

Writing Skill Transfer: Annotated Bibliography

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Boone, S., Biggs-Chaney, S., Compton, J., Donahue, C., & Gocsik, K. (2012). Imagining a

writing and rhetoric program based on principles of knowledge “transfer”: Dartmouth’s



Institute for Writing and Rhetoric. *Composition Forum*, 26. Retrieved from

<http://compositionforum.com/issue/26/dartmouth.php>

Providing an example of what a writing program based on writing-related transfer

research might look like, Boone, Biggs-Chaney, Donahue, and Gocsik provide an

overview of the writing program at Dartmouth’s Institute for Writing and Rhetoric. The

authors provide a history of the program development, explain current curriculum and

organization, and provide a look to future directions for the program. Beginning with the

idea that not all skill or knowledge transfers in the same way, program developers at



Dartmouth set out to explore what kind of knowledge writing is and how this knowledge

is transferred. By developing curriculum and sequences of courses that encourage

reflection and connections to future courses, as well as engaging in faculty development

and reflection, Dartmouth has established a writing program that provides a model for

other writing programs. The authors explore the state of research on the program and

goals based on current assessment.

This piece serves as an excellent guide from writing program administrators and writing

researchers interested in seeing how current research on writing transfer can be applied to

a real program. The authors offer practical advice, include sample syllabi and curriculum,



and offer honest reflection on successes and struggles of the program. This article

provides much-needed information to those interested in revising a writing program that

fits within current transfer research.

Moore, J. (2012). Mapping the questions: the state of writing-related transfer research.

*Composition Forum*, 26. Retrieved from <http://compositionforum.com/issue/26/map-questions-transfer-research.php>

Moore provides an overview of research on transfer of writing skill in this article, which serves as a kind of review of the literature for those interested in writing-related transfer research but need a starting point to enter the research conversation. Moore begins by describing the history of transfer research on writing, describing issues related to common definitions and multi-institutional research, and then discusses current research samples with a call for future research. Moore (2012) writes, “While not exhaustive, this review attempts to capture representative samples with a focus on recent publication” (para. 3). Moore explores methods, theories, and goals of current research, and in her conclusion, calls for efforts to explore new areas of writing-related transfer research. She raises an important question about other tools students have access to from other activity systems that might encourage the transfer of skill.

Moore’s article provides a much-needed summary of sample research in the field of writing-transfer research and would be a foundational piece for any research summary or analysis in this area. This research would also be an appropriate framing for a new study on writing transfer, no matter the study size.

Wardle, E. (2007). Understanding ‘transfer’ from FYC: preliminary results from a longitudinal study. *Writing Program Administration* (31)1-2, 65-85.

In her report on a longitudinal study on writing transfer at the University of Dayton, Wardle explores the issue of transfer of writing skills from freshman composition courses. She begins by explaining the research is limited when it comes to transfer of writing skills, even though this is seen as a key function of freshman writing courses. The research that exists indicates that skills do not transfer well. With this in mind, Wardle established a curriculum designed to support writing transfer and followed students for two years after they had completed freshman composition. Her research indicates that the skills from freshman writing did not transfer well, but it was not because students could not make the transfer but because writing assignments these students encountered, along with a variety of other issues, made students feel that there was no need to transfer these skills.

This longitudinal study is a foundational piece for many writing program directors and serves as a call to more research on transfer of writing skill in this field. Lessons gleaned from this research continue to inform writing teachers, directors, and researchers. In this article, Wardle cites her work with colleague Doug Downs. Together, Wardle and Downs are known as leaders in writing transfer research.