum for History and Theories of Composition

In what follows, the five authors of this text have attempted to revise the course to make it more effective—to better facilitate learning transfer and to enhance student engagement. The lessons here can be used directly within the curriculum for HTC, of course, but the authors also hope that these discussions may be applicable to other graduate courses in composition studies as well.

By asking the graduate students to help in the course revision process, Ryan was hoping to continue to facilitate learning transfer. The graduate students have been able to reflect on how to make connections across contexts through a mindful consideration of the ways that the course could be improved. In addition, this redesign is answering a call by Richard Marback: "Simply encouraging graduate students to apply what they know or training them to theorize through practice is not enough. We need to consider how, in doctoral education, we create the conditions for the exercise of judgment to guide knowledge making in composition studies" (824). Because there is little research on graduate education in composition studies, methods for helping students exercise judgment are rare. The hope here is that the four graduate student co-authors are helping to guide knowledge making through their participation.

In this section, David, Sue, Courtney, and Chris help Ryan to propose three major changes to the course described above: the reflective questions should be introduced later, and their purpose should be explicit; "critical incidents" should be introduced as positive outcomes earlier in the semester; and transfer should be woven into the class in additional ways.

One of the biggest opportunities for revision in the original design of HTC was that the purpose for the questions (Appendix 1) was not articulated clearly or fully when they were first posed. Because students felt that they couldn't answer the questions fully or, in some cases, couldn't answer some questions at all, they were anxious about the content of the class. Because disposition can so greatly affect learning and learning transfer (see, for example, Driscoll and Wells; Driscoll and Powell), this anxiety could be an impediment. Obvi-

ously, this was not the purpose of the questions. The purpose was to encourage students to think about strengths and weaknesses in their knowledge and to serve as a starting point for making connections to other learning, research, and teaching contexts.

To make this purpose clearer, and to use the questions more effectively, the authors propose a set of practices for introducing the questions. The first is to leave the questions for the *second* day of the class instead of introducing them on the first. Students felt a bit overwhelmed on the first day—even before the questions were asked. For many students, like Chris, this was their first day in their first graduate class, so when they were asked these questions and couldn't answer, they felt unprepared. To further mitigate this anxiety, teachers are encouraged to discuss the questions extensively when they are introduced. Instructors should make clear that the questions are not a test, that there is no possibility of failure, and that incomplete answers are acceptable. The reflective process of answering the questions should be highlighted as the purpose, and it should be stated that the specific answers given are not important at this point in the semester. Instead, students would have an opportunity to continue to develop their answers throughout the semester to prepare for their theory of composition. The idea of connection to outside content should also be brought up explicitly. Chris felt that not only would these changes help mitigate anxiety, but would also be instrumental in helping students develop reflective habits conducive to their successful completion of the final project. That is, if students were intentionally trying to connect their answers to these questions to other classes, their teaching, and their other research, they would be able to develop a more robust theory of composition that connected across these contexts. Courtney and Chris felt that the midterm discussion of the questions was the first time they really "got" the content of the course. Having this discussion as early as possible in the semester will probably allow for that epiphany to happen earlier, allowing for transfer to happen more easily earlier in the class.

Another primary change for the curriculum is how "failure" was approached. Part of the design of the class was to allow for "critical incidents" (Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak). In Yancey, Robertson, and Taczak, this is when first-year students recognize how they have been approaching writing assignments will not be effective in college writing. This kind of critical incident can be very positive: it can encourage students to re-evaluate how they perceive knowledge and practices and to reshape new theories. From Ryan's point of view, these struggles were seen as a learning experience in HTC—a way to grow as a student, scholar, and teacher. Colin Brooke and Allison Carr note that these struggles, even failure, "can be an important part of writing development" (62). Trying new things can lead to missteps, and those missteps

can be learning experiences. Robert E. Haskell even notes that "fear of failure" may be a disposition of learners that gets in the way of learning transfer (121), especially when students perceive failure as a "lack of talent rather than lack of knowledge, and practice [sic]" (175, quoting John Hayes). From the students' points of view, this "failure" of their theories of composition led to some anxiety. Graduate students are usually used to success (Ebest): they've often done very well in school, and that's why they're in graduate school. Suddenly being put in a position that they perceive themselves as not having the tools necessary to succeed can lead to a lot of anxiety. What Ryan took as a learning experience, some students, including Courtney, Sue, and Chris, perceived as doing poorly in the course, even not being prepared for graduate school.

The idea of failure, its benefit for learning, and how the class allows for safe "failure" should be discussed explicitly early on. Students should be given the opportunity to reflect upon and redevelop theories and practices in a safe way. This could perhaps be done through more peer-to-peer discussions on topics, especially on the larger projects in the class. But this should also be done through more detailed reviews of expectations: discussions of what is expected through reading responses, projects, and presentations. Simply stating that the struggle is positive may allay some of the students' fears by letting them know that the instructor *wants* some struggle. Perhaps even reflections on failure could be advantageous. Allowing students to understand their own relationship with failure and reflecting on positive outcomes of failure could help them view "failure" in the context of the class differently. These direct discussions of failure would allow students to more readily discuss the struggle instead of hiding it. As Chris pointed out, imposter syndrome is common among graduate students, which in his case, led to anxiety about the struggles he faced in recognizing critical incidents for what they were—learning opportunities rather than complete failures.

Discussion in general was a big part of allowing for critical incidents. Students said they were able to come to these moments in a safer way in small group discussion than they were in full-class discussion. They felt this was because the small groups allowed them to realize other students were also struggling. Especially for more difficult topics, discussing in small groups before talking directly to the full class (especially talking to the instructor) might be very helpful. The discussion allows for this type of rethinking of theories to happen in a more private way before the theories are discussed more publicly with the rest of the class. Sue, Courtney, and Chris confirmed that earlier and more frequent peer-to-peer discussions would have significantly aided their comfort-level when wrestling with the material and would have provided them with low-risk opportunities for asking what they perceived as "dumb" questions. Through lower-stakes interactions with peers and, in this case, more advanced

students in the program, Sue felt this change would provide greater chance for validation and clarification regarding areas of struggle and "critical incidents."

The final major revision of the curriculum is probably the most difficult: weaving the questions and transfer into the course content in more substantial ways. As stated above, transparency about transfer would help the students understand the reasons behind the curriculum. This also goes for the major projects: why were students doing the Expansion, Context, and Gap projects, for example? What was the outcome for each assignment, and how did that outcome connect to course outcomes? Taking some time to discuss this in class could be helpful for students. In the case of the projects above, students were put in a position to connect class content to content outside of the class, but at the time, the student didn't see that.

It may also be helpful to try to explicitly connect the major projects: how might theories from one of the major projects help with another? How are the projects similar? Different? Getting students to think about the ways the projects relate can help them to get more out of the projects in general, but it can also serve as a smaller-scale opportunity for learning transfer by encouraging them to connect one project to another. Connecting the projects could help build upon learning instead of treating each project as separate. If they can connect projects, they won't be "strangers in strange lands" (McCarthy) every time they begin a new project.

This kind of weaving might also be seen in reading responses and in-class discussions. Connecting *back* to the 11 main class questions regularly in reading response prompts and class discussions could help to keep those questions on students' minds more immediately. While Ryan did attempt to do this in both reading response prompts and class discussions, he did not explicitly remind students of the questions to which he was connecting. That small but important step could help to remind students of the importance of those questions and the importance of connecting to contexts beyond the classroom. For example, pedagogy concerns often came up in class discussion. Ryan thought the connection to the questions on pedagogy from the 11 questions was clear, but most of the students did not immediately think about those questions as part of the discussion. Simply taking that extra step of reminding students of questions 3, 4, and 5 from the list—even restating the questions as part of the discussion—may help students to build theories of their teaching practices instead of just discussing pedagogy devoid of larger pedagogical connections. To this end, David felt that putting these pedagogical questions in conversation with sustained critical self-reflection on his then-current teaching practices, as a regular part of class discussion, would have helped him identify the obstacles he experienced sooner. Moreover, greater discussion of major projects would not only help novice students like Chris to establish more holistic theories of

the discipline but could also allow advanced students like David to use these assignments to explore new areas of scholarship, forge new connections, and thus broaden their knowledge of the discipline.

At this point, themes in the revision for the curriculum may seem clear: transparency and connection helped students understand the outcomes of the course more clearly and likely would help them to transfer to contexts outside of the class more easily. While overall, David, Sue, Courtney, and Chris found the curriculum to be helpful, they believed it would be more helpful with revisions that allowed for more explicit explanations and more transparency.

Graduate students are still becoming part of the discourse of rhetoric and composition as they take courses but may at times be expected to already know exactly what they are doing. They are expected to learn the discourse and to synthesize and apply the discourse simultaneous. Of course, this can be quite difficult and may require ample reflection and explicit guidance from graduate instructors. The purpose of this course is to help apprentice them into the discipline more carefully. Transfer theory can certainly help to encourage students to use the theories from graduate classes to enhance their own teaching and research. Instructors of graduate classes can encourage students to mindfully build out their own theories of composition and can help them to become scholars who "guide knowledge making in composition studies" (Marback 824) instead of just taking in what they have learned. In essence, graduate instructors can help to bring graduate students into the discourse of the field more quickly and to get them engaged as productive scholars in composition studies.

While this course is designed specifically for History and Theories of Composition, the lessons about transfer and connection can be applied to other courses in graduate education as well. As a field, composition scholars should attempt to make an effort to build graduate courses that allow for students to build, shape, and reshape their theory of composition.

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Appendix 1: Focal Questions

- How do you define "composition"?
- What (if any) is the relationship between composition studies and English studies?
- How should composition be taught (in the first year and beyond)?
- What are the goals of composition (first-year writing and other contexts)?
- How can and should these goals be met?
- How should composition be studied? Why?
- What are the goals of composition research?
- What methodologies can best lead us to those goals?
- What ties us together as a discipline?
- What do you see as the central "threshold concepts"?
- How do these concepts inform your teaching and research?