

Developmental Writing and Transfer: Examining Student Perceptions

By James Pacello

ABSTRACT: *Using portions of the findings of a qualitative study, this article examines how students described their writing experiences across the curriculum after completing a developmental writing class. The course was purposefully designed to help students become aware that they were developing knowledge about writing that was applicable to other courses. It was structured using evidence-based teaching methods. The findings suggest that multiple participants were incorporating process-oriented approaches to writing, using the college's online tutoring service to improve their writing, and evaluating research material and integrating it into writing for various classes.*

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A great deal of recent research in the field of writing studies has examined the issue of student transfer of writing skills and abilities from first-year writing courses to the rest of the college curriculum (Downs & Wardle, 2007; Tinberg, 2015b; Wardle, 2007). However, limited focus has been placed on examining what role developmental writing courses can play in helping students to begin developing what Tinberg (2015b) has referred to as “transfer knowledge” (p. 7) about writing that can be useful to them in their first credit-bearing writing course and across curricular contexts. Prior research suggests that students often do not transfer knowledge from one context to another (Day & Goldstone, 2012). Consistent with this research, many students who enroll in developmental writing classes are often unable to effectively use what is taught in the courses to improve their academic performance (Community College Research Center, 2014). Grubb and Gabriner (2013) found that the design and instruction in many developmental writing courses might unintentionally amplify a disconnection from a student's overall college experience. The focus is often on a series of decontextualized skills that students do not perceive as being connected to the types of academic tasks they complete in college courses (Grubb & Gabriner, 2013).

Using portions of a qualitative research study that examined the perceptions of eight student participants, this article examines student perspectives on their experiences with writing for courses across the curriculum after completing a

developmental writing course (Pacello, 2015). The focus of the original study was twofold: (a) to capture the ways participants evolved their beliefs about and approaches to writing through the process of taking the course, and (b) to analyze how students reported transferring what they learned about writing to other course contexts. A previous study has addressed how several participants in the study discussed the ways their writing process and views about writing evolved (Pacello, 2019). This article discusses how some of these same participants (and two additional participants) articulated the ways they used what they learned in the course when they wrote for specific classes across the curriculum. To describe and understand student experiences, this paper addresses the following research question: What skills, habits, and/or dispositions taught in a purposefully designed developmental writing course did students report actually using when they wrote for college classes?

This study aims to fill a gap in the research by examining voices directly from former developmental writing students. It seeks to understand how students transfer the writing skills and approaches learned in a developmental writing course to other college-level courses across the curriculum. It also examines the role a developmental writing course can have in explicitly preparing students to think in terms of developing writing skills and mindsets that are relevant and transferable to other academic courses.

Theoretical Framework

The areas of focus of the study are based on a theoretical framework of metacognition and transferability (Downs & Wardle, 2007; Tinberg, 2015a, 2015b). The class under study has been designed to help students become aware that the habits and skills learned could transfer to writing across contexts. In the study, students are asked to identify writing skills and knowledge learned in their developmental course that they applied to their college-level courses. Often, students perceive a disconnect between the skills they have been taught in their developmental courses and how these skills are equally important in their credit-bearing academic courses (Community College Research Center, 2014). Part of this disconnect may result from many first-term students not yet having the cognitive sophistication to transfer their learning

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from one discipline or course to another, and part of the disconnect may be because instructors have not been explicit in helping students see such relevance and connection to their future college classes.

Related Literature

Studies of various aspects of learning composition skills and applying them across the curriculum have been reported in the literature. At the college level, some of these focus on courses that guide students to apply skills in a variety of contexts. An overview of related research follows.

Writing as Process

Writing as a recursive process is an important dimension of how texts are produced in college classes (Downs, 2015). Faculty members need to help students understand that the writing process across contexts should involve multiple stages, including planning, researching, drafting, and revising. Melzer (2014) has examined more than 2000 assigned writing tasks from a variety of disciplines at different higher education institutions across the United States. His study results reveal that courses which were linked to writing across the curriculum programs used pedagogical methods emphasizing a writing process. Additionally, the Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing stresses the need for students to learn multiple strategies for developing a process-oriented approach to writing for college (Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2011).

The Role of Research in Writing

Researchers have stressed the centrality of the use of research material in writing for college classes. For instance, in his analysis of writing assignments across disciplines, Melzer (2014) has shown that, although there are genre convention variations depending on the academic discipline, the research-based writing assignment is widely assigned in a variety of college courses across disciplines. Similarly, in his research analyzing the skills and abilities students need for college and workplace settings, Conley (2014) argues that the ability to find and evaluate research material is essential for college success.

Student Perceptions About Writing

Because the ideas of writing as process and using research evidence are so central to academic writing, it might be easy for faculty members to assume that they are obvious and natural processes that do not need to be explicitly taught to students (Cox, 2009). However, as Downs and Wardle (2007) has explained, “What students traditionally imagine as writing is actually only the final move in a much larger series of events” (p. 563). Other researchers have asserted that students often do not allot much time to planning, formulating ideas, and revising their work (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010). There is a need for developmental

writing instructors to use explicit process-oriented pedagogies and strategies so that they can help students begin to recognize that writing is a complex and recursive process that involves planning, researching, and revising.

Metacognition and Writing Skill Transfer

Instruction emphasizing metacognition can help students become aware of the recursive dimension of writing across contexts. As Tinberg (2015a) has explained it, metacognition is “the ability to perceive the very steps by which success occurs and to articulate the various qualities and components that contribute in significant ways to the production of effective writing” (p. 76). Ambrose et al., (2010) have argued that students can improve their metacognitive abilities when they are given opportunities to reflect on and write about their own approaches to assignments and how they believe their skills have developed through completing the assignments. As Tinberg (2015a) has asserted, “it is metacognition that endows writers with a certain control over their work, regardless of the situation in which they operate” (p. 76).

Method

This study design drew primarily from phenomenological approaches to qualitative research. As Creswell (2007) has articulated, an important characteristic of phenomenological research is “studying several individuals that have shared the experience” (p. 78). All participants in the study had “shared the experience” of completing a developmental writing course purposefully designed to connect course content with college writing.

Research Site

The qualitative data for this study were drawn from two sections of a developmental writing course that I taught in a private, urban, four-year college in the Northeast. The college’s academic calendar was structured around a quarter system. Students were placed in developmental courses based on the results of the ACCUPLACER exam. Students were permitted to take some credit-bearing courses while enrolled in developmental classes. Throughout the article I refer to the course under study as the Developmental course.

Participants

Eight students volunteered to be part of the study. One participant was drawn from a course section I taught in the summer of 2013. The other participants were drawn from a section I taught in the fall of

2013. They were informed via email about the study and asked to participate after they had completed the course and received a grade. I aimed to select participants of a variety of ages so that I could get the perspectives of both traditional and nontraditional age college students. Table 1 provides information about participant ages and majors based on self-reporting. Pseudonyms are used for all participants.

Table 1
Participants

Name	Age	Major
Adam	18	Information Technology
Amesha	22	Business Administration Management
Bruno	24	Business
Dana	38	Health Management
Gideon	33	Business
Heidi	21	Fashion Marketing and Management
Janice	21	Criminal Justice
Tiffany	19	Business

Instructional Design

As recent research has suggested, traditional approaches to teaching developmental courses are not particularly effective. Grubb and Gabriner (2013) have found that many developmental writing classrooms use a “remedial pedagogy” approach in which skills are taught in isolation (p. 52). This type of approach puts little emphasis on how such skills can be transferred to other contexts outside the developmental courses (Grubb & Gabriner, 2013). With this concept in mind, I worked from the standardized learning goals established by the developmental education program at the college to design the course to intentionally move away from remedial pedagogy approaches.

I aimed to help students become mindful that the habits and skills practiced in the course could be used across curricular contexts. An essential method that informed all instruction was what Winkelmess (2013) has called “transparency in teaching,” which consists of “explicit conversation among teachers and students about the processes of learning and the rationale for required learning activities” (p. 48). This type of approach can help students recognize the relevance of their learning experiences and how to use what they learn (Fisher, Kouyoumdjian, Roy, Talavera-Bustillos, and Willard, 2016; McNair, 2016). Key elements of the course design included fostering writing as process, embedding an online tutoring service into a major assignment, engaging students

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

in a dialogue about the role of research in writing, and integrating metacognitive writing tasks.

Fostering writing as process. An integral element of the course design was providing activities that explicitly fostered the disposition of thinking of and treating writing as a recursive process. I repeatedly told students that this kind of approach to writing would be helpful to them when they wrote for other courses across the curriculum. All written assignments were explicitly organized around pre-writing, drafting, revising, and proofreading. Critical elements of writing such as freewriting, composing thesis statements, illustrating ideas through examples and support, and proofreading for grammatical issues were woven into activities focusing on the actual process of writing.

The explicit emphasis on the process of writing was important because it was designed to help students rethink their prior ideas about writing. Ambrose et al. (2010) found that very often college students do not approach writing systematically and instead rely on methods of writing that they have used in the past. As Downs (2015) asserted, students need to learn that “revising, or the need to revise, is not an indicator of poor writing or weak writers but much the opposite—a sign and a function of skilled, mature, professional writing and craft” (p. 67). When I designed the course to emphasize a process-oriented approach to writing, I assumed that it was important to explicitly help students understand and practice the recursive qualities of writing.

The writing process was fostered in various ways. For example, as part of the revision stage of the process for some of the assignments, students were required to receive feedback from their peers and provide feedback prior to submitting their work to me for a grade. As Grubb and Gabriner (2013) asserted, this kind of approach “stresses writing as a form of communication among people and as the expression of ideas” (p. 96). I was explicit in my approach to organizing the peer feedback sessions to help students understand their role in the writing process. I articulated to students the benefits of both receiving and giving feedback on written work. For example, I explained that this task could help them to consider their audience when writing.

Embedding online tutoring service. To complete the final research essay for the course, students needed to submit their draft to the college’s online tutoring service as part of their writing process. After they submitted it, students received emailed feedback from a tutor in the Academic Support Center. This feedback helped guide the focus of the miniconference session each student had with me about their work before they submitted it for a grade. During class discussions, I made direct connections to how the online tutoring service would help students successfully complete writing

assignments for other courses. As Callahan and Chumney (2009) have found, using tutoring services is a “form of academic capital that is transferable to other courses” (p. 1658). I informed students that the online tutoring service would be available for them to use as part of their writing process well beyond the developmental writing course.

Emphasizing the role of research in college writing. As part of the course design, I engaged students in a dialogue about the role that research skills would play in writing for college classes across the curriculum. I purposefully integrated into the class a visit from a librarian, who gave them an overview of key library resources. Like the embedded online tutoring, this aspect of the course gave students a connection to a resource that could be useful to them in future courses. I explicitly discussed this connection with students to help them recognize the transferable dimension of this aspect of the course. For the final paper, students needed to find and incorporate three research sources into

They also learned to evaluate the quality of a [research] source.

their work. The students were taught that the research material they found should be used as evidence to help them make persuasive claims about their topic. They also learned to evaluate the quality of a source by establishing the author’s expertise and veracity when searching for sources to help build their arguments. Instruction included how to use in-text citations and signal phrases to incorporate research into written work and how to cite sources on a Works Cited page using MLA format.

Integrating metacognitive writing. An additional strategy designed to move the course beyond the remedial pedagogy approach was explicit emphasis on reflective blog tasks to promote student metacognition. They were aimed to help students develop an “increased self-awareness” about their evolving writing process (Downs & Wardle, 2007, p. 572). As Tinberg (2015a) has explained, metacognition can help students better understand and articulate what helps make writing effective. He has argued that this heightened awareness of process helps them adapt to different writing situations, which can be pivotal in teaching with an emphasis on transfer. In their blogs, students wrote about their own process as they worked on written assignments for the class.

Data Collection

Interviews were the primary mode of data collection. This decision was guided by Patton’s (1990) notion that “Qualitative interviewing begins with the

assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (p. 278). With the exception of one participant who was interviewed only once because of scheduling conflicts, each participant was interviewed two times. Both interviews took place in the quarter after participants had completed the class. The interviews were semistructured and lasted roughly 45 minutes to 1 hour (see Appendix A and B). Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

I also collected short reflective writings students had completed during the course. In these documents, students had written about their own writing process. Additionally, during the time when I was teaching the course and throughout the research process, I kept a researcher journal to help me think about my own evolving sense of how students connected learning about writing in the Developmental course to writing in other courses.

Using some data that emerged in the context of my own classrooms gave me the opportunity to be a “teacher-researcher” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 15). An advantage to this type of research is that it allows a researcher to document the teaching and learning environment “over long periods of time, with special insights and knowledge” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993, p. 19). I was able to closely examine participant experiences as they completed my course and moved on to their other courses in the subsequent quarter.

Data Analysis

To code the data, I used the views and language of the participants (“emic”) and my own views and interpretations (“etic”) about the phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2007, p. 72). Using the data analysis method of “looking at language” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 69), I coded the words and phrases participants used to describe their experiences with writing for college courses. For example, I focused on coding the descriptions of their approach to completing a written assignment (which they had selected and emailed to me before one of the interviews) for one of their credit-bearing courses and the approach they took to complete the final paper for the Developmental course. Coding and analyzing other data sources (i.e., reflective blog posts participants wrote for the Developmental course, an electronic portfolio introduction page students completed for the class, notes I wrote in my research journal after several class sessions, etc.) was also a helpful way of attaining data triangulation (Creswell & Miller, 2000). This process allowed me to analyze the ways students discussed their writing while they were in the Developmental course in relationship to what they reported when they took classes after completing the course.

After I coded the data sources and analyzed them, I organized the data into “themes” (Creswell, 2007, p. 159). A central theme most relevant to this

study that emerged was the connection between what students learned in the Developmental course and what they reported they were using when writing for other courses. To increase the validity of my analysis and findings, I had “peer review” sessions with two doctoral program classmates (Creswell, 2007, p. 208). They helped me check my coding schemes and challenged me to clearly articulate my interpretations (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Findings

Data analysis revealed several ways participants reported transferring what they learned in the Developmental course into classes across the curriculum. Recurring themes regarding the transfer of learning were as follows: (a) using a process approach, (b) using online tutoring services, and (c) conducting research and incorporating it into writing assignments. Table 2 provides an overview of key habits, strategies, and dispositions each participant

letter assignment he had written for his Career Management Seminar course, he said he began by “looking over the instructions to see what exactly the professor was asking.” His next step was “brainstorming [for] information I wanted to put in the cover letter” before he moved into the drafting stage.

Dana and Bruno both reported that they used freewriting during the prewriting stage of their process for courses other than the Developmental class. For example, during an interview, when Dana discussed writing a narrative essay for Expository Writing (the first credit-bearing English course), she explained that at first, she struggled to get started. However, she reported that doing freewriting helped her to construct “the basic story, the basic outline.” When Bruno described his approach to working on an Expository Writing assignment, he said that his process involved “first just writ[ing] whatever I think.”

such as “find the error” and “there will be a lot of mistakes,” suggests that he might have been thinking about the postdrafting stage as being mostly about proofreading for grammatical correctness, rather than about revising for other important qualities such as persuasiveness and clarity.

Heidi’s commentary during the second interview was also reflective of using a process-oriented approach. She reported developing her work in stages. While describing her approach to developing a research paper for the Expository Writing class, she reported that when she drafted her work, she organized it so that each of her main points was explored “in its own paragraph.” Then, she explained that, as part of her approach to writing, “I have to read [my work] out loud to myself.” She believed this strategy was useful when she wrote for the credit-bearing course because it helped her verify whether her assignment was “what she [the professor] asked for.” She also reported that asking the instructor for feedback was now part of her process.

Table 2
Participant Comments for Use of Skills in Writing for Credit-bearing Courses

Participant	Skills Used in Credit-Bearing Courses				
	Prewriting	Drafting	Proofreading and revising	Using tutoring services	Using research skills
Adam					X
Amesha		X	X	X	X
Bruno	X	X	X	X	X
Dana	X	X	X	X	X
Gideon	X	X			X
Heidi		X	X	X	X
Janice			X	X	X
Tiffany		X	X	X	X

Using Online Tutoring Service

Most participants used or expressed intentions to use the online tutoring service as part of the proofreading and revising stages of the writing process in courses other than the Developmental course. Of the eight participants, only Gideon and Adam did not discuss using the service at all.

Tiffany and Heidi were required to submit their work to the online tutoring service for credit-bearing courses they were taking. Regardless of whether or not they were just using it because they had to, both participants expressed that they valued it. Heidi needed to use the service to receive feedback on a draft of an assignment she wrote for a Textiles course, which was connected to her major. Similarly, Tiffany explained that for her Jazz to Hip Hop class, the professor was requiring the class to submit their work to the service after they had drafted it. She described the experience of having been introduced to using the online service in the Developmental course as having given her “insight how to use them.”

Both Tiffany and Heidi discussed using the online tutoring resource even for courses that did not require them to submit their work for feedback. Tiffany explained that using the service for other courses was beneficial to her because it helped her “get a better understanding. A professional view of [her work].” Heidi reported that she sought help from an online tutor when she was struggling to write a press release assignment for her Visual Merchandising course. She also explained that when she was improperly switching between MLA and APA formats in a draft of an assignment, the online tutor caught this error and pointed it out to her.

Other participants who had not been required by any of their professors to use the service reported

reported using or intending to use in their credit-bearing courses.

Using a Process Approach

Most participants reported that they had used at least some aspects of a process approach to complete writing assignments for courses other than the Developmental class. Only Adam, who had been assigned few writing assignments in the quarter after completing the Developmental course, did not explicitly discuss any of the stages of the writing process when describing his approach to writing for other courses.

During interviews, Gideon, Bruno, and Dana specifically discussed using the prewriting stage in their process approach to writing in credit-bearing courses. For instance, when I asked Gideon to walk me through his approach to working on a cover

Bruno spoke about taking his work through other aspects of the writing process after the prewriting stage, including drafting and proofreading. When he discussed writing a paper for the credit-bearing writing class, he explained that his drafting stage entailed “organizing the words” into an introduction, a body, and a conclusion and equated this process to “build[ing] a puzzle.” After this drafting stage, he said he “proofread” his work by reading it out loud “just to make sure” it was effective. He also said that he had taken a break between writing his initial draft and then reviewing it because “after a break, you go again and you can find the error, but if you read after you write, there will be a lot of mistakes [you will miss because] your brain is tired.” His description provided evidence that he was using a recursive approach to writing in other classes beyond the Developmental course. However, his use of phrases

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14

that they used it anyway. For instance, Bruno explained that he requested online tutoring for an assignment he wrote for Expository Writing. He said that doing so was helpful to him because the tutor helped him correct in-text citations, improve the paper's structure, and decrease wordiness. He stated that he planned to continue using the service in the future. Similarly, Janice reported using it to help her with an assignment for her World Religions class and said, "And now I'm using it a lot more."

By the time their second interview was conducted, Dana and Amesha had not used the tutoring service for any of their writing assignments. However, both participants explained that they had intentions of doing so. For instance, during the second interview, Dana reported that she would be submitting a draft of her work to the service for her Expository Writing course because it would give her a "first opinion of the paper to see whether [the] message is conveyed, [and whether there are] any errors and such." Similarly, Amesha explained that she would use the college's writing tutoring services after composing a draft because "I know I'll need some other person's input on it." She said that using the services would be a "self-requirement." However, it was not clear whether she was referring to the online or on-site tutoring service.

Incorporating Research into Writing Assignments

Most participants were required to conduct research to complete writing assignments for courses both during the quarter in which they were enrolled in the Developmental course and in the quarter after they had completed it. In his second interview, Gideon discussed his process of developing a paper for a business class by explaining that he needed to make sure that he was using "reliable sources." He said that he believed he could find them by using the college's online library. He explained that his knowledge about the research process came from what he had been taught in both the Developmental and Business Applications classes.

Similar to Gideon's statement about the importance of having "reliable sources," Dana more explicitly addressed the value of discernment in conducting research. She discussed the ways her research process had become more critical and careful since she had started taking classes at the college. Prior to enrolling, she said that she had "never really thought about" reliability of research sources based on authorship. However, now when she conducted research to reinforce her assertions for college course writing assignments, "I make sure that the person that I'm quoting or reading or researching at least has some expertise in that field before... I quote or go deeper in researching something." She said

she used these research skills when she wrote an "academic research paper" in Expository Writing.

Adam also reported recognizing the value of using research to support assertions and that his understanding evolved in relationship to completing the Developmental course and taking other classes. When I asked him what really stuck with him from the Developmental class that he believed he would do again when he had to write a paper for other courses, he said research was the "number one" skill. He also explained, "so far in most of the classes I've been taking, like IT, Business, Management... [it] is about... using sources that you know that's able to prove your topic." Adam's comments suggest that he was recognizing the importance of having effective research skills in college.

Other participants also reported that they needed to integrate and document research sources into writing for assignments across the curriculum. For example, Janice said that she needed to incorporate "research on... different cultures, different religions"

Learning about citations also helped her understand how to avoid plagiarism in her work.

into an assignment for her World Religions class. Heidi discussed her process of integrating and citing research sources into fashion courses. She explained that what she had learned in the Developmental course about integrating research into written work helped her with assignments she had to do in classes she was taking concurrently with the course. When asked to elaborate, she said that she had learned "how to write in-text citations... I never used to write in-text citations." She reported that learning about citations also helped her understand how to avoid plagiarism in her work.

During the second interview, Heidi said that she wished we had spent "more time" during the Developmental course on writing research papers because she had encountered them so extensively across the curriculum. In particular, in her fashion classes (which were connected to her major), she was required to write several research papers. This desire for more practice with the research process seemed to be related to difficulties she had encountered in one fashion class in particular, which she had taken concurrently with the Developmental course. She reported that the professor had spoken to the entire class because he was concerned that students did not know how to properly integrate research into their writing. She also explained that the professor said that "when you're writing a paper, you have to

put more of your ideas." He informed the students that many of them had not incorporated enough "original thought" in their writing, so he gave the class an opportunity to revise their work. Based on her own account, Heidi's work contained some of these issues.

Discussion

To varying degrees, participants appeared to be transferring some of the process-oriented dispositions, habits, and skills of writing taught in the Developmental course into writing they did for other college courses. As a whole, the participants were able to articulate how they were using what they learned in the Developmental course in their college classes that involved writing. These findings are important because researchers have suggested that students often struggle to transfer skills from one context to another (Ambrose et al., 2010; Cox, 2009; Day & Goldstone, 2012). The course was designed with an explicit emphasis on writing as recursive process, exploring the role of research in writing, and using tutoring services. It deliberately sought to help students recognize the transfer value of the knowledge learned in the class. Winkelmess (2013) has found that "Transparent teaching methods can offer benefits for both current and future learning" (p. 51). Likewise, McNair (2016) has asserted that students "are more motivated to learn when they understand the end goals of their learning experience" (p. 3). The transparent approach to the course activities and assignments likely helped raise student awareness of the transferability of what they were learning about writing.

It was evident that multiple participants were viewing the online tutoring service as an important aspect of their writing process. The students submitted work for feedback on writing assignments that came from diverse courses, including Expository Writing, World Religions, Jazz to Hip Hop, and Textiles. As Wardle (2007) has asserted about the teaching of college writing, "We cannot prepare students for every genre, nor can we know every assignment they will be given or the genre conventions appropriate to those assignments across the disciplines" (p. 82). However, consistent with Callahan and Chumney's (2009) research, the findings of this study affirm that developmental writing courses can help students value and learn how to use writing tutoring services, acquainting them with a resource that can help them navigate a wide range of writing requirements well beyond their developmental courses.

The majority of the participants discussed taking their work for other courses through the proofreading and revising stages of the writing process. It was not always clear, however, whether the participants were viewing the later stages of their process as being mostly about proofreading for errors and grammar and punctuation issues or if they were looking at more substantive features of their work,

such as whether the argument is effectively structured or based on sound evidence and reasoning.

All participants seemed to deepen their understanding of the value of the research process in relationship to completing the Developmental course and encountering research requirements in other courses. Heidi even suggested that the course needed more of an emphasis on integrating research into papers. This is a useful and valid perspective about the class because participants were required to do research in multiple courses.

Limitations

One limitation of this study was the small sample size and volunteer participants, which limited the generalizability of the findings. An additional limitation was that there was always the possibility that because I was their former instructor, students may have tried responding to my questions by saying what they assumed I wanted them to tell me. To reduce this possibility, I informed them of the purpose of my research, answered questions that they had, and emphasized that honest responses would help me and other instructors to improve the design of writing courses. There was also the limitation of relying only on student perspectives about the writing they did across the curriculum. I did not examine faculty expectations and beliefs about writing in their disciplines and courses. Due to this limitation, I was unable to do a more detailed analysis of the kind of writing students who complete developmental courses commonly encounter.

Implications for Practice and Research

The design of a developmental course seems likely to help (or hinder) students with the process of transferring skills. Based on the findings of this study, I recommend several ways instructors can increase the likelihood that their students will transfer what they learned about writing in a developmental writing course into the overall curriculum. These recommendations can be applied to stand-alone developmental writing courses, integrated reading and writing courses, and courses that link credit-bearing first-year writing classes with concurrent developmental or supplemental coursework.

Instructors should put repeated and explicit emphasis on the recursive aspects of writing, making it clear to students early and often that all written work across course contexts and other day-to-day applications should go through stages of a writing process. Instructors can help students understand that, even though writing tasks might vary significantly across disciplines, process approaches to writing can be applied to composing across the curriculum. Instructors should make the complexities of each stage of the process of writing as explicit as they can. To help students understand the transferability of the process approach, faculty

members could have an instructor from a content area course visit a developmental class or make a short video to discuss how certain aspects of the writing process are particularly important to writing in another class.

One important finding in this study was that some participants might have been viewing the revision stage as being mostly about eliminating errors. This finding suggested that I might have made more concrete what happens during revision, including making it clear that revising entails much more than correcting errors. In order to help students visualize the revision process, instructors should model this stage of the writing process by having students analyze an essay that moves from a draft to a finished product, emphasizing that they should pay attention to revisions to the document beyond simply mechanical issues. Students should also be given opportunities to reflect on their own revisions so that they develop a metacognitive awareness of their evolving approach to the writing process.

Tutoring services should be carefully built

Students should also be given opportunities to reflect on their own revisions.

into the design of developmental courses. They should also be connected directly to at least one major assignment. Although the students in the Developmental class were required to use the college's online tutoring service, face-to-face tutoring seems likely to prove equally effective but potentially less accessible and convenient. One essential component to integrating tutoring services (whether online or on-site) is to have class discussions with students to help them recognize it as a form of "valued capital" that can assist them as they navigate the complex college writing expectations beyond the developmental classroom (Callahan & Chumney, 2009, p. 1623). Faculty members should also invite representatives from a college tutoring service into the class to discuss the role of tutoring in the writing process.

Students should be given ample opportunity to practice the skills of conducting research and integrating it into written work. As this study illustrates, participants encountered research requirements in writing assignments early and often in college courses. It is evident that students enrolled in developmental writing courses (and students in general) need extensive practice with these skills. Many participants in this study encountered research demands even in classes they were taking concurrently with the developmental course. To encourage transfer, instructors should emphasize the role evidence-based writing plays in college

classes and use specific examples of courses across the curriculum that require students to integrate research into writing. An in-class visit with a librarian can also play an integral role in this process. The librarian should be encouraged to discuss examples of other core courses in which the integration of research sources plays an important role in the writing process. Students from prior sections of a developmental course could also be invited into the class to discuss the ways they have used research skills when writing across the curriculum.

Future research should investigate the learning outcomes and writing skills of students who started their education in a developmental writing course designed to help students transfer knowledge about writing to other courses. This study focused primarily on participant self-reporting. It would be useful for future studies to use qualitative and quantitative research traditions to do a close analysis of student writing in both developmental courses and courses they take shortly after completing these classes. Such research can help to determine if transfer is observable in student writing.

Another area in need of further inquiry is the role that tutoring services can play in the design of developmental writing classes. In this study, the inquiry focused most explicitly on the role of the college's online tutoring service because that was the form of tutoring that students were required to use. It is important to investigate whether mandated on-site tutoring is more, less, or equally effective in student learning, motivation, and skill transfer. Furthermore, writing researchers should examine how students use support services over time, especially if it is not required of them to do so.

Conclusion

By showcasing student voices, this paper aimed to contribute to the research about improving developmental writing courses so that such courses can be designed to help students successfully navigate the complex demands of college. As Day and Goldstone (2012) have articulated, fostering knowledge transfer is not easy. If institutions want to increase student success, it seems pivotal to examine student experiences with writing and transfer at all levels. Faculty teaching developmental writing courses need to be supported and incentivized to continue learning about evidence-based approaches they can use in their classrooms. This paper adds to the research base regarding transfer of skills by illustrating that the instruction students receive can help them become aware of how what they are learning in developmental writing courses can help them in other classes. More colleges are exploring alternative ways of supporting students in need of developmental assistance (Edgecombe & Bickerstaff, 2018). As developmental education efforts continue

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

to evolve, it seems essential that these reforms include an emphasis on the need for students to receive instruction that explicitly emphasizes the transfer of knowledge and skills across contexts.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

Appendix A

Interview 1 Protocol

This interview is to be conducted at the beginning of the quarter after which students have completed the [Developmental] course.

Explanation to student:

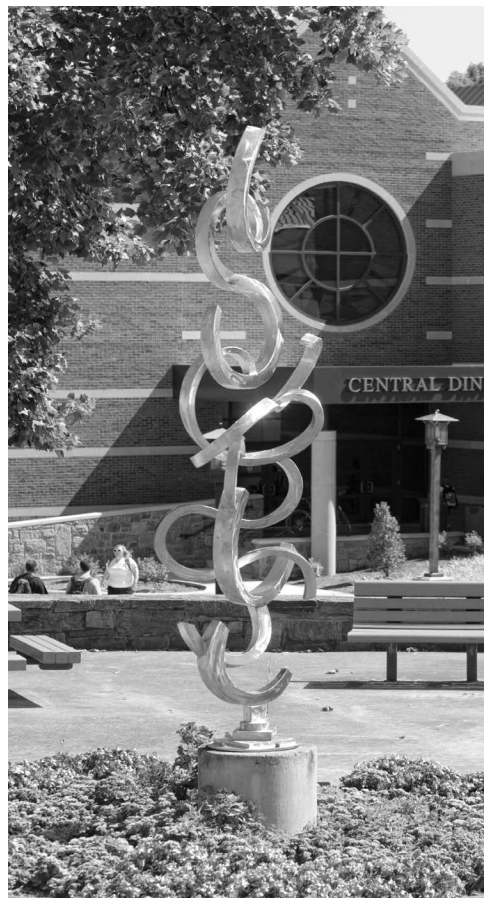
My goal in asking you the following questions is to capture a detailed account of your experiences with the [Developmental] course. Please be as detailed and honest as possible in your responses, since those are the kinds of responses that will be most helpful.

1. Can you talk to me a bit about some of your reasons for deciding to enroll at and continue your education?
2. Overall, how did your last quarter go?
3. What specific courses were you taking?
4. Can you tell me a little bit about the types of writing assignments (if any) you did for your [] course? (If student is taking more than one other course besides writing, repeat the question for each course the student is taking.)
5. Now I want to start talking about writing for college, which is what I am focusing on in my study. What kinds of writing skills and habits do you believe are necessary to being a successful college student? Where have these ideas about writing for college come from? Did you have these same ideas when you first enrolled at the college or have they changed since you started taking courses? How so?
6. Here is a bullet point overview of many of the assignments and activities from our class last quarter to refresh your memory about the course.

Bringing yourself back to our course last quarter, can you explain to me what you think were the three most helpful activities or assignments to help prepare you to become a better college writer? Why? (If respondent does not specify why it was helpful, follow up with the question: In what ways was this helpful?)

7. Can you explain to me what you think was the least helpful activity or assignment in our course last quarter to help prepare you to become a college writer? Please do not be afraid to be honest here. Your honest response to this question can be very helpful in the way the course is designed in the future.
8. Can you explain to me one way you think the course might be improved to better help students with writing for college classes? Once again, do not be afraid to be honest here. Your honest response to this question can be very helpful to improving the course's design.
9. How, if at all, did taking the writing course help you with assignments you worked on in other courses?
10. How were the writing assignments you worked on in your other courses similar to the writing assignments we worked on in our [Developmental] class? Can you talk to me about a specific assignment?
11. How were the writing assignments you were working on in your other courses different than the writing assignments we worked on in our class? Can you talk to me about a specific assignment?
12. Think about the most recent writing assignment you worked on for any of your other courses. Can you first explain to me what the assignment was and then can you walk me through your approach to working on this particular assignment, starting from the moment after the instructor gave you the assignment?
13. Imagine a student is taking a [Developmental] course similar to ours. He is not sure why he needs to develop his writing skills. He is going through the course feeling unmotivated and is beginning to fall behind. He decides to talk to the professor about his lack of motivation. What do you think the instructor might tell him or do to help motivate him to get something out of the course?
14. Now that you have completed the [Developmental] Course, what really sticks with you that you think you will do again when you have to write a paper? Follow-up in case response is not detailed: Can you tell me a little more about that?
15. Do you have anything else that you would like to share about your experience of having taken the [Developmental] course?
16. Any final questions for me?

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Appendix B

Interview 2 Protocol

The following interview protocol is to be conducted with the student participant who has completed the [Developmental] course. Although the student might be in developmental math course, his/her developmental reading and writing requirements have been completed.

As a reminder from our first interview, my goal in asking you the following questions is to capture a detailed account of your experiences. The focus of this interview will be about your experiences with writing after you have completed the [Developmental] course. Please do not be afraid of being as detailed as possible in your responses, since those are the kinds of responses that will be most helpful to me in capturing your experiences.

1. How is college going since the last time we spoke?
2. What courses are you currently taking?
3. You have had experience with several courses at the college at this point in your education. Knowing what you have experienced so far as a college student, could you share with me what you believe are some of the most important writing skills and habits necessary for college courses? In what ways (if any) has this changed since you first started as a student?
4. Can you describe for me the most recent assignment that involved writing in the _____ class? (Repeat this question and question below for all classes student has mentioned)
5. How did you approach the assignment for the _____ course?
6. How do you feel about your writing skills at this point in your education?
7. What role (if any) would you say the [Developmental] course played in your confidence to write effectively for college classes?
8. In what ways, if any, do you use what you learned in the [Developmental] course in your current courses? (*Depending on whether or not the student gives a detailed response, follow up with the question: Can you give me a specific example of an assignment or activity we did in the writing course that you feel has helped you to work on an assignment in one of the classes you are taking now?*)
9. I asked you to email me a copy of a writing assignment you worked on for one of your classes. Let's take a look at that. Being as detailed as possible, can you walk me through what steps you took to complete this assignment from the time you received the assignment from the professor to the moment you submitted it? (*If student does not give much detail, follow up with the question: Did you do anything else along the way as you worked on the assignment?*)
10. If participant does not bring this into the discussion, ask, in what ways (if any) did you use the library and/or the Academic Support Center to complete this assignment or any other writing assignments?
11. Here is a copy of your final essay from the [Developmental] course. Take a minute to look over it. Can you explain to me how your approach to working on this assignment that you emailed me was similar to or different from the way you worked on the final assignment for the [Developmental] course? (For each participant, have a copy of their work from the DED course).
12. Imagine I am a new student at the college and I am taking the Foundations of Critical Writing course. We become friends and I look to you for some guidance about college. I am not happy about having to take the writing course, so I go to you and I ask: "What is the point of having to take this class?" What would you tell me? (If student is not detailed, follow up with "What can I get from taking this course?")
13. Knowing what you know now about college writing, what do you think could have been covered in the [Developmental] course that was not covered?
14. Do you have any final thoughts that would capture some of your experiences with writing this past quarter?
15. Final questions or comments?