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New genres and new challenges : five interdisciplinary case studies of master's student writers.

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NEW GENRES AND NEW CHALLENGES: FIVE INTERDISCIPLINARY CASE
STUDIES OF MASTER'S STUDENT WRITERS

By

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M.A., University of Massachusetts Boston, 2011

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ABSTRACT

NEW GENRES AND NEW CHALLENGES: FIVE INTERDISCIPLINARY CASE
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Meghan Hancock

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In the area of graduate writing research, Rhetoric and Composition scholarship

has focused mainly on students of English and their experiences as novice writing

teachers, or on students who are nearing the end of their graduate experience and are in

the writing stage of their culminating projects, like dissertations. Few case studies in

Rhetoric and Composition have been conducted on graduate student writers, particularly

graduate students from multiple disciplines. This dissertation sets out to address this gap

in conducting five interdisciplinary case studies of new master's student writers as they

navigate their first semester of graduate school and learn how to adapt, transform or

disregard their previous undergraduate writing practices to meet the demands of the new

genres they encounter at the graduate level.

Chapter one provides an overview of scholarship that has been conducted in

Rhetoric and Composition and the sub-field of Applied Linguistics on graduate students

as writers, teachers, and scholars, and argues that my study addresses the need for more

interdisciplinary case studies of how new graduate students describe their experiences as

writers in their first semester of graduate school. Chapter two describes the study's

methodology, which draws from case study theory and Julie Lindquist's notion of slow research. Chapter three includes two analyses of graduate genres—the Physiology seminar Report and the Seminar Paper (from an English seminar), and how both faculty and students understand the conventions and goals of these genres. Chapter four describes the experiences of two students from English and Social work who attempt to transfer writing knowledge from their undergraduate writing experiences to their new graduate-level writing contexts. I interpret one student's experience as reflecting what Rebecca Nowacek terms "frustrated transfer," and the other student's experience as "successful integration." In Chapter five, I argue for writing instruction in disciplinary introductory graduate writing courses that thoroughly scaffolds classroom genres, incorporates discussions of how such genres compare to genres at work in the discipline, and makes room for students to reflect upon past writing experiences in comparison to present graduate-level writing tasks in order to provide new graduate students with the writing support they need in the first semester.

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CHAPTER ONE

SETTING THE STAGE FOR GRADUATE WRITING RESEARCH: AN
INTRODUCTION

Origins

I still remember my first graduate seminar so vividly.

I had temp. jobs on and off the previous year, unsurprisingly finding it difficult to

sell my English degree as a relevant credential for the few unrelated positions I was able

to find in my hometown. When I found out I was accepted to a graduate program, I was

ecstatic. Not only did it mean I could continue my studies, I could leave Maine—a place I

had loved as my home my whole life, but had outgrown. I considered myself to be a good

student. I had graduated *cum laude* with a 3.45 cumulative GPA, worked as a peer tutor

at my university's Writing Center, and had several faculty members willing to write me

enthusiastic letters of recommendation. They all assured me I could do it, and I believed

them.

When I showed up at that first seminar meeting, all of that confidence

disappeared. My experience didn't matter anymore. The desks were arranged in a big

square, so I couldn't hide if I needed to. I nervously took my seat and tried to force a

smile. The syllabus was handed out. My eyes widened at the weekly reading

requirements, but especially at the term paper, which was expected to be as long as both

of my final papers for my most recent undergraduate courses combined. When the discussion began over an excerpt from a literary text, things got worse. Here, in this room, were all of these other students who had similar or possibly even more credentials than I had, and they all sounded smarter than me. Somehow they all knew when to jump into the conversation without raising their hands. I chose to stay silent, rather than risk sounding like I didn't belong. What had I gotten myself into?

Of course, eventually I adjusted, as most new graduate students do. I learned how to politely insert myself into seminar discussions when there was a pause in the dialogue. I learned what seminar papers were and how to write them within a few days of the due date when I would inevitably procrastinate. I learned how to deal with a heavy reading load by paying attention to sections I had something to say about. Though many other new graduate students like myself learned to adjust and adapt to the expectations of graduate writing, many still have to experience the isolation, confusion, and crisis of identity that I felt. How might my experience have been different if I had had more support from my program from the beginning? Instead of assuming I would figure things out on my own eventually, how much less anxious and scared would I have been as a new graduate writer? As Patricia Sullivan (1991) long ago stated, "most graduate faculty assume that graduate students, by definition, 'already know how to write,' and thus writing assumes a secondary and often marginal role in graduate education" (285). Though this perception of graduate student writers is slowly changing, there still remains a lack of adequate support and instruction for student writers in graduate education across the disciplines, and part of this lack of available instruction is due to the fact that so little studies have been conducted on how new graduate students actually learn how to write at

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the graduate level in their first semester. Perhaps if Rhetoric and Composition scholars conducted more studies on this transitional period for new graduate students, faculty involved in graduate education across the disciplines would have a better notion of how to best approach the task of preparing, teaching, and supporting graduate students as they enter this more demanding and more rigorous level of their education.

This very task is what my project set out to accomplish in its five case studies of new Master's student writers from three disciplines at the same four-year university. I sought to learn how new graduate students across the disciplines learn how to produce what each of their disciplines consider graduate-level writing. In my study, I examine interviews I conducted with graduate students at the beginning, middle, and end of their first semester (as well as a few interviews with students during the succeeding spring semester) to learn about how they interpreted the new genres they were assigned, how they strategized writing those new genres, and what they found overall overwhelming or successful about their first semester. I also chose to interview three professors (each professor taught at least one of my students) asking them questions about how they value graduate writing pedagogy, what genres they prioritized in their instruction of new graduate students, and how they designed their courses. Finally, I interviewed administrators from each of my students' programs, asking them similar questions about graduate writing pedagogy and how their programs overall prioritized the instruction of their new graduate students. The texts I was able to collect from my students and their faculty (syllabi, assignments, drafts, etc.) factored into my analyses of the genres my students were learning, as well as to add context to my discussion of their courses' structures and curricula. What I then propose is a graduate writing pedagogy in the

disciplines that connects discussions of instructional genres (genres that only exist for classroom purposes) with discussions of the kinds of knowledge creation and circulation that are made possible by the kinds of genres that exist in a given discipline (outside the classroom context). This pedagogy is most important in any discipline-specific introductory graduate writing course in the first semester of a graduate student's career, but would also be helpful in other graduate-level seminars. To justify this pedagogy as well as to analyze my data, I will be using theoretical frameworks from transfer theory, genre theory, and genre pedagogy. I will also be providing brief reviews of the major scholarship on these theories in chapters two and three before describing my data and analyses.

Before I can delve into the specifics of my study, I will first discuss how Rhetoric and Composition has studied graduate students in the past, as well as some exciting new directions to graduate writing scholarship that has recently emerged. The succeeding section, then, is a review of literature emerging from the discipline of Composition Rhetoric on graduate students of English as well as some studies on graduate students across the disciplines. This review is meant to represent some of the major voices in the conversation about graduate students as writers, teachers, scholars and budding professionals, and to identify a gap in interdisciplinary studies on new graduate student writers as they transition from undergraduate writing practices to the writing expected of them at the graduate level.

Review of Literature

English Graduate Program Curricula Design

The majority of scholarship on graduate pedagogy emerging from Rhetoric and Composition has limited its focus to graduate students and graduate programs of English, while graduate genre analyses and both disciplinary and interdisciplinary studies of graduate student writers occur mainly in Linguistics (specifically English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes). These studies will be discussed later in this section. One large focus for graduate-related research has been on English graduate program curricula. Some scholars have discussed the importance of incorporating new media instruction and courses focused on digital literacy in Rhetoric and Composition graduate programs (Blair; Eyman et al; Knievel and Sheridan; Yancey 2009), as well as have discussed the importance of the role of the foreign language requirement (Patty). Other work has taken a wider scope, studying and evaluating the overall design of English graduate programs (Lunsford et al; Lauer; Mountford and Reynolds; Pemberton; Young and Steinberg), conducting surveys on overall impressions of the purpose of graduate training in Rhetoric and Composition programs (Covino et al), what kinds of courses are offered (Golding and Mascaro; Graves and Solomon), as well as what kinds of course texts are assigned (Peirce and Enos). Scholars have also explored how well English graduate programs are preparing graduate students for the kinds of work they may encounter after graduation, and how such professionalization opportunities should be structured or implemented in graduate programs. One major professionalization concern has been how graduate programs might prepare graduate students for work expected of a writing program administrator (Thomas), and how to avoid the exploitation of graduate student administrators as cheap labor and expecting too much of them in such roles ("IWCA Position Statement").

Multiple surveys have been conducted to gauge how English graduate student administrators perceive the support and development opportunities available to them in their programs (Elder et al), to gauge how graduate students perceive the training available to them for future WPA work after graduation (Ebest; McNabb et. al), and to gauge what kinds of work graduate student administrators of writing programs (Edgington and Taylor) and graduate student administrators of writing centers (Rowan 2007, 2009) are expected to do. Past English graduate student administrators have also been surveyed to see how their training while graduate student administrators has prepared them for their current work as professionals in the discipline (Anson and Rutz). Some scholars, however, have sought to expand the notion of graduate professionalization to mean more than just gaining administrative experience or knowledge, like offering courses that prepare students for multimodal composing or teaching (Graupner et al; Hauman et. al), courses that focus solely on issues like assessment at both the programmatic and university level (Wittman), and professional development opportunities that allow graduate students to explore alternate career paths to those in academia (Ball) or work as individual writing consultants (Tauber). Other work has examined whether English graduate programs are too limiting in their representation of the actual, lived work of the field in their preoccupation with research and disciplinary content knowledge (Long et. al), whether programs leave out issues like community literacy and outreach (Miller 2001), or whether the term "professional" might be queered to give graduate students more agency and power over what they consider to be professionalization (Strouse).

Another of the more popular topics concerning English graduate program curricula has been the potentialities and pitfalls of the introductory teaching practicum course. Such studies were conducted to address problems faculty have with trying to reconcile pressures to include everything a new teacher of writing should know, while simultaneously covering an exhaustive survey of Rhetoric and Composition scholarship (Reid 2004). Sidney Dobrin's essay collection, *Don't Call It That: The Composition Practicum*, is one of the more well-known texts for discussion of the composition practicum, and covers topics from the use of theory in practica courses to how composition practica play a role in professional development for graduate students who hope to pursue careers in teaching. Other work involving teaching practicum curricula has discussed how to take advantage of the difficulty that graduate students of English have with their conflicting roles (as brand new teachers *and* as brand new graduate students) in order to foster opportunities for them to reflect on how this positionality gives them a unique perspective in understanding their own students' struggles with reading difficult texts and meeting the demands of academic discourse (Dryer; Hesse; Reid 2009; Restaino). Other scholars have examined additional training experiences for novice graduate student teachers, like working in writing centers (Ianetta et al), working as mentors in first-year writing classrooms (Henry and Bruland), and connecting literature courses with the teaching practicum in order to teach students how to apply composition pedagogy to their potential future experiences teaching literature (Schilb). While such research on the teaching practicum and other training opportunities for new graduate teachers is essential for instructors who feel overwhelmed with the course's many functions and responsibilities, as well as for graduate students who feel

overwhelmed with their first crack at teaching, little Rhetoric and Composition research has been done that primarily focuses on graduate students as student writers (in the discipline of English or otherwise) who may be struggling in their other coursework.

It is interesting that so much work in Rhetoric and Composition has been on the concerns of professionalization and teacher training, while research on graduate students (in or out of the discipline of English) as writers has been so sparse. Perhaps this is due to the fact that as graduate teaching assistants or as graduate administrators, graduate students are representing the work of their programs at the university level. It makes sense, then, that programs would want to do everything in their power to make sure graduate students who represent the instruction or administration of their programs are as successful as possible. Otherwise, they risk hurting the perception of their program by the university at large, which may in turn affect future funding and enrollment. If students are able to procure impressive academic careers after graduation, this also reflects well on a given program's success and value. Unfortunately, this does not bode well for the graduate student of English who may be well supported in their roles as teachers or administrators, but are still struggling with their coursework and writing practices.

English Introductory Graduate Writing Course Design

In the first decade of the 2000's, some scholarship began to address this gap by proposing how new English graduate writers can receive more focused reading and writing instruction apart from the composition teaching practicum. Noting that not much research has been done on the kinds of reading new graduate students of English are assigned in their introductory courses (most commonly the composition teaching practicum), Sheryl L. Fontaine and Susan M. Hunter argue for an introductory Rhetoric

and Composition survey course that assigns an "alternative genre" instructional textbook. This textbook, they describe, would cover "methods of inquiry" important for new graduate students to know that "is written specifically for the novice, student audience" and "reads in a voice whose real, immediate quality extends an invitation to the reader" (207). This is in opposition to what Steve North describes as the "magisterial approach" between professor and student, where graduate students, "through a sink-or-swim process," are expected to replicate the work of the professor as well as other established scholars through the immersion approach to instruction, where graduate students are assigned a plethora of the professional literature of the discipline (198 and 29).

In other words, in such a relationship, teacher and student are master and apprentice—the student is expected to learn both the knowledge and the ways of constructing knowledge in the discipline by immersing themselves in scholarship that uses esoteric language and terminology the student may find entirely foreign. The fact that Fontaine and Hunter's pedagogy involves meeting new graduate students where they are instead of assuming they will learn the writing and reading practices—and major scholarship—of their discipline through an immersive approach is both admirable and realistic. A textbook specifically designed to introduce new graduate students of English to the conversation of Rhetoric and Composition—students who Fontaine and Hunter describe as "at the threshold of disciplinary knowledge"—is a step in the right direction when considering what kinds of pedagogical approaches might be less intimidating. However, the voices of graduate students who may or may not find such an approach helpful are missing from this discussion—how do we know if this approach would indeed be helpful if we do not hear from students?

Unlike Fontaine and Hunter, Laura Micciche chose to co-author her article with her graduate student Allison Carr, and speaks for the importance of an introductory reading and writing course (what Micciche calls "comp for grad students") for new graduate students of English. Micciche's work grows out of her observation of the lack of "direct writing instruction for graduate students"—a problem that she sees as "[reinforcing] misperceptions that writing competency amounts to a set of static skills learned once and for all" (494). Though "compositionists have sought to counter this faulty assumption, arguing convincingly that writing competency is recursive and relative to genre conventions and discourse community knowledge," Micciche argues that this thinking has not significantly affected graduate education" (494). Micciche agrees with scholars like Fontaine and Hunter in arguing that the immersion approach—or what she calls learning through "osmosis"—does not work for the majority of graduate students.

Instead, Micciche teaches "critical writing" in her comp for grad students course through a supportive and collaborative workshop format, or "writing that takes as its point of departure other people's writing" in order to show graduate students how they can also take part in the conversation of the discipline (480). The workshop "arms" new graduate students with a "set of adaptable rhetorical principles usable for different purposes, audiences, genres, and rhetorical constraints" (494). Micciche's carefully scaffolded approach to graduate writing instruction in her workshop that approaches genre and the conversation of the discipline from a more meta-approach (instead of teaching disciplinary genres as isolated and static) is similar to the graduate writing pedagogy I propose, though the experiences of her students (including Carr, the student she lists as a co-author) are in the background (sometimes literally, as Carr's comments

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are included in textboxes in the margins of the article). Bringing what graduate student writers made of their learning experiences in her course to the forefront would make studies like Micciche's more grounded and supported, which is why I chose to base my study around the responses of graduate student writers.

Regardless of approach, scholarship like Fontaine, Hunter, and Micciche's is still essential to the improvement of graduate pedagogy in English, as too often new English graduate students are expected to learn too much too fast in their first year of graduate school. To further address the unpreparedness of English graduate students, scholars like Peter H. Khost et al. propose making graduate seminars more pragmatic in nature, assigning genres like autoethnographies, reflections on how students understand their own writing processes, designing of lesson plans, and discussing labor issues and the state of the job market. In such a course, students are able to reflect upon their futures in the profession and their identities as scholars and writers as well as learning about disciplinary content knowledge and research practices. Peter Vandenberg and Jennifer Clary-Lemon (2007) propose a similar pedagogy for graduate seminars in which students are removed from their disciplinary contexts in the classroom and required to conduct research in their local communities, allowing students to connect the disciplinary knowledge they gain in their reading to real, embodied experiences in "localized publics" (99). Nancy Mack, in order to make the theories graduate students encounter in her Rhetoric and Composition survey more accessible and less intimidating, assigns a parody assignment that asks students to write parodies of various "theory camps," encouraging students to make light of scholarship that seems daunting, and to see their "field of study…[as] a wide-open space that…[they] feel welcome to explore" (435). The

inclusive and empathetic intentions behind the pedagogies these scholars describe is certainly a step in the right direction for graduate writing studies, as it demonstrates that the field of Rhetoric and Composition is becoming more open to discussing graduate students as writers who need more focused attention in order to learn the writing and reading practices expected of them in their discipline. However, in order to more accurately design such introductory writing courses in any discipline (and in order to better serve graduate students throughout their graduate writing careers), interdisciplinary studies are needed that closely research new graduate students' learning processes as writers during their first semester.

Studies of English Graduate Student Teaching Assistants

Some work in Rhetoric and Composition has focused on the difficulties of graduate student writers, though the majority of this work was again on graduate students of English. Scholars like Patricia Sullivan discuss issues that graduate students have with a lack of instruction on critical writing about literature at the graduate level (1991) and how graduate students come to conceive of target audiences for their writing in literature seminars (1989). Though Sullivan's work was limited to students in literature courses, Sullivan's arguments that graduate students spend more time being immersed in the texts of the discipline instead of being instructed how to *write* about those texts is important because it implies that graduate students are not automatically equipped with the knowledge that they are assumed to have when entering a program. Her article about target audiences is similarly important, as it discusses how graduate students are forced to create their own strategies to help them with issues like audience in writing for their coursework because they are not given the kinds of instruction that would allow them to

develop and think about audience awareness in graduate-level writing. Lynn Bloom, concerned with the writing anxiety issues she noticed in workshops she implemented "to help anxious writers overcome their problems," studies doctoral and master's students in these workshops to get a sense of the major causes of such anxieties, like problems with topic choice and advisors, as well as underpreparedness in research methodologies before undertaking theses or dissertations (1981). Bloom's work was an important piece that identified graduate students as a population in need of more support. The lack of support for graduate students of English was causing the kinds of writing anxiety issues that Bloom discusses, and her incorporation of student voices into her article lent authenticity to her arguments and justification to her proposed solutions for support, like proper mentoring practices and allowing time and space for students to explore their research topics. Still, though Bloom and Sullivan's work was important for drawing attention to the issues that graduate student writers of English deal with because of a lack of writing support, and though they do gather comments from the students they analyze, their studies did not take advantage of the in-depth case study approach, and ended up painting a shallower picture of their students' experiences.

Some more recent work has researched the experiences of graduate students as novice writing teachers. This work has come the closest to conducting the type of in-depth study of graduate student writers in Rhetoric and Composition that I envisioned for my own project. Such scholarship is very promising and shows that the discipline is increasingly interested in conducting in-depth case studies of new graduate students. Jessica Restaino's recent book, *First Semester: Graduate Students, Teaching, Writing, and the Challenge of the Middle Ground* is the first in-depth case study of new graduate

student teachers of writing in Rhetoric and Composition—teachers who Restaino argues

are the "shaky foundation on which writing programs...rest," as they, in many English

departments, make up the majority of first-year writing instructors (1-2). Restaino studies

four graduate students during their first semester of teaching at a state university, and

focuses largely on the identity conflicts that arise from graduate teaching assistants who

must pose as experts of writing while they are often completely new to the experience,

and while they are students of writing themselves. Restaino draws from the "survival

skills" and strategies that these GTA's used to overcome what became to them a very

difficult task—to teach first-year writing without the kinds of insider knowledge of

Rhetoric and Composition scholarship or adequate time to discover their own pedagogies

that they felt would have better prepared them for their work in the classroom (1).

Developing survival skills that allow for quick solutions is understandable, Restaino

argues, as most GTA's only receive a brief and inadequate orientation before they start

teaching and a practicum during their first semester of teaching (instead of before, in

preparation). Restaino encourages GTA's and instructors of GTA's to consider the

connection between their work as teachers and Hannah Arendt's theories of labor, work

and action—to see the labor they do as teachers as linked to real action and work that

makes a difference for their students and the development of the discipline overall.

Grading, for example, can become either work or labor, depending on the form and

function the grading takes on. Restaino's study encourages further reflection on how

programs train their GTA's before stepping into a classroom, and how important it is to

not only adequately prepare them, but to make sure GTA instruction routinely connects

the labor of GTA's to the larger work of the discipline, so GTA's feel more like active agents who are contributing to a body of knowledge.

Dylan Dryer's Braddock Award winning essay, "At a Mirror Darkly: The Imagined Undergraduate Writers of Ten Novice Composition Instructors" is also a case study conducted on new graduate writing teachers. Dryer's study is born out of observations that the field of Rhetoric and Composition has been largely oblivious to the conflicts and tension novice teachers feel when asked to teach a course as experts when they themselves are novice writers at the graduate level. Dryer studied how the comments that ten graduate teaching assistants in the teaching practicum at a state university make on their students' essays reflect their attitudes toward learning academic discourse. Dryer found that the GTA's he studied expressed ambivalence about the conventions of academic writing, especially those GTA's who had taken first-year writing as undergraduates. The GTA's also spent more time talking about what student writers were lacking than discussing the potential of their student's writing—comments that Dryer argues are reflected in their ambivalence toward their own insecurities as writers. In other words, the GTA's were projecting their own writing anxieties onto the student papers they were responding to. Dryer argues that in order to make these connections both explicit and productive for graduate students who are learning to teach writing, we need to bring the work that GTA's are doing as teachers, as writers in coursework, and in the workplace into "productive tension" with each other, so GTA's can more fully understand their own theories of writing pedagogy, and how they bring what they value about writing to the classroom (442).

Dryer's concern that graduate teaching assistants are forced to take on conflicting

roles as teachers, writers, and workers without being given the chance to reflect upon

those tensions is similar to how new graduate students struggle as they enter a program

without the kinds of writing instruction they need (writing instruction that would

hopefully incorporate opportunities to reflect upon how their past writing experiences

compare to new writing expectations at the graduate level). Similarly, Restaino's concern

that graduate student teachers do not feel prepared to take on the labor of teaching or that

the labor they do (because of that under preparation) is valuable to the field, is

comparable to how new graduate students feel as writers in their coursework as they

struggle to connect the genres they learn to the work of the discipline. Restaino's study,

in particular, is very in-depth, providing readers with rich descriptions of the graduate

students she analyzes, lending authenticity to her students' stories. This is a practice that I

value as a researcher, and I drew on Restaino's study as a model for how I describe my

own students and their experiences in my study.

While Restaino and Dryer's pieces signal an exciting move in Rhetoric and

Composition toward research on the experiences of new graduate students (and how they

are expected to take on tasks in the first semester without being adequately instructed

first), these case studies are still viewing their graduate student participants through the

lens of novice writing teachers in English graduate programs instead of primarily as

novice student writers.

Studies of Graduate Student Writers

So, though there have been several case studies focused specifically on Master's

students as novice teachers in Rhetoric and Composition, as well as a few studies on

graduate students of English and their difficulties learning the kinds of writing they were expected to learn in their isolated discipline, there has been little scholarship on how new Master's students from multiple disciplines go through the process of learning to write in their discipline. Paul Prior's book, *Writing/Disiplinarity: A Sociohistoric Account of Literate Activity in the Academy* is one of those few studies. Prior conducted in-depth case studies of three graduate seminars (in American studies, education and geography), with some of those seminars containing both Master's and PhD students. Prior examines interactions among students and their professors in the classroom, student writing (both drafts and final versions of major assignments), as well as the professors' responses to their students' writing. Prior chooses graduate seminars as a site for his research, as he sees graduate study as a time during which students are disciplinarily enculturated, and taught the ins and outs of their fields in order to eventually become members of those communities themselves. Prior's analysis complicates common conceptions of disciplinarity, as he claims that "writing and disciplinarity are laminated, not autonomous, that every moment implicates multiple activities, weaves together multiple histories, and exists within the chronotopic networks of lifeworlds where boundaries of time and space are highly permeable" (277). Prior also makes use of activity theory in his study, describing how his participants move between different genre systems as they learn the discourses of their disciplines. Dana Britt Lundell and Richard Beach conduct a similar study of eleven dissertation writers from education and humanities departments at one university, describing the "double binds" doctoral students find themselves in as they write their dissertations while also participating in different genre systems that required them to "[socially] and [politically negotiate] with their programs through various "rules,

advisors, committee members, T.A. teaching demands, peers, families, and the potential job market" (491). Lundell and Beach identify several contradictions in these demands, making it difficult for doctoral students to meet all of the expectations of their programs and otherwise.

Carol Berkenkotter, Thomas Huckin, and John Ackerman's 1988 article, "Conventions, Conversations, and the Writer: Case Study of a Student in a Rhetoric PhD Program" is another one of the very few in-depth case studies in Rhetoric and Composition that does not involve graduate students' struggles with teaching (as Restaino's and Dryer's studies do), but instead involves a graduate student as he struggles with learning to write for his discipline. Berkenkotter et al. study Nate, a new Rhetoric PhD student, and conduct interviews with him about his writing as well as analyze the writing he does for his coursework. Nate struggles to please his professors, lamenting that "[he is] butting heads finally with ACADEMIC WRITING—and it is monstrous and unfathomable" (21). He feels that the theorists he reads like "Young, Waller, and Flower write differently from [him]" and that they "have access to the code while "[he does] not" (21). Berkenkotter et al. eventually arrive at the conclusion that Nate learns to adapt his writing style to one deemed more appropriate for work in a PhD Rhetoric program, but Catherine Prendergast, in "Catching Up With Professor Nate: the Problem with Sociolinguistics in Composition Research" finds fault in Berkenkotter et al.'s "initiation study," arguing that looking at writing samples like Nate's from a sociolinguistic perspective makes a lot of assumptions that cannot be corroborated merely from textual analysis of Nate's writing. Unfortunately, since Berkenkotter et al.'s study of Nate and Prior's study of interdisciplinary graduate seminars, little scholarship in Rhetoric and

Composition has further investigated the process graduate students go through as they learn the new writing conventions and genres of the fields they are entering into—studies that Catherine Prendergast refers to as "initiation studies" that "focus on the student's negotiation of the clash between a previous discourse and the discourse of [a] new community" (40).

Scholarship on Graduate Student Writers from English for Academic Purposes/English for Specific Purposes

The subfields of English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes, emerging out of Applied Linguistics, have fortunately produced an abundance of scholarship revolving around graduate student writers. These sources tend to be geared toward international graduate students—a population of students many faculty have more quickly recognized as needing more explicit and focused writing instruction—as well as instructors who are interested in taking a genre approach of instruction to graduate writing pedagogy. English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes have produced a multitude of helpful analyses of graduate genres like the qualitative dissertation (Belcher and Hirvela), the thesis (Cooley and Lewkowicz), classroom writing assignments (Cooper and Bikowski), the dissertation acknowledgements page (Hyland 2004), the literature review (Melles; Zhu and Cheng), the submission letter (Swales 1996), and the seminar presentation (Weissberg). There have also been guidebooks on academic research writing specifically aimed toward graduate student writers (Swales and Feak 2004). John M. Swales and Christine Feak have published many helpful guides on how to compose specific genres that graduate students may need to know, like the abstract, the introduction, the literature review, statements of purpose, letters of

recommendation, and responses to journal reviewers (Swales and Feak 2011). Some EAP/ESP scholars have taken a wider view of graduate literacy, publishing work on how to best utilize mentors and navigate the complexities of graduate programs overall (Casanave et al; Harwood and Petric). Finally, EAP/ESP scholars have put quite a bit of focus on the sharing of possible pedagogies for teaching graduate genres effectively (Allison et al; Aranha; Belcher; Bitchener and Basturkmen; Charles; Cheng; Delyser; Ding; Hyon; Paltridge; Reiff and Bawarshi; Sundstrom; Tardy 2006).

Some of these genre-based studies are very helpful in thinking about ways to approach graduate writing instruction from a genre perspective for *any* student—not just ELL graduate students, who tend to be the main research focus for most EAP/ESP research on graduate writers. Solange Aranha, in her chapter about a genre-based writing course, makes a point to acknowledge that "the fact that a graduate student is not alien to a foreign language or its culture does not mean that he/she is able to write texts in that language" (466). She adds that "recognizing and reading academic texts proficiently is not a guarantee that one is able to produce texts according to the constraints of academic genres which are likely to be accepted by individual academic discourse communities" (466). Aranha's course is carefully scaffolded around students' past experiences with writing genres, as she spends the first week asking students to reflect on their background knowledge of research writing by having students take a needs analysis questionnaire, as well as to discuss what they identified as genre conventions in sample research articles that were assigned as reading. The kind of course that Aranha describes—one that is designed around students' previous knowledge and expectations of graduate writing genres—is similar to the kinds of courses and pedagogies that I argue for in my study.

Aranha's course is much more sensitive to slowly introducing graduate students to the kinds of writing they will be expected to produce in graduate school, incorporating analyses of genres students find through research into their own disciplines into class discussions and assignments.

Though this is what I envision as very effective and thoughtful pedagogy for graduate writing courses, Aranha's arguments—along with much of the other work on genre pedagogies from EAP/ESP scholars I listed previously—are aimed toward graduate students who are in the ending stages of their programs and are working on either publications or their culminating projects (theses and dissertations). I see these kinds of pedagogies (ones that are helpful for native English-speaking and ELL graduate writers alike) to be much more effective if instead incorporated in introductory writing courses at the beginning of graduate students' careers. Also, many of the genre-based writing courses described by Aranha and others in EAP/ESP are open to graduate students of any discipline[1], and indeed, there are advantages to students sharing the disciplinary writing practices of their fields with students of other fields. However, if these kinds of genre-based pedagogies are taught in discipline-specific introductory writing courses or even incorporated into upper-level discipline-specific courses, they could be more effective, as the instructor has insider knowledge about writing for their discipline to be shared with their students (as I later argue).

Finally, in 2016, *The Routledge Guide of English for Academic Purposes* was published, providing in-depth analyses of graduate genres like the seminar, the abstract, etc., as well as helpful literature reviews of work done in English for Academic Purposes

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[1] See The Consortium on Graduate Communication website for sample syllabi from these kinds of writing courses offered at universities internationally.

on graduate student writers. Though this guide might be seen as problematic because it offers some descriptions of academic research genres as isolated with relatively static conventions, it is a very helpful source for instructors who are looking to incorporate pedagogies proposed by EAP/ESP scholars into their classrooms. *Supporting Graduate Writers: Research, Curriculum & Program Design*, by Simpson et. al, also emerged in 2016, providing surveys of graduate writing instruction offered by programs around world, as well as descriptions of specific pedagogies and support programs for graduate writers (though, again, the majority of these studies were designed with international graduate students as their pedagogical aim). The fact that an entire book is now dedicated to research in graduate writing instruction certainly indicates a turn toward a more concerted effort by scholars to discuss and address the writing struggles of graduate students that have flown under the radar for far too long.

The kind of dedication to graduate writing pedagogy that has been produced in EAP and ESP is certainly admirable, especially given the increasing number of international graduate students who are coming to the U.S. to continue their education. EAP and ESP scholars have been more attentive to the struggles of graduate student writers and more willing to admit that graduate students are not getting the kinds of instruction they sorely need than have scholars of Rhetoric and Composition. Perhaps this is due to the fact that most Rhetoric and Composition scholars are teachers of writing (especially new graduate students who are working as graduate teaching assistants to fund their education), and if you can teach writing, you most likely already know how to write well enough to adapt to new genres, or have the skills to be able to teach yourself how to write at the graduate level.

The kind of attention that EAP/ESP scholars have dedicated to graduate writers is needed for native English-speaking graduate students *as well as* international graduate students across the disciplines. While ELL graduate students certainly need more focused attention, especially given the fact that they are often developing their skills at a different language than their first at the same time as they are acclimating to the expectations of graduate-level writing, native English-speaking graduate students are also new to graduate school and need guidance in the kinds of writing they are expected to produce. As Pierre Bourdieu et. al long ago stated, "Academic language...is no one's mother tongue," and though they've had some practice with it at the undergraduate level, academic writing at the graduate level is different (8). There are new genres to learn, new expectations to meet like publications or presentations, and new professional responsibilities to take on alongside of coursework. Offering writing instruction to graduate students during their transitional first semester, so they can learn about these new expectations immediately, would be incredibly helpful and productive. The majority of studies emerging from EAP/ESP, though, focus on pedagogies aimed toward students who are in the stages of writing their culminating projects or attempting to publish with colleagues, instead of on newer graduate students who are transitioning from undergraduate to graduate writing practices.

My Study and Outline of Chapters

My study builds upon the literature I have discussed here by examining a population of graduate student that remains rather understudied in Rhetoric and Composition scholarship and EAP/ESP scholarship—the Master's student—during the first semester of graduate study. My study expands upon the work of scholars like Prior

and Berkenkotter et. al by analyzing how new graduate students learn the kinds of writing expected of them by their discipline of choice, and the work of EAP and ESP scholars by incorporating analyses of the major classroom genres that graduate students identified in their coursework (and genres their professors identified as essential for new graduate students to learn first in their discipline).

In the chapters that follow, I will first describe the methods I implemented in gathering as well as interpreting my data (Chapter 2). In Chapter 2, I provide some brief biographies of each of my participants, describing their backgrounds, research interests, and notable life experiences to give the reader an understanding of who these students are as people. I describe my data gathering process, consisting of semi-structured interviews during the beginning, middle and end of the fall semester of 2015 with five first-semester Master's students from the disciplines of Physiology, Social Work, and English, professors from each discipline who were teaching at least two students in my study, and at least one administrator from each discipline. I also describe the kinds of texts I collected and discussed in my study, like syllabi, assignment descriptions, and some student writing. I also provide justification for my choice of case study as my study's methodology, using theory from scholars like Thomas Newkirk, who warns against simplifying data gathered from qualitative research by placing it within a particular narrative construct like the "success story format" that "shows the extraordinary development" of a writer which can "...[pose] the obvious potential problem of creating such a unidimensionally positive picture of the learner that readers will reject it as unrealistic" ("Narrative Roots" 143).

In Chapter 3, I analyze some of the key instructional genres that graduate students, their professors, and their administrators discussed in interviews. Focusing narrowly on the genres of the research seminar report from Physiology and the seminar paper from English, I draw from my students', professors', and administrators' comments to discuss what the conventions of these instructional genres appear to be, how they are being taught to students and written by students, and how professors and administrators understand these genres to be teaching the kinds of writing their discipline eventually expects of graduate students. I discuss the pedagogical approaches of professors from English and Physiology—one offering a more scaffolded and supportive approach to the teaching of genre than the other. I then argue for graduate writing pedagogies (either in discipline-specific introductory writing courses or incorporated into upper-level courses) that allow for critique and discussion of examples of real genres in the discipline and explicit discussions of how instructional genres relate to or contrast from real genres in the discipline.

In Chapter 4, I discuss how graduate students' writing knowledge from their previous undergraduate writing contexts transfers to their learning of new graduate genres. I focus narrowly on two students' (one from Social Work, and one from English) experiences in trying to come to terms with the new expectations of graduate-level writing in their coursework, and analyze how they are describing comparisons between the kinds of writing they did as undergraduates and the work they are now being asked to do in their graduate coursework. I discuss these acts of both successful transfer and frustrated transfer through the lens of Rebecca Nowacek's theories of transfer as acts of recontextualization or transformation of information to meet the needs of new writing

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situations. I use her terms "frustrated transfer" and "successful integration" to refer to each of these students. One student is more successful in her "selling" of the new texts she was able to write by recognizing the difference in her new writing situation from the writing situations she encountered as an undergraduate, while the other student has trouble reconciling her past writing knowledge with the writing tasks she is met with in her graduate program, as she had changed disciplines and was entering graduate school for the first time. I end with recommendations for graduate writing pedagogies that make space for discussions of graduate students' past writing experiences and disciplines in order to more productively introduce new writing expectations of graduate school and disciplinary ways of knowing.

Chapter 5 concludes my study with some recommendations for graduate writing pedagogy that is more attentive to the act of transition that new graduate students are going through when they enter their programs, making room for discipline-specific (or interdisciplinary) introductory graduate writing courses that allow for discussions of genre and past writing experiences. I also make recommendations for pedagogies that can be incorporated into any graduate course, allowing for professors who are active members of a discipline themselves and often produce writing that advances that discipline to share their expertise with students. Finally, I provide some recommendations for further graduate writing scholarship that is still needed in Rhetoric and Composition, mainly more studies on Master's students that examine the transitional period between undergraduate-level writing practices and graduate writing practices.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODS

The case study as a research method appealed to me when deciding how to go about studying the transition between writing as an undergraduate student to writing as a graduate student. In my use of "case study" as a term here, I am distinguishing between the terms "method" and "methodology" using Gesa Kirsch and Patricia A. Sullivan's definition in *Methods and Methodology in Case Study Research*—that "*method* [is] a technique or way of proceeding or gathering evidence…and *methodology* as the underlying theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed" (2). In what follows, I will discuss some of my reasoning behind choosing this method as well as some exemplary case studies I have come across in my research that I find particularly effective as models for my own research

First, case studies appealed to me because they allow for different kinds of data gathering processes. In other words, in conducting a case study, I did not feel bound *only* by interviews, observations, or textual analysis, for instance, but had the option to combine these approaches to yield a more rich and holistic picture of how my participants were learning the new graduate-level genres they were being assigned in their coursework. According to Robert K. Yin, "people have thought that the case study method required them to embrace [certain] data collection methods if they want to do case studies at all" like "qualitative methods, ethnography, or participant-observation,"

but "the method does not imply any particular form of data collection—which can be qualitative or quantitative" ("Design and Methods" 32). These methods still "[converge] on the same set of issues," allowing the researcher to vary their sources of evidence which provides for both a bigger contextual picture of research participants and increases the researcher's chances of finding quality data. Due to the fact that the graduate student writers I studied were from three different disciplines, I took advantage of the multiple data gathering approach enabled by the case study method in order to provide my audience with enough information to orient them to the programs and coursework my Social Work and Physiology students were enrolled in—both discourse communities my audience may not immediately be familiar with. In my case study, I analyzed some textual artifacts (course assignments, syllabi, templates, in-class exercise descriptions), conducted interviews (mainly with my participants, but with my participants' professors and program administrators), and conducted some observations of two Physiology Research Seminar meetings. This allowed me to get a glimpse into what kinds of writing my participants were doing and how they saw themselves developing as graduate writers, but also provided me with the context I needed to understand how their courses were structured, how their professors and administrators saw the function of these courses in the program curriculum, and what kinds of pedagogical approaches their professors valued when it came to graduate writing instruction.

I also found Julie Lindquist's notion of "slow research" an advantage of qualitative research methodology. Lindquist's notion of slow research applies mainly to longitudinal research occurring over a matter of years. Though my own study occurred over the span of a semester (with some interviews occurring at the beginning of the

following semester), I found her concept of slow research valuable, as enacting this kind of slow research myself allowed me to get to know the graduate students of my study and to gain their trust over a semester instead of in a single meeting. This kind of trust was important in working with new master's students, as they are often in vulnerable positions as new members of their programs. Several of them had other responsibilities with assistantships, full-time jobs, childcare, and more—all while also dealing with the pressures of graduate school for the first time. My own stance as a graduate student put me in a unique position where I was both a researcher as well as a peer of my participants, which gave me an advantage in gaining my participants' trust. In my interviews with graduate students, I often found myself commiserating with them and sharing my own experiences with coursework, research, and the demanding reading and writing expectations of graduate-level work. Jeffrey Grabill, in "Community-Based Research and the Importance of a Research Stance," speaks to the importance of a researcher knowing his or her "research stance," or a "set of beliefs and obligations that shape how one acts as a researcher" (21). My role as a fellow graduate student who understood my participants' struggles because of my recent experience (without letting that cloud my objectivity as a researcher) gave me a clear motive in communicating my research objectives to my participants.

Finally, I value the ability for the case study method to tell a story instead of simply reporting facts or evidence to an audience. Thomas Newkirk, in "The Narrative Roots of Case Study," speaks to the strength of case study in utilizing narrative to tell a story of research participants as well as the context surrounding participants (communities, programs, workplaces, genres they take part in, etc). Newkirk argues that

we are so drawn to case studies because case studies draw from narratives we are used to being exposed to, like "transformative narratives" where an individual changes or matures over time. Although I did not *expect* my students to experience transformation during their first semester, the case study method allowed me to tell that story of some of my students (Erin, for example, when she is able to recognize the subtle differences between the ways she should read and write as a graduate student and the ways she previously wrote as an undergraduate student). I was also able to tell stories of students who did not necessarily experience a kind of epiphany when learning how to read and write at the graduate-level, though those stories are just as valuable. After all, just because a student did not experience a traditional success story when learning how to read and write as a graduate student, this does not mean learning did not occur. As Newkirk would advise, I had to be careful not to rely on the givens of the narratives I wanted to tell in my research (like the transformative narrative), as this would have kept me from seeing how complex my research should be.

Some exemplary studies that I have come across in my research utilizing the case study method are Kevin Roozen's "Tracing the Trajectories of Practice: Repurposing in One Student's Developing Disciplinary Writing Processes" and Dylan Dryer's "At a Mirror, Darkly: The Imagined Undergraduate Writers of Ten Novice Composition Instructors." Roozen's study examines a graduate student who draws from the writing processes she uses in a prayer journal as a member in a church youth group as well as uses her writing practices in a past undergraduate graphic arts class in writing for a course she is taking toward a MEd in secondary education English language arts. Dryer's article studies ten graduate student teachers of writing and how their comments on their

students' essays reflect their own attitudes about learning how to write academic discourse (in both their past experiences as undergraduates and their current experience as graduate students).

Both articles use a successful mix of data gathering methods. Dryer uses interviews he conducts with the graduate student teachers "at the sixth, eleventh, and sixteenth weeks of the term," allowing him to trace the progress of the teachers' views of student writing as well as the demands of their own writing being done in graduate school over a longer span of time rather than in one isolated point in the semester. He uses a small sample size in order to get a more detailed and nuanced picture of his participants as people and as teachers. Dryer also makes use of the semi-structured interview style, which allows him to adapt his questions to his participants' responses—a practice I valued in my own interviewing as it allowed for a more conversational and comfortable dynamic between me and my participants. After conducting his interviews, Dryer has his participants read a student paper (from a course not their own), asks them to write comments on the paper as they would for their own students, and follows with another interview with the TA's, asking them the question: "'How might you characterize the work this writer is doing in this essay?'" (427). Dryer eventually finds that the TAs' misgivings about learning how to write academic discourse as undergraduates and currently as graduate students very often correlated with what issues they chose to comment on after reading the student essays. Dryer, instead of only asking the TA's what they thought of the student writing, observes the TAs' commentary in actual practice, giving him a more authentic glimpse into the TAs' habits as writing teachers. The combination of textual analysis and interview methods give Dryer more well-rounded

and reliable data. The interviews also give his participants a chance to talk for themselves instead of Dryer only making his own conclusions from their commentary.

Kevin Roozen similarly uses multiple data gathering techniques in his study, allowing him, like Dryer, to get a more complete picture of his participant, Lindsey. Roozen allows Lindsey to represent her own interpretation of the strengths of her writing processes and techniques. Roozen's research questions also changed as the study progressed. Roozen originally set out to conduct "text-based interviews" (similar to Dryer) "and ethnographic observation of [Lindsey's] journaling activities" to learn about her journaling activities in general as a writing process (322). After learning that Lindsey "stopped keeping a prayer journal during her late teen years, but then commented that she still did a form of verse copying when taking notes for her college and graduate school literature papers," Roozen switched gears and decided to put his focus on Lindsey's transformative adaptation of a previous writing practice into use in a new context (graduate school) because it was more compelling as a research opportunity. In my own project, it was important for me to remain adaptable in changing my research questions if the data I started to gather presented me with questions I did not expect to surface. Qualitative research can be unpredictable, and I liked that Roozen embraced the complexity his data presented him with. I had originally set out to study the kinds of resources that my graduate students utilized in their program, at the university, or outside of academia to help them with their reading and writing (writing centers, tutors, workshops, etc.) However, I found that none of my students were taking advantage of such resources, as they shared with me that they either did not have the time or had not had the opportunity to do so. Though I did not pursue this route of research, my students

had a lot more to say about the genres they were learning than I expected, leading to some very exciting and very in-depth analyses on instructional genres. Roozen also made all of the materials he collected available to Lindsey "by placing them in stacks within reach of the table where [they] conducted face-to-face interviews" to make Lindsey feel more comfortable that the hard copies of her journal entries were safe in Roozen's keeping. I also consistently reassured my participants that the data I gathered would be used ethically and confidentially.

Next, I will describe the kinds of ethical considerations I kept in mind when conducting my research as well as some of the limitations of my study's design. Next, I will provide a description of the site of my research, which will be followed by a discussion of my study's methods. The description of methods will include my recruitment email procedure, methods of gathering data through interview, text collection and observation, as well as methods of analyzing data through the highlighting and classification of significant passages in interview transcripts. Last will be a description of the demographics of my participants overall, as well as some brief bios of each subject.

Ethical Considerations and Limitations

Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity was incredibly important to my study. I see new graduate students as a particularly vulnerable population, as they are often struggling with their transition to a new level of study and worry whether they are capable enough to make it through their first semester. This level of stress and anxiety means that students like these are often highly emotional and distressed, and it also meant that in our interviews, students made frustrated comments about their programs and professors. These comments were perhaps more honest and forthcoming because I was a

graduate student myself and due to this positioning, was able to identify with and commiserate with graduate students' experiences. This seemed to make the graduate students more comfortable in sharing their frustrations with me. It was vital for me to instill trust in my participants, therefore, and to ensure them that nothing they said in our interviews would reach their professors or administrators. I assured graduate students that they were safe in talking to me, and that any data gathered from our interviews would be coded with a pseudonym for anonymity. I assured the same of my professor and administrator participants. This was vital, as the professors I interviewed and the administrators were current faculty members overseeing the students' progress. As well as making these verbal assurances to my participants, language regarding confidentiality and anonymity was included in my IRB-approved protocol, recruitment emails, and consent forms.

It was also important for me to remain true to my students' descriptions of their lived experiences during the first semester. This is why the majority of my data for this project is gathered from interviews, and why the majority of the arguments I make about graduate pedagogy are so closely tied to my students' own explanations of what they experienced as they learned how to read and write in graduate school. This is why I resisted Newkirk's concept of the "transformative narrative," and did not ascribe any simple stories of failure or success to the graduate students' telling of how they made it through their first semester of graduate school. My resistance to ascribing stories to graduate students that do not necessarily represent their lived experiences was also represented in how transparent I chose to be with my participants. Before every initial interview, I explained my study in detail and allowed each interviewee to ask questions.

During repeat interviews with students, I would, at the beginning of an interview, recap significant comments they made during our last meeting, asking them if I had understood the meaning of their comments correctly. I also volunteered to share my study's results with participants.

Some limitations of my study stemmed from the fact that it was a one-semester study and the fact that I chose a smaller sample size, and the some stemmed from the busy lives of my students. Since graduate students are busy and overwhelmed, it was difficult to schedule interviews and observations, and it was difficult for students to remember to send me textual artifacts. However, the data I gathered through interviews was enough to represent the kinds of experiences I was hoping to portray from graduate students' lives during the first semester. Also, the interviews I conducted with professors and administrators, as well as the access to syllabi and major assignments from students' courses, allowed me to contextualize the data gathered in my student interviews. Finally, case studies are "usually tied to specific situations," so many see case studies as producing data that is "not generalizable," particularly to disciplines that conduct mostly quantitative studies (MacNealy 199). First, while I acknowledge this potential disadvantage, the fact that I am drawing my participants from a range of different disciplines makes the results of my study applicable to wider audiences outside of Rhetoric and Composition. Secondly, one of the purposes of my study is to familiarize audiences with what some graduate students go through and experience during their first semester of graduate school, and I think the best way to make these subjective experiences clear to audiences who may not be familiar with such experiences is by taking advantage of the narrative potentialities of case study.

Research Site

My study was conducted at a southern state research university. As of the fall
semester of 2016, the school enrolled 22,640 students, 16,033 of which were
undergraduates and 5,808 of which were graduate students. 2,894 of those students were
Master's students, the student population of interest in my study. There were, therefore, a
rich variety of graduate schools to choose from for this study. In order to give me a varied
sampling of student writing experiences, I recruited participants in a science discipline, a
social science discipline, and a humanities discipline.

Recruitment

As sites to recruit my science participants, I chose the Physiology graduate
program (at the time of the study, the degree included Biophysics in its name, but this has
recently been removed) housed within the university's Integrated Programs in
Biomedical Sciences. To recruit my social science participants, I chose the Social Work
graduate program, and for my humanities participants, I chose the English graduate
program. To recruit my participants, I first met with program administrators to obtain
permission to email all of the Master's students in their programs, and, when granted
permission, to then obtain student email addresses. My recruitment email consisted of a
brief overview of the study's purpose and goals, the expectations of participation, and
reassurance that the study was completely voluntary and that study participants would
remain anonymous.

I sent recruitment emails to the students of the English and Physiology programs
asking them for voluntary participation in my study, and I received eight replies from
English MA students and three replies from Physiology MS students. The first English

MA student to respond was ineligible for the study because she was a fourth semester graduate student, and the second student to express interest stopped responding to requests to meet. The next two English MA students were chosen based on time of response and signed consent forms to participate in mid-September. The remaining four MA English students who replied had to be turned away from the study, as I wanted my study to have an even representation of students from each discipline. The first MS Physiology student to respond was ineligible because he had already obtained a previous Master's degree prior to entering his program that semester. The only other two MS Physiology students to respond afterward were chosen, and signed consent forms to participate in mid-September. Finally, a Dean in the Social Work graduate program I met with to gain permission to conduct my study chose to contact students directly to see if they were interested in participating (sharing with them my recruitment email and a brief outline of my study plan), and shared with me the contact information for two students from his program who had responded positively. One student eventually chose not to participate, but the other student agreed, and signed a consent form to participate at the end of October.

Similar recruitment emails were sent to professors of the graduate students (their names were gathered from the graduate students of my study who told me who their professors were that semester), informing them of the study's purpose and goals, the expectations of their participation (at least one interview and potentially any assignments or lesson plans they found relevant to our discussion), and the involvement of some of their current (and in the case of one of my professors, past) graduate students. Professors were informed that their students' identities would not be shared with them and that their

involvement in the study would not be shared with students. The professors who responded to the email were chosen for interviews and signed consent forms on the days of their interviews (the professor of English in the mid-fall semester, the professor of Physiology at the end of the fall semester, and the professor of Social Work at the beginning of the spring 2016 semester).

I was pleased with the participants I ended up with for my study, though I would have liked to have signed up one more MS Social Work student to round out my number of graduate student participants. Since the program administrator I went through to get access to potential student participants wanted to ask students himself, confirm that they were willing to participate, and give me their contact information afterward, I had no control over how many students I could contact to volunteer in the study. I would have also liked to have had more male graduate students participate in the study to provide me with a more diverse representation of gender, but the only students to respond to my recruitment emails were female and I had a short window of time to sign my participants up for the study so I could start gathering data close to the beginning of their first semester of graduate school.

Data Gathering Methods

I originally planned to send an email questionnaire to my participants prior to beginning their graduate programs during the summer of 2015 to gauge what they expected of writing as new graduate students in their discipline, how these writing practices might or might not differ from those they had done in the past, and what they expected their writing strengths or weaknesses might be as new graduate student writers. However, only one of my English MA students was signed on to the study early enough

in the summer prior to starting the fall semester to complete this questionnaire. The rest of my study consisted of semi-structured interviews with each of the five graduate students, three professors (one professor from each discipline who also taught the graduate students in the study), and four program administrators (two from Social Work, one from English, and one from Physiology) during the fall semester of 2015.

Interviews with graduate students took place at the beginning, middle, and end of the fall semester, as well as four follow-up interviews that took place during the spring semester of 2016. Interview questions focused on students' observations and reflections of the writing, reading, and research practices they utilized in their graduate coursework, as well as their own perceptions of themselves as new graduate writers. Questions also included topics related to the kinds of instructional genres students were learning, what they thought of the ways these genres were being taught to them, and how they saw these genres as preparing them for future work in graduate school and beyond. My questions were relatively organic and changeable based on students' responses because it was important for me to be able to provide them with a comfortable and supportive space to share their experiences, and this kind of open structure allowed for more honest responses. My interviews were in-depth phenomenological interviews—a concept Irving Seidman in *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* describes as "focused, in-depth interviewing" that uses "primarily, open-ended questions" (15). These questions "build upon and explore...participants' responses to those questions," with the goal as "[having] the participant reconstruct his or her experience within the topic under study" (Seidman 15). The in-depth phenomenological interview was appealing to me as a researcher because it

allowed me to ask questions that prompted students to openly describe their lived experiences of that first semester.

Two interviews with professors took place during the mid-fall semester of 2015, and one took place during the beginning of the 2016 spring semester. Interview questions consisted of professors' approaches to graduate writing pedagogy, including how much they prioritized writing instruction in the graduate courses they taught, what kinds of genres they felt it was vital for new graduate students of their discipline to learn in the first semester, the differences they see between teaching undergraduate writers and teaching graduate writers, and any challenges or successes they experienced when teaching new graduate writers. Some of these questions were also context-specific to the course the graduate students were enrolled in, and consisted of clarifications about the course's syllabus, major assignments, readings, and how and why they made decisions about course design. The three interviews with graduate program administrators (one interview for each graduate program of the study) all took place during the summer of 2016. Interview questions consisted of how their graduate program curriculum incorporates writing instruction for graduate students (especially new graduate students), what kinds of genres they see as vital for first-semester graduate students in their discipline to learn, what kinds of graduate students typically enroll in their programs, and what kinds of improvements to graduate writing instruction they would like to see implemented in their programs, if any.

Other data was gathered from each graduate student's course syllabi and major assignment descriptions. Some data was gathered from each graduate program's website like course descriptions, required coursework for graduate students on particular degree

tracks, and general descriptions of each program. Two graduate students were also willing to share some of their writing for their coursework (one English MA student and one MS Physiology student). These writing samples were all from smaller course assignments, and were separate from any major end-of-the-semester projects. Finally, two observations of a writing-intensive course that both of my Physiology students had been enrolled in during the fall semester of 2015 were conducted after obtaining permission from the Physiology professor. These observations were of a course during the fall semester of 2016 (one year after my study), but the course's structure was the same, and it was helpful to gain context for my analysis of this course's main instructional genre after seeing how the professor introduced and taught this genre at the course's onset.

I was able to gather a wealth of data from the interviews I conducted with students, professors, and administrators in the fall semester of 2015 and spring and summer of 2016. Interviewing at a range of different times throughout my students' first semesters (and some in the following spring semester) gave me a good range of data detailing their experiences as they developed and changed over time. Ideally, I would have liked to follow my students for a whole year (or even throughout their entire Master's experience) to get even more of a glimpse into how they felt their writing, reading, and research practices developed over time. I hope to be able to do so in my future research. Though I did request my students to send me any writing they were comfortable sharing, only two students sent me one sample each of their writing for small homework assignments (one of which was a draft of a Seminar Report—the genre I discuss in Chapter 3). I felt that this was not enough writing to warrant full textual

analyses in my study (as well as interviews asking students questions about what they thought of this writing themselves), though my student's draft of her Seminar Report was helpful in giving me the context I needed to explain the writerly moves the course's professor expected of students.

Finally, I was unable to arrange regular classroom observations as not all of my students responded to my requests to arrange such visits. My graduate students frequently mentioned how overwhelmed, busy, and stressed they were during their first semester (a point I make throughout this project and part of the reason why I conducted this study in the first place), so I was understanding of these limitations. I was grateful for the time these students were able to spare for our interviews, as it provided me with the kind of glimpse into their lived experiences of the transition into graduate level reading, writing, and research that I was hoping to get when I set out to conduct this study.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data gathered from my interviews, I drew from scholarship in Writing in the Disciplines regarding how specialized knowledge operates within specific disciplines. Such scholarship is valuable in thinking about how graduate students go through the process of joining new academic communities. Though this work is not specifically focused on the individual learning experiences of graduate student writers, it informs how I theorized and conceptualized the ways my participants were learning to understand how writing works in or factors into their graduate programs and individual courses, as well as how the professors I interviewed are conceptualizing them in their teaching. Michael Carter's "Ways of Knowing, Doing, and Writing in the Disciplines," for instance, argues how writing in the disciplines can be understood as "ways of

doing...which [link] ways of knowing and writing in the disciplines" and are "used [by faculty] to describe broader generic and disciplinary structures, metagenres, and metadisciplines" (385). In other words, rather than understanding writing as a generalizable skill, writing here is understood as being linked to what "ways of doing" that writing in the disciplines is used to accomplish. When analyzing my interviews with both professors and students, I drew from research in WID to think about what kinds of "doing" and "knowing" happen within my participants' disciplines based on the data I gathered, and how each discipline goes about naming and teaching such knowledge to their graduate students. The kinds of patterns that emerged from the data in my interviews with graduate students about their own writing was more individualized language referring to their past writing contexts and genres (research papers, responses, capstone projects, etc.), and past strategies they used to work through such writing genres.

To analyze the transcripts of the interviews I conducted, I employed the methods that Seidman recommends for in-depth phenomenological interviews. Seidman recommends that researchers immerse themselves in the data, highlighting passages that stand out as significant or compelling in some way. After this initial notation, researchers classify passages according to significant categories or themes based on patterns that emerge from the highlighted data. Though this process has been called "coding" by other researchers, some theorists, like Ian Day, find this term problematic when applied to qualitative research, as the process of categorizing interview data can be so subjective:

The term 'coding' has a rather mechanical overtone quite at odds with the

conceptual tasks involved in categorizing data. This arises from the association of

coding with a consistent and complete set of rules governing the assignment of codes to data, thereby eliminating error and of course allowing recovery of the original data simply by reversing the process (i.e. decoding). Qualitative analysis, in contrast, requires the analyst to create or adapt concepts relevant to the data rather than apply a set of pre-established rules (Strauss 1987; Strauss and Corbin 1990) (60).

I undertook such "conceptual tasks" when I created categories based on the interview passages I marked as significant. I assigned one category, "genre," to any naming of and descriptions of instructional genres students described they were being assigned in their coursework, genres faculty or administrators described when asked about their own or departmental curricula and pedagogies, as well as former genres from students' undergraduate writing experiences. I also assigned a category, "transfer," to any mentions by students of comparisons and contrasts between their undergraduate and graduate writing experiences or any mention of how they used a former writing strategy or writing task to help them learn a new graduate writing task they were presented with. I also placed mentions by faculty and administrators of comparisons and contrasts they made between undergraduate and graduate writing practices in this category. I assigned another category, "disciplinary knowledge" to any mentions by students or faculty of the kinds of knowledge they believed would be necessary to gain in the first semester in order to successfully begin the process of becoming members of their chosen discipline. Finally, one other category was created from a pattern I noticed was emerging in the data from my interviews with students. This category was "impostor syndrome." The passages assigned to this category were emotional descriptions by the graduate students of their

fear of failure, issues with authority, and feelings that they were out-of-place or admitted to the program in error. Unlike the categories of "genre" and "transfer," the passages assigned to this category emerged organically without any questions from me that asked students to reflect on their issues with these subjects. As a result, I made room for a discussion of students' struggles with impostor syndrome in Chapter 4.

Finally, in my field notes during my observations of my Physiology students' courses, I sat in on two course meetings of the "Physiology Research Seminar" as an onlooker. I used the notes I recorded from my observations to compare to the interviews I conducted with my participants, as well as the interview I conducted with the professor of the course, explaining his teaching methods and pedagogical priorities.

Demographics of Study Participants[1]

The students of this study were all first-time graduate students in their first semester of their Master's programs. Though this was unplanned, all of the students who ended up responding to my recruitment emails and were able to participate in the study were female. Four students were native English speakers and one student was a non-native English speaker. All students were enrolled full-time in their programs, except for Erica, who was enrolled as a part-time student while also working full-time. Two of the professors of the study were female, and one was male. Two of the administrators of the study were female, while the other two were male. One administrator was a non-native English speaker.

Bios of Participants

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[1] I will not be providing a bio of Dr. Hinsey, the professor of Erin's Sociolinguistics course, as she had left the university at the time of my study and was therefore unavailable for an interview.

Below are some bios of the graduate students, professors, and administrators enrolled in this study.

Students

Lisa

Lisa is a female native English speaker. Lisa was from the southern U.S., and had attended a university in the south. Lisa had "kind of always known that [she] wanted to be in the medical field." Specifically, she wanted to take the "physician path" and eventually go to medical school. Lisa was switching disciplines as a new Physiology MS student. As an undergraduate, she double-majored in Business and Spanish, choosing these study areas because she wanted to choose something "other than...a science field...to have a backup plan, as well as something that could help [her] along the way." She specifically chose Spanish "to be able to...help [her] future patients" because "Spanish is still big...in the States now." To bridge the gap between her undergraduate coursework and the graduate programs she would need to attend to reach her goal of getting into medical school, Lisa took prerequisite science courses as an undergraduate alongside of the courses she was taking to fulfill her major requirements. Lisa participated in a summer education program for students who plan to attend medical school, but need a bit more preparation first. This summer program was how Lisa found out about and chose the Physiology Master's program into which she was eventually accepted. She made the decision to attend this MS program because "since [she] came from a non-science background" she knew she "wanted to do a...post-bac degree or a Master's degree first before [she] went into medical school to kind of help give [her] a better foundation."

Carly

Carly is a female native English speaker. Carly had lived in the area of her graduate program's university "her whole life." She acquired her Bachelor's degree in Biology at the same institution she was currently enrolled in as an MS Physiology student. This meant that she had some familiarity with positions at the institution, leading her to apply for and obtain a graduate assistantship with a tutoring program on campus that allowed her to attend her program tuition-free as well as receiving a stipend. Initially, Carly had applied for medical school at the same institution but did not get accepted, so a Master's program became her "back up plan." Carly had plans to either work in a lab doing research after graduating with her Master's degree, or teaching at the university level, as she had developed a fondness for education while working at the tutoring center.

Erin

Erin is a female native English speaker. Erin was from the rural part of the same state her graduate program's university was in. Like Carly, she had also previously acquired her Bachelor's degree in English at the same institution she was currently enrolled in as an MA English student. She worked "on and off" for five years after graduating with her Bachelor's. She had applied for and gotten a graduate assistantship with the English department, and was expected to tutor at the university's writing center her first year, and teach first-year writing during her second year. In exchange for this work, Erin was able to attend her program tuition-free as well as receiving a stipend. Erin came into her program with research interests already in mind, particularly Appalachian identity and "how that particular identity was affected or impacted by certain non-linear narrative

structures in life writing and regional literature," but had since changed to "book history" and "paratext as a site or source of trauma on individual texts."

Nora

Nora is a female non-native English speaker. Nora was in the U.S. on a sponsorship from the university she was previously teaching ESL courses at in Kuwait. Though she was a non-native English speaker, she had learned English from a very young age and was fluent in the language. The agreement she reached with her Kuwait university was that they would fund her to gain her Master's degree in English as long as she returned after graduation to teach for double the number of years she was in the U.S. to gain her degree, which would be a period of four years. Nora saw herself as a creative writer, and was very excited at the prospect of taking more creative writing courses as an MA student with a concentration in creative writing. She had past experiences authoring creative non-fiction pieces for online magazines in Kuwait, but had dreams of publishing a fiction novel. Nora was planning on using her MA culminating project as an opportunity to write her novel, and was already bringing in early drafts of this work to the workshops in her first-semester graduate creative writing course. Her ambition led her to asking her creative writing professor to direct her culminating project as early as her first semester.

Erica

Erica is a female native English speaker. Erica was returning to school after twenty years and working at a non-profit that provides community-based behavioral health care and other support services. Though her workplace was a fifteen-minute drive from her graduate school, Erica had to commute over forty-five minutes from her home to drive to work and school every day. Erica also had a young daughter she raised herself, as the

"father was not in the picture." At the time of our interview, she was participating in a play with her daughter for a community theatre production. Getting adequate child care for her daughter after school was also becoming more of a complication for her, as her mother—who had been responsible for watching Erica's daughter—had recently been diagnosed with dementia. At the time of our interview, Erica's mother had to be moved to a nursing home. As an undergraduate, Erica majored in English Literature and was therefore switching disciplines in enrolling in an MS Social Work program.

Professors

Dr. Anderson

Dr. Anderson is a male non-native English speaker. Dr. Anderson is a professor in the graduate department of Physiology for the university's Integrated Programs in Biomedical Sciences. His research areas are in cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases. He regularly teaches the Physiology Research Seminar, a course spanning two semesters meant to introduce students to the writing and research conventions in the area of Physiology in which both of my Physiology students were enrolled.

Dr. Bauer

Dr. Bauer is a female native English speaker. She is a professor who teaches undergraduate and graduate literature courses for the English department. Her research areas are in Nineteenth-Century American literature. At the time of this study, she was also teaching an Introduction to Graduate Studies course for first-semester English MA students—a course that is taught yearly by different professors on a rotating basis.

Dr. Oliver

Dr. Oliver is a female native English speaker. She is currently serving as the Family Services Coordinator at a non-profit organization that provides academic and family support services. At the time of our interview, she was also an instructor for the university's graduate Social Work program, teaching one section of "Human Behavior in the Social Environment" for first-year Master's students.

Program Administrators

Dr. Morse

Dr. Morse is a male native English speaker. He is a professor currently serving as the English Department's Graduate Program Director. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in critical theory, literature, and rhetoric. His research area is in the rhetoric of social movements.

Dr. Nickerson

Dr. Nickerson is a female native English speaker. She is a professor who teaches graduate courses in the Social Work program and is serving as the Associate Dean of Student Services for the program. Her research area is on influences on the management of diabetes among members of vulnerable populations.

Dr. Merritt

Dr. Merritt is a female non-native English speaker. She is a professor who teaches graduate courses in the Social Work program and is serving as the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs. Her research area is in aging and chronic disease management.

Dr. Godard

Dr. Godard is a male native English speaker. He is a professor in the Physiology graduate program currently serving as the Vice Chairman of the program. His research area is in "microvascular control mechanisms."

The following chapter includes my analyses of two instructional genres (genres only existing in the classroom context) that four of my graduate students were assigned in their coursework. I will discuss first how genre pedagogy has been studied and discussed in Rhetoric and Composition scholarship, how my students described the conventions of these instructional genres as well as their understanding of their purpose, how two professors understood the role of the genres in their course structure, and finally how my analyses of these two genres connects to recommendations for graduate writing pedagogies in the disciplines.

CHAPTER THREE

LEARNING IN THE FIRST SEMESTER: AN INSTRUCTIONAL GENRE

APPROACH IN TWO GRADUATE WRITING PEDAGOGIES

Are there any smaller assignments that lead you up to that point? Or is it just kind of like...write a 20-page paper?

Erin : Dr. Bauer is just like, do it. (laughs) ...It's not that we're just going to necessarily go into it blind. Um, but it's still going to be hard. We're going to go into it a little blind. Go into it you know, sort of groggy, like, 'what is going on? I can't really navigate this that well.'

Going into assignments "a little blind" and attempting to "navigate" unfamiliar conventions through a thick fog of uncertainty is an experience with which most graduate students (particularly those completely new to graduate school) are familiar. As represented in the above quotation, Erin, an English MA student, often described herself as a novice explorer attempting to navigate an unfamiliar terrain to explain her own graduate experience during that very first semester, particularly in relation to the new genres she was being introduced to. Her Sociolinguistics professor, Dr. Hinsey, informed her class of the 20 page seminar paper due at the end of the semester, but Erin had never written a seminar paper before, nor did she know how to define what a seminar paper was. Similarly, Carly, a Physiology MS student, had never attended a scientific research presentation before, and didn't know how simultaneously to understand the jargon, while also thinking of what to write about for her required weekly report on the presentations.

For new graduate students, there are a lot of firsts in the first semester. Most of those firsts take the form of classroom genres (ones that do not exist in any other context but the classroom) meant to evaluate students on their progress, and not all of those first genres are scaffolded. This lack of scaffolding can be either because professors assume students in graduate school will know how to figure things out themselves, or because professors assume students now at the graduate level will already be familiar with the genres they assign. For native English-speaking and ELL new graduate students alike, this kind of familiarity is often not the case, which can lead to confusion and frustration, and the work that is produced to meet the expectations of such vague genres is often packed away into storage afterward or buried in a computer folder, never again to see the light of day. The fact that these classroom genres are also often assigned with little to no discussion of how they relate to disciplinary genres that exist outside of the classroom only adds to this possibility—if students do not know what they can do with it, they never look at it again. Luckily, there are exceptions. Often with the help of good and encouraging instructors, graduate students find such classroom genres helpful, as they can transform their writing for classroom genres (like the seminar paper) into writing that can be used for professional or scholarly purposes either for disciplinary research or work outside of the classroom. Also with good guidance and carefully scaffolded writing instruction, graduate students are able to transfer the kind of meta-awareness of writing gained through the process of producing such classroom genres to future writing situations in their graduate career and beyond.

I have chosen to focus this chapter on genre instruction in graduate writing pedagogies because knowledge of and adeptness at producing certain genres (most often

genres associated with research practices) can make genres feel as if they function as a

form of gatekeeping for new graduate students. The first semester of graduate school is

when new graduate students encounter many graduate-level genres for the first time, and,

in the instruction they receive in their courses, they are asked to replicate real genres that

professional scholars produce at work in their chosen discipline, replicate or mimic *parts*

of such genres in genres that are designed purely for classroom use, or they are asked to,

at the very least, engage with them through reading, discussion, or critique. Of course, the

argument regarding the power and authority issues that arise with the learning of

"academic discourse" has been made of undergraduates who are also often encountering

college writing for the first time (Bartholomae 1986; Bizzell 1986; Elbow 1991).

However, new graduate students, because they are now seen more as colleagues who

should "already know such things" tend to receive less writing instruction as a result,

which can produce anxiety and fear of failure during that first semester of graduate study

(native English-speaking and ELL students alike) (Sullivan 294). Because genres

function as representative of power and belonging in the disciplines (and because they

often create anxiety for new graduate students), I have chosen to focus on how the

participants gauged their own learning process with the genres they encountered during

their first semester and on how some of their professors both prioritized and carried out

their genre instruction.

In this chapter, I first review discussions of genre in scholarship on graduate

student writing. I then provide two analyses of genres that my student participants as well

as my faculty participants described in our interviews: the Seminar Report and the

Seminar Paper. In addition to a discussion of the formal features and perceived purposes

of these genres from the instructors' perspectives, I discuss how these graduate students gauged the effectiveness of these genres within the context of the courses they were taking, as well as how they described their own learning processes. I chose these particular genres to analyze here based on how frequently the graduate students mentioned them in our interviews as well as the genres they tended to focus more on in describing both what they were struggling with as well as what genres they thought were working well in the focus of their courses.

Brief Review of Scholarship on Graduate Student Genre Instruction

The term "genre" is used so often by so many different disciplines and in so many ways, it is important to first define the way I will be utilizing the term in this chapter. Anis S. Bawarshi and Mary Jo Reiff, in *Genre: An Introduction to History, Theory, Research, and Pedagogy*, define genre as more dynamic, fluid and socially constructed than simply a system of categorization in the following quotation:

> ...Genres are understood as forms of cultural knowledge that conceptually frame and mediate how we understand and typically act within various situations. This view recognizes genres as both organizing and generating kinds of texts and social actions, in complex, dynamic relation to one another. Such a dynamic view of genre calls for studying and teaching genres beyond only their formal features. Instead, it calls for recognizing how formal features, rather than being arbitrary, are connected to social purposes and to ways of being and knowing in relationship to these purposes. (4)

Reiff and Bawarshi's conceptualization of genre here—the fact that genres are "forms of cultural knowledge" that continually shape and are shaped by the ways different communities accomplish social actions (see also, Carolyn Miller's landmark essay, "Genre as Social Action") —is an effective way of explaining how I will be thinking of the genres operating in the courses and departments of my participants. Like Reiff and Bawarshi, I see genres as social structures that "organize" as well as "generate"

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texts, ways of knowing, and social actions. I also strongly agree with Reiff and Bawarshi's assertions that genres should be taught not only for the purpose of familiarizing students with the formal features of a given genre, but also teaching how those formal features come to be designed, who gets to design them, how these features make a given genre functional in carrying out certain social actions in a given community, and overall, how genres shape ways of knowing.

While new graduate students are confronted with more genres than just the kinds of writing they do in their courses during their first semester (class discussions, meetings with professors, emails, conversations with peers, tutorials, etc.), I will be focusing only on the "instructional genres" they are being asked to learn and produce by their professors. The term "instructional genres" was first used by J.R. Martin in "A Contextual Theory of Language," re-used as "pre-genres" by John M. Swales ("Genre Analysis 58), again by William Grabe as "macro-genres" ("Narrative and Expository Macro-Genres") and once more by Aviva Freedman as "school genres" ("The Role"). These types of genres only exist for the purpose of instruction, and therefore most often occur in the classroom.

Before I describe what genres the graduate students encountered their first semester and how faculty described their own pedagogies, a brief review of available scholarship that has already embraced genre instruction within graduate writing pedagogies is needed. Approaches to graduate genre pedagogies vary based on factors like programmatic curricula, discipline-specific writing goals/objectives, student populations, institutional culture, as well as idiosyncratic goals of individual instructors. While Rhetoric and Composition scholarship on genre-based approaches to graduate

writing pedagogies has been limited, scholarship on the same in the research area of

English for Academic Purposes (EAP) housed within Applied Linguistics has been more

extensive, both in terms of course texts designed for graduate genre instruction and in

terms of scholarship that gauges the success of different approaches to graduate writing

pedagogy with a genre focus. Though such publications can certainly be helpful to

graduate students whose native language is primarily English, scholars with a focus in

EAP and an interest in graduate writers tend to put exclusive attention on the instruction

of ELL graduate students and focus their scholarship accordingly.

Texts intended for classroom use in graduate writing education written by EAP

scholars are often dedicated to making common research genres intelligible to graduate

students. Such texts can be utilized in cross-disciplinary graduate writing courses or

discipline-specific writing courses. The "Course Syllabi" page on the Consortium on

Graduate Communication (CGC) website lists many such courses offered to graduate

students of multiple disciplines who use the explicit genre instruction approach—an

approach common particularly to pedagogies aimed toward ELL student writers. The

explicit genre instruction approach can be defined by Sunny Hyon as a pedagogy that

"[teaches] students the formal, staged qualities of genres so that they can recognize these

features in the texts that they read and use them in the texts that they write" ("Genre"

701), which, in turn, gives students "access to the rules and tricks" of the genres

belonging to a particular discourse (Devitt, *Genre Pedagogies*, 147). "English for

International Graduate Students," a three-credit course taught at Miami University of

Ohio, is one such course using a kind of explicit approach with goals such as "creat[ing[

and sustain[ing] clear, workable theses in a variety of genres" like the argumentative essay, the annotated bibliography, and the research proposal.

Similarly, Dr. Heather Blain Vorhies's "Graduate Writing," a non-credit course that is "all about breaking down and analyzing disciplinary genres and audiences," and assigns genres like the literature review and the proposal as course projects. "International Business Communication" at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and "Engineering Research Communication" at Michigan Technological University are discipline-specific courses listed on the CGC site that have a similar approach to genre instruction. Texts for courses that use an explicit genre approach vary based on the preferences of the instructor, though most of them contain common writerly moves that occur in a number of academic research genres. John M. Swales (1990, 2004) and John M. Swales and Christine Feak (1994, 2009, 2011), for example, have published numerous works of this type, whose topics range from demystifying genres common to graduate students like literature reviews, introductions, abstracts and conference papers, to describing what grammar usage is common to the kinds of academic writing graduate students are expected to engage in.

Other scholars share research on the learning processes of graduate writers who are making their way through the dissertation genre (Belcher; Belcher and Hirvela; Dong 1996, 1998; Hyland 2004; Miguel and Nelson; Rogers, Zawacki and Baker), as well as genre-based approaches to generalized writing courses for graduate students across the disciplines (Aranha; Delyser; Hyon 2001, 2002). EAP scholars, specifically, have also conducted research on what types of genres professors are requiring of their graduate students to provide a closer look at what graduate writing pedagogies actually look like

(Cooper and Bikowski; Conseco and Byrd). Though, as previously stated, EAP puts the majority of its focus on ELL graduate student writers, this kind of scholarship can be valuable to instructors who are interested in the development of graduate writing pedagogies for both native English-speaking students *and* ELL students. native English-speaking students who are entering graduate school for the first time, after all, may have as little practice with the new genres they will encounter as ELL students. Steve Simpson, in "New Frontiers in Graduate Writing Support and Program Design," asserts that the conversation regarding native English and ELL graduate student instruction "assumes the form of strict either/or positions: either these students' needs are the same and can be met simultaneously or they are different and require different programs" but that the "situation is much more complicated and warrants a more sophisticated, researched understanding of the ways in which native English-speaking and ELL students' needs overlap and the ways they are distinct" (10). Though native English-speaking and ELL students do overlap in their need for genre instruction when entering graduate school and throughout, more research is needed to gauge how one course or several courses (discipline-specific or otherwise) might meet the needs of both groups.

While most of the scholarship on graduate writing genres in EAP focuses on explicit instruction of particular genres, other types of approaches to genre instruction that encourage more of a meta-awareness of genres at work may be helpful for new graduate writers. In other words, this kind of instruction does not only focus solely on the formal features of any given genre (usually as static and final), but also focuses on how students might develop the ability to choose their own genres for their own purposes as writers in the future. Amy Devitt, in her "Genre Pedagogies" chapter of *A Guide to*

Composition Pedagogies, describes what she sees as the three main "critical approaches" of genre pedagogies that have emerged in the teaching of college writing: "teaching particular genres, genre awareness, and genre critique" (147). To teach particular genres, writing instructors provide explicit instruction on the formal features and conventions of given genres in order to demystify genres that students might expect to encounter as writers. The genre awareness approach allows for more conversation regarding how students might develop the kinds of meta-awareness of how genres are constructed and carried out, as well as how they evolve over time. Finally, the instruction of genre critique promotes the practice of asking critical questions of existing genres and provides students with the opportunity to examine issues of power and access behind certain genres (who gets granted access to particular genres and who is excluded), as well as chances to dismantle, play with, and transform certain genres themselves. Developing this kind of meta-awareness and ability to critique that Devitt describes might make graduate students more prepared to write similar genres themselves after leaving the classroom, therefore increasing the likelihood of knowledge transfer to other contexts. As I will eventually argue, a three-pronged approach utilizing all of Devitt's described approaches to genre instruction (explicit genre instruction, teaching for critical genre awareness, and genre critique) is vital to graduate genre instruction, as all three are codependent and essential for graduate student learners to develop the kinds of genre knowledge they need to be able to take on the expectations of them as writers in graduate school and beyond.

Below, I analyze two professors' approaches to new graduate student pedagogies, as well as comments from students regarding how those approaches worked for them. I

will end each genre analysis section of this chapter with a discussion of best practices for genre instruction for new graduate students in relation to the pedagogies and student experiences described to me.

The Physiology Research Seminar Report: An Analysis of a Graduate-Level Instructional Genre

The first genre I will analyze comes from the "Physiology Research Seminar" that both Physiology (Physiology) students were enrolled in as a first semester course during the fall semester of 2015. The interviews I draw from in the analysis below are those I conducted with two graduate students (Carly and Lisa) and with the professor of the course, Dr. Anderson, who is a full-time professor for the Department of Physiology. I also draw from the course's syllabus, as well as a handout provided by the professor for the students on the first class meeting as a writing heuristic. Finally, I draw from two observations I conducted during the first two weeks of seminar meetings in the fall semester of 2016, as I did not have access to either of these class meetings during the fall of 2015 (I had not yet officially signed my participants on to the study) and felt that these later observations would still be helpful in providing me with more context for the course's design and implementation.

Carly and Lisa were both required to take this course as part of their degree plan. The program website states that all MS students of Physiology are required to take three elective courses during their first semester, one of which can be the Research Seminar, but Carly and Lisa were both advised that they were required to take the Research Seminar. The course is described in the syllabus as being "designed for the first year students," which applies to both first year MS students and first year PhD students in the

program. The course is a one-hour, weekly seminar meeting. With the exception of the

first class meeting, meetings consist of attending seminar presentations for the students

by various researchers (both faculty researchers as well as current PhD student

researchers in the program). Physiology faculty's attendance is voluntary. Seminars are

based on published research conducted by each presenter, with the exception of the PhD

student presenters, who have not all necessarily reached the stage of publication at the

time of their seminar presentations. The first meeting of the course is taught by the

professor, during which he explains the syllabus and course requirements as well as

provides the instructions for the weekly written seminar report based on the presentations

that students attend. The professor also, after providing some brief instructions for the

writing of seminar reports, gives a sample presentation (a shortened version of the kind of

presentation students can expect from seminar presentations for the rest of the semester),

after which he asks students to share how they would write a report about the sample

presentation. Lastly, he shares what he would write for a report with the class. These

written reports are the sole instructional genres by which the students are evaluated. The

first class meeting is the only formal means of instruction that students receive on their

required written seminar reports, though the professor makes himself available for office

hour instruction if students feel they need supplemental help on the assignment or need

clarification on the written comments they have received from the professor.

The Professor's Perspective

　　　Below is an overview of the course's design taken directly from the syllabus. The

seminar is meant to: "Teach and develop comprehensive scientific writing skills,

particularly, to present a short written report on scientific material presented by a speaker.

Each week, a seminar speaker will be presenting a seminar and students will be

submitting written reports on presented

material." The learning goals of the seminar are also listed as follows: "There are three

major goals for this course: 1) to expose students to science, 2) to prepare students to

present scientific concepts, methods, and experimental results, and 3) to provide critical

analysis of mechanisms of presented processes in a written format."

The "written report" is the main genre used to evaluate students' work in the

course, but also depends on students' attendance at and comprehension of the semester's

weekly seminar presentations given by guest speakers. The purpose and goals of the

written seminar report are also included in the course's syllabus: "The main emphasis of

PHZB 617 is for the students to attain enough knowledge of physiology to understand

presented material and to be able to communicate this material in concise form as a

written report. This report should be clear to a person who was not present at the

seminar." The "presented material" refers to the weekly presentations students must

attend and make sure to take notes on, so they can successfully write their weekly written

reports for the course. The fact that the "main emphasis" of the course overall is tied to

the writing task of the seminar report demonstrates how important the satisfactory

completion of the genre is to each student's success. Below, I elaborate on what Dr.

Anderson sees as the function and goals of this instructional genre in the context of the

Research Seminar. The following data was gathered from an interview I conducted with

him during the fall semester of 2015. I was able to divide what Dr. Anderson describes as

the skills his students are gaining through their writing of the seminar paper into three

distinct (though often intersecting) categories: listening and comprehension skills,

rhetorical considerations of writing for the STEM fields, and the broadening of Physiology subject knowledge.

Listening and Comprehension Skills

The writing of the seminar report depends entirely on students' listening to weekly seminar presentations. Students must be able to a) comprehend and b) record and prioritize what they are hearing in order to be able to (eventually) demonstrate their understanding of the presentation in the form of the seminar report. Dr. Anderson refers to the process of listening to seminars as "train[ing] [students] to grasp essence of science which is presented to them...even if they don't know that much about [that] subject." He admits to the difficulty of this task, stating that it is "difficult to...listen and then write down and make notes of that kind of short-handing." As well as being able to comprehend the seminar presentations they attend, students were further asked to choose which study among the several studies presenters described in their presentations that they would like to write about in their seminar reports. This was not written in the syllabus description of seminar reports for the course, but was described verbally by Dr. Anderson in the first class meeting of the semester. Dr. Anderson states, "This is a big kind of study they present that consists of many different studies, which more or less confirm each other...so my students… have to define which line [of research] they would like to present in their report. This is also training of their mind to get the essence of the study. So it's very complicated." While this would imply that students are not responsible for writing about the entirety of each presentation that they attended, this required a narrower focus for each report—students could not describe each presentation in broad strokes. Being able to choose which study to report on would also imply a kind of

familiarity with types of studies in the discipline of Physiology—if students are to choose which study is most interesting for them to write about, this implies that students are already aware of certain areas of study that are common within the discipline.

Broadening Disciplinary Subject Knowledge

In addition to the listening and comprehension skills this instructional genre is supposed to be teaching to graduate students of Physiology, Dr. Anderson explains that it also broadens students' knowledge of what kinds of research are possible in the discipline. He applies this principle to his own stance as a researcher, stating that "overall, we started very narrow area, however, we should know a little bit more outside our area...But still, we don't know everything. We cannot know everything. And when we go to a seminar, listen to some expert in that area, it's very difficult to know everything, but you still have to understand..." Dr. Anderson's use of "we" as a pronoun here implies a kind of kinship he has with his students. Though they are, in theory, novice researchers of Physiology, Dr. Anderson's philosophy is that *all* Physiology researchers (including himself) cannot ever know everything, which is why they are all expected to regularly attend seminars, similar to the ones students must attend to broaden their knowledge of current research. This is also reflected in the fact that faculty in this Physiology program, according to Lisa, are implicitly expected by the department (though not required) to attend the same seminars that students attend. Dr. Anderson also implies that even though Physiology researchers may attend seminars describing a research area they have little experience with or knowledge of, they are still expected to understand what they hear so they remain current on the latest research trends in the discipline.

The research seminar, then, both familiarizes students with the importance of the genre of the seminar presentation (one that they can expect to keep participating in as professional researchers or as professionals in the medical field), as well as provides them with the valuable knowledge of what kinds of research areas are available to them as future Physiology researchers. During the fall semester of 2015, the flyer listing the seminar presentations that students were required to attend lists nine presentations from professional researchers and two presentations from PhD student researchers. Of those nine professional presenters, seven were from institutions other than the host institution, providing seminar students with perspectives on Physiology research from around the country.

Rhetoric of Physiology Research Writing

The instructional genre of the seminar report based on attendance at seminar presentations is also intended to teach students about the kinds of rhetorical skills they may need to be familiar with both in their future writing in graduate school and possibly in their future writing after graduation if they choose careers purely in research, choose to continue on to medical school, or choose an alternative career in the medical field.

First, Dr. Anderson's requirement that the seminar paper be written to an audience that is familiar with the discipline of Physiology, but may not be present at the seminar that students are writing about teaches students about audience awareness. Dr. Anderson describes the report's goal in terms of audience when he says that he sees the genre as a kind of "game" in that students have to pretend they are writing their report to give to a colleague because the colleague wasn't able to make it to the presentation themselves: "So, therefore, they listen, they're required to present report on that—what information

they got and present that in concise...way, that would make sense to a person who was not present at the seminar." However, Dr. Anderson specifies that reports should not just be aimed at *anyone* who wasn't present, but rather a "person who works in the same area and would understand...so you don't need to really explain every detail…but it should be to your colleague, and that's why we play game like that...you have to present this report to your colleague who wasn't at the seminar, but should understand...what is that you heard." This supports the description of the genre in Dr. Anderson's syllabus in that he is looking for reports that are "clear to a person who was not present at a seminar." This criteria for the report is also supported by the fact that Dr. Anderson told me that he would not have to be present at the seminars to evaluate his students' reports (as he is in this way acting as an outside audience, but one with some knowledge of the STEM fields), as he states in the following: "Sometimes I'm not even present. It happened once, but theoretically I could be not present at all. So, I would not know what the scientist is talking about." In this way, Dr. Anderson is acting as an outside audience when reading his students' seminar reports, but one that is still familiar with Physiology research and terminology.

In addition to audience awareness, Dr. Anderson also describes the kinds of knowledge of conventions the seminar report should be teaching to his students that they can expect to encounter in future contexts in graduate school as well as in other science research settings. Though Dr. Anderson was reluctant to call himself a teacher and opted instead for the descriptor of "trainer" as his role as instructor of the course, he did describe himself as a teacher when it came to providing his students with written comments on their seminar reports, as well as verbal comments in individual meetings

with his students regarding the same. These comments mainly focused on the required

conventions of the seminar report in isolation. First, Dr. Anderson described the

importance of the description of the speaker's introduction in the report. To explain his

process in evaluating each student's description of a presentation's introduction, Dr.

Anderson pointed to two sample reports from the same student (one report from early in

the semester and one report from later in the semester) and explained the difference

between the two:

> As you can see, this is...quite...you know, short paragraph. The other one has a
> little bit longer paragraph. Now they learned to not present too much in
> introduction. Usually when they started doing that, the introduction was so long, it
> almost took one page sometimes—several paragraphs—2, 3, 4 paragraphs. That's
> not really necessary for...whatever I require... They're not writing a paper, they
> are writing more like an abstract, and then hypothesis.

Dr. Anderson was therefore concerned with the length of the description of the

presentation's introduction in each report. He wanted students to aim for concision with

their introductions and to limit each one to a paragraph each. The student he was

describing seemed to have learned to limit their previously lengthy introductions to only

one paragraph per Dr. Anderson's comments on their work. Also in his explanation of

what he requires from his students, Dr. Anderson makes a comparison between the

conventions students are learning in writing the seminar report and two other genres

common to writing in the sciences: the abstract and the hypothesis (the hypothesis being

a part-genre instead of a full genre). The scientific abstract genre that Dr. Anderson is

comparing the seminar report to would most likely be what Swales and Feak call the "*RP*

[research paper] *summary* Abstract in which you provide one- or two-sentence synopses

of each of the [research paper's] four sections" (*Academic Writing* 282). Summary

abstracts usually take the form of "structured Abstracts," which "have subheadings as a

paper would" (*Academic Writing* 282). The US National Library of Medicine describes

the subheadings of the kinds of structured abstracts common to the Medical field as

following "the IMRAD format (INTRODUCTION, METHODS, RESULTS, and

DISCUSSION)." It also states that "standardized formats for structured abstracts have

been defined for original research studies, review articles, and clinical practice

guidelines." Three of the headings in the seminar report, then, would follow this format—

the introduction, methods, and results. The hypothesis and interpretation of the

mechanisms, however, deviate from the IMRAD format. Dr. Anderson chose to separate

the hypothesis part-genre from the genre of the abstract (his specific comparison is that

the report is "more like an abstract, and then hypothesis"). Dr. Anderson delves further

into the importance of knowing how to formulate a hypothesis in the following:

> So I teach them...what a hypothesis should look like, or what it should be based
> on their work...that's what we do here with our students—PhD students, Master's
> students, post-docs, or colleagues. We discuss what kind of hypothesis we have to
> write when we send grants, so that's what I teach. And so…for example, this is
> not really a good hypothesis, as you can see from that paragraph here. Some of
> them are good hypotheses. So this hypothesis particularly would have been good
> if this portion had been out. So, by doing this—by cutting some portions, or
> writing some comments on that, I think, they should learn what is the main point
> of the hypothesis or what they have to write in the future.

Dr. Anderson connects the hypothesis writing he describes previously to the

writing of grant proposals—a common genre scientists like him have to participate in, in

order to apply for research funding. In order to prove the potential of their research,

scientists must provide a description of their proposed study, including what hypothesis

they are attempting to prove or disprove with their experiment(s). Dr. Anderson justifies

his inclusion of a hypothesis as a requirement of the seminar report by explaining that

students can expect to have to write these when sending grants both as graduate student

researchers working under a mentor (during their second or third semester depending on

course load), or as professional scientists themselves after graduation. He also states, in his class meeting dedicated to explaining the requirements of the report, that the hypothesis of a particular study described in a given presentation that students must write about in their report is not necessarily provided in the presentation. Rather, Dr. Anderson explains that students will have to "come up with" or "define" a hypothesis "based on the study" they chose to write about. Finally, Dr. Anderson advises during this same class meeting that students should not "write hypothesis until [they] finish the rest" of the report. Dr. Anderson justifies this advice to wait until they have written the rest of the report to write the hypothesis by explaining that when they will need to write published papers in the future, "[their] hypothesis published in a paper is different than the initial hypothesis" that they had before starting the actual research, in the original grant proposal. In the seminar report, Dr. Anderson seems to be assigning an instructional genre that borrows from other genres students might expect to encounter in their future writing contexts—both later on in graduate school and in professional contexts. The writing of the structured abstract and the hypothesis—appearing in both grant proposals and published papers—are two of those genres. In his instruction on the first day of class, Dr. Anderson also shares these comparisons to genres of the discipline informally with the class, as tangents to describing his requirements for the features of the report.

Student Perspectives

Carly and Lisa, both first year MS Physiology students, were enrolled in Dr. Anderson's Research Seminar in the fall semester of 2015. At first, Carly had a bit of difficulty learning the expectations Dr. Anderson had for the seminar report, which may have been compounded by the fact that his only formal instruction on the genre occurred

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verbally on the first day of class and in the form of a template (see Appendix A) posted on the class website meant as a guide for students to structure their reports. Carly states, "the only prompt I think he gave us was like his template for these papers. Like actually, the really only thing he did was the very first day of class, he actually physically went through like this is what it's kind of going to be like and how to actually sit there and try to write what he was talking about, which...was difficult. I could see him judging us the entire time." The "judging" Carly felt was going on referred to the part of the class meeting when Dr. Anderson asked students how they would write a seminar report based on the sample presentation he gave the class on his own research. During this session, Dr. Anderson called on students quickly, asking questions like, "what were the mechanisms for one study you identified?" or "how would you explain that study's introduction?" During my observation of Dr. Anderson's 2016 class meeting (a meeting at which he explained the seminar report with the same structure as he had during Carly's year), it was clear that most students in the class felt uncomfortable and intimidated by such questioning, as they were not first given time to write or reflect on the sample presentation. Many of them were at a loss of what to say, and simply responded with an "I don't know."

Also, though Dr. Anderson did go over some of his expectations for the seminar report during the first class meeting, Carly still felt that many of his expectations were unclear or unmentioned, given what he was commenting on her work. "He would always say like, my hypothesis wasn't clear and that...my conclusion wasn't clear, and that I would bring things into the Methods and Results that weren't really necessary?...His notes on the paper...he kind of has slanted kind of sloppy writing, so it's hard to read half

the time. And the other half it was like…what does he mean by that? I mean you just write, 'not clear.' Well, how do I make it clear? Explain." Lisa also felt frustrated by the seminar reports at first, describing herself and other students as "fish out of water," not knowing how to "organize these papers." When asked to describe her experience with writing the genre at first, Lisa felt that "our first couple of papers were like, he trashed them—like, 'what is this?' Well, we don't know because we don't know how to write exactly what you want us to do!"

However, after receiving several rounds of comments from Dr. Anderson on their work and meeting with him in person about his comments (for example, regarding what he meant by "unclear" on Carly's report), both Carly and Lisa were able to improve their writing to more closely resemble what Dr. Anderson expected of the genre. Eventually, Carly felt more confident with her writing of reports, stating, "I know exactly what he wants. He wants the introduction, he wants the methods…you know, all the little pieces." Lisa similarly described Dr. Anderson's requirements for written reports as more idiosyncratic than the writing she does for other classes, sharing that "he's very specific on what he wants—it's not objective writing" and that it's "very tailored to what he wants you to write about." By "not objective writing," Lisa was probably referring to the fact that Dr. Anderson's expectations were quite subjective, in that he had specific requirements in mind for successful completion of each portion of the report. Lisa responded well to Dr. Anderson's comments on her work—comments she described as, "this is what [he wants], what you need to do, and if it's not specifically what [he needs], [he'll] give you feedback based on that."

Though Carly and Lisa were eventually able to produce the kinds of reports Dr. Anderson was envisioning for the genre, both students spoke to the difficulty of accurately recording notes on the presentations and interpreting those notes to complete their seminar reports. Though she had a Bachelor's degree in Biology and therefore some science background, Carly still had trouble grasping the content of the presentations she attended, stating, "it's hard for me to connect, like, what are you talking about? And actually apply it to the writing." Carly's statement here indicates some difficulty both with comprehension of what she was hearing in the presentations, as well as with her translation or interpretation of what she heard in her seminar report writing. She commented on this difficulty further in the following: "some of these seminar papers… I have no idea what they [the speakers] talked about. Let me BS my way through this." Carly's need to "BS [her] way through this" reflects her frustration with not understanding what she has heard in seminar presentations. Confronted with the task of writing a report on a presentation she has understood minimally, she does the best she can, though the writing she produces feels like "BS" as a result.

Dr. Anderson's comments on Lisa's work were also related to comprehension of seminar presentations. Lisa describes Dr. Anderson's comments on her work as specifically focused on narrowing her report to "[writing] conclusively on one experiment vs. trying to encompass all of them and have...parts of different experiments in each part of your paper." In order to recognize when a speaker is talking about a specific "line" of research within the scope of their entire presentation, students must be able to comprehend enough of the presentation to separate it into specific studies. Lisa had trouble with this task, as she did not major in science as an undergraduate. Entering

the MS program with a BS in Accounting and Spanish, Lisa came into the Research Seminar "without having research experience," and was therefore very unfamiliar with the discourse she was hearing presentations. Dr. Anderson recognizes that this is no easy task, and said as much when he stated that "this is...training of their mind to get the essence of the study" and that this is "very complicated." To compensate, Lisa admitted that she and several other students would "look up" various articles published by presenters in order to give her clues as to what the parameters of a given study in a presentation was about. Luckily, Dr. Anderson must have listened to the comments of his students regarding the difficulty of following presentations and after the "first three or four presentations," had presenters send relevant articles and abstracts to students a week before a presentation occurred to give students a head start in understanding a presentation's focus. Lisa shared that after Dr. Anderson started having presenters provide these supporting documents, and after receiving several rounds of comments, "[she's] had to do better with [identifying and summarizing a single study in her reports] in his class, and [she has]." Overall, though both students admitted to some difficulties with the professor's expectations on the seminar report, both were able to improve their writing (at least to the extent that they produced work that was closer to what Dr. Anderson envisioned for the genre) over the course of the semester.

Below, I discuss Dr. Anderson's pedagogy in the context of existing genre pedagogy scholarship from Rhetoric and Composition and EAP, and how courses like the Research Seminar could be improved in their approach to the instruction of genres by incorporating the kinds of pedagogies that Rhetoric and Composition scholars propose.

Discussion: Genre Instruction in the Research Seminar

The following discussion is focused on how Dr. Anderson's overall course design and the function of his seminar report instructional genre in the context of Physiology programmatic goals for graduate writing instruction could be improved, given the kinds of genre-based graduate writing pedagogies I argue for. My discussion as well as my pedagogical recommendations that follow might be helpful for WAC/WID scholars who are looking to collaborate with faculty across disciplines in order to assist them in implementing genre-based writing instruction in their graduate seminars (these recommendations could also be adapted for writing-intensive disciplinary undergraduate courses as well).

Given what the course does offer to new Physiology graduate students like Carly and Lisa, there are a lot of things the Research Seminar does well. By immersing students in seminar presentations, it allows students to practice the kinds of listening and comprehension skills they will be expected to enact when they are professional researchers or professionals in the medical field and expected to attend such presentations. It also gives students a unique opportunity to discover what lines of research are current in Physiology, and what future research areas might be possible for them after graduation or as part of the research they conduct under a mentor in their second or third semester of study. Providing students with this kind of exposure to scholars in the discipline is something graduate programs in any discipline would love to have, if not for lack of funding. Attending these presentations and completing their coursework focusing on Physiology as subjects provides new students of this program with a good range of content knowledge. It also provides students with examples of

seminar presentations as well as examples of scientific research articles that they could potentially use as models when writing articles of their own.

Despite these strengths, what seems to be lacking in the first semester of the MS Physiology program is discipline-specific writing instruction, particularly in teaching new graduate students how to write the genres they will encounter later on in their graduate work, as well as genres they will encounter as professional researchers or medical professionals. Also, though the Research Seminar is considered a writing class, not much structured time is actually spent talking about how the main instructional genre of the course, the Seminar Report, is a way of learning the kinds of writing students will be expected to do in the future as researchers, or how this genre connects to, mimics, or differs from genres that are at work in the discipline. This may be because the seminar report's real function and purpose at work in the course is misaligned with the course's overall goal of giving students practice in writing for the discipline.

In fact, Dr. Anderson does not seem to want to admit that the course is one that teaches students how to write at all. He assures students that by the time they complete the course, they will be able to attend seminar presentations with enough critical *listening* skills to be able to discern the "essence" of a particular study. Dr. Anderson states in the first class meeting, "by the end of this class, you will be very good at getting information from talks. You will be trained to get essence of every talk you attend. Sometimes you have to go all day long and attend talks. After this training, you will remember more than you would have [at each talk] than you would have without this class." So, students will acquire these listening and comprehension skills by, a) being immersed in many sample seminar presentations, and b) practicing the act of selectively summarizing and

evaluating a particular study (from a given presentation) in the reports they write. Students improve their work for each successive report based on professor feedback (depending on how well students adhere to Dr. Anderson's requirements for the report's conventions). In theory, the selective summaries of presentations that students completed in their reports were not only supposed to help students comprehend and evaluate the presentations they attended, but also were supposed to do the work of preparing students to do the kinds of writing they would be expected to perform as future researchers or medical field professionals—this being the only course focused exclusively on writing that students are required to take in the Physiology MS program. Considering this role of the course in the program's curriculum, it is curious that Dr. Anderson does not assure the same kind of knowledge transfer for students' future research *writing* skills after leaving the Research Seminar as he does for their listening and comprehension skills for attending seminar presentations. This may be because Dr. Anderson does not consider himself to be a writing teacher, per se. He described himself to be "train[ing] them...to acquire specific skills," but "not teach[ing] them," and if his students "want to write better, they still have to take those courses," meaning first year writing courses. When speaking of his students he saw as having "poor skills" in writing, he believed it would have been "helpful" for them to take introductory writing courses at the university, but since he stated that none of his students took these courses he was familiar with at his current institution, he could not speak to how satisfactory of an experience they had with first year writing. Dr. Anderson, then, sees first-year writing as being the sole course responsible for the writing instruction of his graduate students.

Also, when asked if he sends his students to the university writing center, he responded with a no, explaining that his course "is not really a writing course." This is interesting, as the syllabus describes the course as one focusing exclusively on writing, and the only ways students are being evaluated are on their attendance and their writing of the seminar reports. Even Lisa mentions that Dr. Anderson "is considered to be...the expert in writing...research" in the program and "helps out a lot of students...with their research," and lists examples like, "writing out grants, writing out...papers for publishing and stuff like that." Avoiding formal writing instruction (in other words, structured time in classrooms spent on the teaching of writing—not the kinds of one-on-one instruction Lisa mentions that Dr. Anderson does often) is common in the sciences, as Charles Bazerman has argued in his genre study of the scientific experimental article. Bazerman observes that "scientific discourse...appears to hide itself" because "even widely published scientists, responsible for the production of many texts over many years, often do not see themselves as accomplished writers, nor do they recognize any self-conscious control of their texts" (*Shaping* 14). This could account for Dr. Anderson's unwillingness to describe himself as a teacher of scientific writing, even if he has published many articles during his career and does seem very willing, according to Lisa, to share his writing expertise with students one-on-one outside of a traditional course-based situation.

So, there seems to be some misunderstanding happening between the course's curricular function in the program and Dr. Anderson's understanding of the course's goals—that the instructional seminar report genre does actually facilitate the kind of knowledge transfer that makes it possible for students to eventually write for the discipline as professional scholars. The goals of the course described in the syllabus are

actually more connected, though, to the learning of how to A) effectively structure and give a seminar presentation, B) listen to and comprehend the parts of a seminar presentation, and learn to do so *through* the act of writing, and C) write a successful seminar report in the isolation of the course. In other words, Dr. Anderson is under the impression that in reflecting on, summarizing, and evaluating the presentations they attend in their reports, students will learn how to effectively present and structure their own seminars in the future, as well as understand the ones they attend. It does not end up teaching students as much about the genres or practices of research writing they will need to know about in their future graduate work and after graduation, like the scientific research paper, the grant proposal, or the abstract. This disconnect is illustrated in comments from an administrator in the Physiology program, Dr. Godard, in the following:

> One of the things that we felt was missing a little bit in the program was students learning how to write. You know, most of the tests they take are going to be multiple choice, and they don't have a lot of chance because they're not writing manuscripts typically because their research isn't extensive enough. So, we wanted to give them a chance to be able to think about what the presentation is, pick out what they see as specific aims, and break it down in what the person talked about...It's not real extensive, it just gives them some practice. But I think it's valuable...Very early on, there is a seminar on doing research in scientific writing. And it's given by the guy that directs the seminar series. So, he explains pretty clearly what he's looking for because he's the one that's going to grade the papers. And even in the grading of that, we find out, most of the students get an A. What'll happen is they'll write something up, he'll take his red pen and make some comments and suggestions and gives it back to them...So it really is practice. And we just want to see all the students make some progress in that direction.

The fact that the program feels so strongly about giving graduate students more practice in the act of writing is very admirable, especially given Bazerman's observation of the tendency for scientific discourse to hide itself, and especially because the program appears to have dedicated an entire course to the kind of practice they intend. Also, the

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fact that Dr. Anderson gives students regular feedback on their writing in order to allow students to improve is also impressive, particularly given the fact that Dr. Anderson commented that he gives A grades to students who are "trying, progressing better" and "[compares] them with themselves" by gauging whether or not their writing has improved. This would imply that Dr. Anderson does see writing as a process—that students should not be assessed on a product in isolation, but that they should be evaluated based on how their writing has improved over time. However, to bring the discussion back to genre instruction, the genre of the seminar report is simply not meeting the kinds of goals that the curriculum seems to expect of it—namely, that students "learn to write." Given the genre's required conventions, rhetorical purposes, and amount of instruction spent on how the genre will teach students to write as scientists, it does not seem to be the *right* instructional genre for what the program is expecting to gain from the implementation of the Research Seminar, at least as it exists currently.

Dr. Anderson's instruction describing how to write the seminar report genre does not include any connections between the knowledge students will gain from writing reports and the kinds of writing students might expect when writing up their own research that they will present on at their own seminars, including the grant proposals that make that kind of research possible, as well as published papers written after research has been conducted. In other words, there was no time in class discussing how writing the seminar report might compare to writing other genres that exist in the STEM fields. Despite the fact that the STEM research presentations students attended contained similar organizational structures (introductions, methods, and results sections) to scientific

research articles, the rhetorical situation of a presentation differs greatly from the rhetorical situation of a scientific article. One major difference is that the presentation is spoken and delivered in person, and therefore contains less material than an article and often incorporates more visual aids than an article would in order to engage a live audience.

Instead of only teaching the required conventions of the instructional genre of the seminar report in the isolation of the course, Dr. Anderson could spend more time discussing *how* the conventions and features of the report compare to or diverge from the ways knowledge is rhetorically constructed in the common genres of the discipline. He does briefly mention, for example, the writing of grant proposals and scientific articles, and offers some advice for how to best produce the kinds of texts that reviewers might be looking for in accepting pieces for publication or funding. These comments occurred informally as a tangent to his lecture on the first day of class on how to write the seminar report. However, this kind of advice is difficult for students to actually be able to follow in future writing contexts if they are not first given the kind of writing experience they can only gain through guided practice accompanied by expert instruction. Instructional genres like the seminar report, then, could ideally function as the kind of practice students need to transfer discipline-specific writing knowledge to their future writing practices *if* framed in a way that would enable that transfer, and if the instruction of this genre is paired with additional discussions and critical analyses of real genres that students will encounter in their future writing contexts as scientists.

How might this kind of knowledge transfer be accomplished more successfully in the scope of this course? First, Dr. Anderson could benefit from utilizing the scientific

articles that presenters send to students of the Research Seminar before their presentations *in his instruction*. These are potentially ideal examples of the scientific research paper genre, and taking advantage of these texts by including them in the instruction of the course is a great opportunity for genre instruction. In having students read, discuss, and unpack the conventions and exigencies of scientific articles, students would not only learn about the expected conventions of a scientific article, it would also provide an opportunity to compare the conventions they are practicing in the completion of their seminar reports to similar conventions in scientific articles. For example: How might your descriptions of presenters' introductions compare to the introduction of a scientific article? Why are article introductions so much longer? What do they include that your report's introduction does not include? Why? These types of questions are similar to the questions that Richard M. Coe encourages in order to teach genres "both as structures and as social processes" instead of a set of static features:

> What purposes does this genre serve? How do its particular generic structures serve those purposes?
>
> How is it adapted to its particular readers?
>
> How is it appropriate to its context of situation? (161)

By posing these kinds of questions and making these kinds of comparisons, students are encouraged to critically analyze and think about the exigencies of the seminar presentation, the seminar report, *and* the scientific article. Instead of only teaching the conventions and formal features of the report genre in the isolation of the course, Dr. Anderson would be placing the conventions of the report in the context of similar conventions appearing in other related genres in the discipline outside the

classroom. In critically analyzing presenters' documents in class, there are opportunities

for students to consider genres' "social processes" that reflect how the "ways of doing"

are represented in the "ways of knowing" of the discipline—in this case, in the genres

that circulate knowledge, like the scientific article and the seminar presentation (Carter,

"Ways of Knowing"). The Research Seminar has a unique opportunity for this kind of

genre instruction, as "teaching needed genres in discipline-specific courses, rather than

college composition courses, can embed instruction in context more deeply so that, as

Mary Soliday concludes from studying a Writing across the Curriculum program, 'Giving

skills flesh and bone...turns 'conventions' into meaningful rhetorical craft and opens up

one pathway to a genre' (103)" (Devitt, *Writing Genres*, 149). Dr. Anderson does have

expertise as a regular writer of scientific publications—a kind of expertise that a scholar

of Rhetoric and Composition would not necessarily have in teaching an introductory

WAC course for new graduate students, for example, and would be more able to "[give]

skills flesh and bone" to the kinds of genres he has experience with in the discipline

(103). Also, having students read and discuss the scientific articles that presenters send

alongside of attending presentations also takes the major focus of the course away from

presentations and incorporates more instruction on genres of writing that students will

need to know how to perform in their future careers and later graduate work. In a

practical sense, this would mean more class time and potentially fewer presentations, but

even Dr. Anderson admitted there were several weeks where there were no presenters,

and these weeks could potentially be reserved for this kind of instruction. Perhaps Dr.

Anderson could also incorporate into the work of the seminar report some less formal

reflective writing that asks students to respond to guest presentations and articles in light

of the kinds of critical analyses of these genres that could be conducted in class. What do specific presentations and articles remind students of? How might they apply what they learned to future writing situations they can think of?

Some scholars warn against a pedagogy that uses models to teach students about particular genres. Amy Devitt, in *Writing Genres*, warns that "if the goal of instruction is to enable students to learn particular genres, then the movement from models (or samples, which students are likely to treat as models) to production would seem to encourage producing texts that follow those models, and would seem to encourage treating models as prescriptions and writing assignments as imitations of those models" (194). John M. Swales also speaks of a common argument against explicit teaching in second language instruction—that "whether genre as a structuring device for language teaching is doomed to encourage the unthinking application of formulas" (*Genre Analysis* 33). Devitt's criticism and the conversations Swales speaks of, however, refer to the kind of explicit instruction of genre through the use of models that is done without the kind of contextual discussions and assignments that would encourage students to not only look to models as examples, but look to models as potential opportunities for critique. Instead of encouraging his students to only look to presenters' articles as models for replication, Dr. Anderson could also allow students to critique the articles of presenters, devoting time in class to this kind of discussion or adding this type of evaluative writing to the report assignment itself. The seminar report came close to this kind of evaluative work, in that it asked students to reflect on the "positives" and "negatives" of the presentation they heard, but this kind of critique could also be applied to the scientific articles students read alongside of presentations. Encouraging critique of these genres causes students to "be

aware of [a genre's] limitations and discourage mindless conformity" when examining

models of a genre (Devitt, "Genre Pedagogies, 151).

Finally, genre instruction that encourages students to see conventions and forms

of genres as social processes each with their own exigencies steers the focus away from

what was essentially an immersion approach of instruction whereupon students were

expected to learn not only how to comprehend seminar presentations and eventually

make their own presentations, but also how to write any genre for the discipline by

listening to experts perform dense scientific discourse every week (with little

accompanying writing instruction). This learning by immersion approach is similar to

what Laura Micchiche terms learning by "repeated exposure and an osmosis-like

process" (485) and Mary Soliday terms the "apprenticeship model of learning" (101).

The former describes a process by which students learn how to write for the discipline by

repeated exposure through massive amounts of reading of scholarship, and the latter is

defined as a common narrative perpetuated by instructors who believe giving novice

writers (like new graduate students) less guidance and more immersion in exemplary

texts "poses a *necessary* rhetorical challenge for students to explore" (Soliday 101). By

the end of the semester, Carly was still "BS-ing" her seminar reports because she still

understood very little of what presenters were actually conveying. Though this might be

seen as a "necessary...challenge" by Dr. Anderson, as he or other faculty in the program

may have learned how to understand seminar presentations themselves through repeated

exposure, it is hard not to imagine how much easier Carly may have found it to

understand what she was hearing had she had more instruction alongside of the course's

immersion approach.

A pedagogy that embraces discussion of the exigencies of the conventions and forms/features of *multiple* genres that exist in the discipline (not just the instructional genre of the seminar paper in isolation) and how these conventions compare to each other might have helped students like Carly more effectively transfer the knowledge she gained in writing seminar reports to the kinds of writing she would later be expected to do as a researcher, as she unfortunately left the course still feeling a bit lost: "I feel better about the seminar class because now I know what's expected of me...otherwise, like, research writing, I haven't done a whole lot with it yet? But I'm expected to? I can already tell they're wanting me to. So that's going to be a challenge once it happens." Though Carly was participating in a kind of research writing during this course (or, at least a genre that borrows from the kinds of research writing she might be expected to do as a professional researcher), and though she was immersed in the discourse of the discipline all semester by listening to experts talk about research, she still left the course feeling like she had not "done a whole lot with it yet." Though the conventions that appear in genres like the scientific article do tend to stay "a matter of 'local knowledge,'" as Geertz asserts in *Local Knowledge*, the Research Seminar is an opportunity for students like Carly to gain access to such local knowledge, or what D.N. Perkins and Gavriel Salomon call knowledge that refers to the "detailed ins and outs of a field" (17). Not only might Carly gain some local knowledge about the common genres of her discipline, but a pedagogy privileging genre as a social construction that accomplishes a certain rhetorical action might make the process of transfer more likely, as it gives Carly a wider and more "meta" view of *why* certain genres have certain conventions at all. Instead of only knowing what an introduction looks like in a scientific article, for example, she might also know what

an introduction does, and *why* introductions differ depending on what type of genre they occur in. This is similar to the "meta-awareness" approach to genre instruction Amy Devitt espouses, as it gives students the tools to recognize genres in the future, how to choose which ones to use for what purposes, and how and why certain genres look the way they do.

Finally, presenters could also be encouraged to submit different kinds of genres to students ahead of time, including genres that would make up what John M. Swales terms a "genre chain," or a system where "one genre is a necessary antecedent for another" (*Research Genres* 18). Instead of only sending students relevant scientific articles ahead of their presentations, for example, presenters could send the grant proposal that made the research possible, the reviewers' comments they received on their manuscript, the abstract they submitted for database searching purposes, etc. These genres are ones that are very often "'occluded," or 'out of sight' to outsiders and apprentices (such as graduate students)" and "such occluded and interstitial genres perform essential waystage roles in the administrative and evaluative functioning of the research world" (Swales, *Academic Writing*, 18). John M. Swales uses the term "occluded genres" to refer to genres only familiar to those with an "in," in the functioning of academic research and faculty evaluation, from "external evaluations (for academic institutions)" to "initiating or responsive phone calls and emails" (*Academic Writing*, 19). Again, learning about such occluded genres from the experts who are already there to talk about their research is a great opportunity in a writing course for graduate students, as these genres are ones that would not normally be discussed in a classroom context.

In their Introduction to *Learning and Teaching Genre*, Aviva Freedman and Peter Medway voice how genre instruction, particularly in the sciences, can be limiting, given the tendency for scientists to rely on the idea that enculturation of students into a certain discipline—through hands-on "ways of doing" in real work contexts, like the lab, or the work of collaborating with fellow study members on the authoring of a scientific article—is the process by which genre acquisition occurs (Carter, "Ways of Knowing"). This kind of enculturation is "essential to the effective operation of the subcommunities of science" and the "objective of a full induction into the genres of working science for a student while still in school" is "unattainable" since "the exigencies that motivate the strategies embodied in the genre impinge only on the working scientists" (Freedman and Medway 14). Given this unattainability, "school writing may imitate and adapt features of working genres but cannot *be* those genres: it is doomed, whatever its transparent features, to remain *school* writing, a solution to a quite different set of exigencies" (Freedman and Medway 14). Ken Hyland describes other scholars' skepticism of genre instruction, claiming that such scholars believe "genres are too complex and varied to be removed from their original contexts and taught in the artificial environment of the classroom" (*Genres and Second* 150). However, would it not be safe to assume that students like Carly and Lisa would be well-served by at least an awareness of the kinds of genres they will be expected to write both before they graduate and as future professionals who conduct scientific research? True, the kinds of genre acquisition that both Hyland and Freedman and Medway speak of does eventually occur when novice science writers are immersed in the authentic writing situations of the discipline, or what Christine Tardy terms a "genre's sociorhetorical setting," as "genres are, after all,

socially embedded instantiations" (*Building* 28). After all, in the words of Richard M. Coe, "people learned to swim for millenia before coaches explicitly articulated our knowledge of how to swim" —but "kids today learn to swim better (and in less time) on the basis of that explicit knowledge" (159).

In other words, the Research Seminar could ideally offer a head start to students from an expert who writes for their discipline by offering an approach to instruction that embraces genre awareness. Instead of continuing the narrative that writing in disciplinary classrooms is occluded because "students are unfamiliar with the genre or expectations, and sample texts may not be readily available," and instead of only assuming that "the quality and quantity of feedback provided in disciplinary classes is likely to vary" and therefore it should only be the job of WAC writing classes for graduate students to provide the kinds of writing instruction they need, faculty involved in WAC/WID programs could share with instructors the kinds of genre awareness instruction I describe here—instruction that many Rhetoric and Composition scholars (especially Amy Devitt) already propose (Tardy, *Building*, 273). Students like Carly and Lisa could leave a course like the Research Seminar armed with an awareness of the genres of their discipline instead of leaving the course feeling lost, like Carly. Carly felt ready to meet the expectations of Dr. Anderson when it came to the isolated instructional genre of the seminar report, but did not feel she was ready to take on other genres of scientific writing, like the scientific article—mainly because those kinds of writing were not discussed. Luckily, Dr. Anderson seems to have taken the advice of Carly and Lisa's class, as he now offers his own presentation on "How to Write a Scientific Research Article" as the first official presentation of the seminar series. This is a step in the right direction, but

again, is a purely explicit approach (to write an article, do x, y, and z), and working this kind of instruction into the course itself, with discussions of the kinds of genre awareness I and other scholars have proposed, would potentially be more likely to facilitate transfer of the local writing knowledge of the discipline to students' future writing practices.

"Just...Write a Seminar Paper": An Analysis of an Occluded Graduate Genre

In this section, I will describe two students' experiences (Erin and Nora) with the seminar paper genre as well as how it was implemented and taught in some of their courses. I will then discuss how those experiences and pedagogies reflect the issues and strengths of this particular instructional genre that is commonly assigned to new graduate students. First, in order to provide the reader with the context surrounding this particular instructional genre, I will give a brief overview of the background and formal features of the genre as it exists currently in graduate education (primarily in the Humanities).

The genre of the seminar paper grows out of the graduate seminar, a creation that Paul Prior in *Writing/Disciplinarity*, asserts arose from a growing desire, in the "last three decades of the 1800s," for "[US] universities [to be] seen as sites for the production of new and socially useful knowledge through original research; traditional roles were reconfigured as faculty became knowledge producers and students, their active apprentices…" (189). Instead of students only attending lectures, in seminars they become active participants in the knowledge creation of the classroom through seminar discussion and the production of writing that could potentially lead to original research. Marta Aguilar, in her chapter "Seminars" included in *The Routledge Handbook of English for Academic Purposes*, examines the modern conception of the seminar genre further, defining it as "a site of inquiry where teaching, research and learning are not

dissociated, and where a small amount of participants engage in theory-practice disciplinary dialogue" (335). Aguilar also clarifies that seminars in the US are distinctive in that they are considered environments "where students debate and discuss ideas with the purpose of improving their academic communication skills while talking about topics that relate to their field of study" (Aguilar 335). The importance of discussion and debate in seminars, led by but not necessarily dominated by a seminar's professor, implies more of a student-centered atmosphere where students are knowledge producers as well as knowledge receivers.

The seminar paper, a genre that Eric Hayot, in *The Elements of Academic Style*, defines as an "end-of-term essay, usually twenty to thirty pages in length...that connects thematically to the course material" is a graduate student's chance to demonstrate what they have learned in seminar from their course readings and seminar discussions and to theoretically put that knowledge into practice (11). This essay is usually expected to contain engagement with the concepts related to the seminar's course theme and engagement with scholarship gathered from course readings as well as scholarship outside the scope of the seminar's required reading. Hayot describes some of the assumed "virtues" of the genre as the fact that "it can teach students to organize and manage an argument of an appropriate length; that it helps give students an intuitive sense of the shape of a twenty-five-page idea; and that it requires them (usually) to manage both primary and secondary sources" (13). Though the seminar paper is commonly assigned in graduate seminars in the Humanities, the expected rules, conventions and purposes for this genre vary according to idiosyncrasies in each professor's pedagogy. While some professors make their expectations for the seminar paper quite transparent, other

professors prefer to leave the student to decide upon the best approach and structure to explore their topic of choice.

Dr. Bauer, in her "Introduction to Graduate Studies" course, assigns the seminar paper to her first year MA English students as the last project of the semester. Intro. to Graduate Studies is a required course for all MA English students, and both Erin and Nora were enrolled in Dr. Bauer's section during the fall semester of 2015. This was Dr. Bauer's first time teaching the course. The interviews I draw from in the analysis below are those I conducted with Erin and Nora, as well as from the interview I conducted with the professor of the course, Dr. Bauer, who is a full-time professor for the Department of English. I also draw from an interview I conducted with Dr. Morse, who is an administrator in the Department of English. Finally, I also draw from the course's syllabus. In this section, I will be discussing what Dr. Bauer sees as her own philosophy behind assigning the seminar paper, what graduates shared about their understanding of the genre's purpose and effectiveness, as well as how they gauged their own learning processes with this genre. Finally, I will provide a discussion of what this genre seems to be offering new graduate student writers, as well as how it might be improved, given my students' experiences. I will also discuss the possibilities of some other approaches to the use of this genre as well as other alternative genres that might be of more use to new graduate student writers of English.

To begin, some context for "Introduction to Graduate Studies" is given below. Here is a quotation from Dr. Bauer's syllabus that outlines the course's overall goals:

> This course has two main objectives: first, to introduce students to the range of conversations, fascinations, interpretive lenses, and challenges that shape English studies at the graduate and professional levels; and second, to aid students in

developing the specific research, writing, and oral communication skills that they will need in order to join such conversations.

The course focuses both on familiarizing new graduate students with content knowledge (the kinds of scholarly conversations at work in English studies) as well as allowing students to develop the kinds of research and writing skills that will be expected of them in the future as graduate English scholars. The seminar meets once a week for two hours and forty-five minutes. The professor of the course provides regular written feedback on assignments and makes herself available for questions during office hours. Similar to most graduate seminars, the course is discussion-based. There are smaller weekly reading and writing assignments required, as well as two projects throughout the semester, and one major seminar paper due at the end of the course. Dr. Bauer further comments on her philosophy behind the course in her comments about the privileging of writing instruction—a practice she makes central to the work she assigns:

> My conception of the course, or the way I've tried to set it up this first time is really as a writing course. So, I have tamped down my impulse to assign tremendous amounts of reading. We're still reading quite a bit, but I purposefully pulled back from that to leave time for more writing, more talking about writing, more work shopping, and I'm really thinking of it, again, as a writing course.

The genres of writing Dr. Bauer assigns vary, ranging from a 5-6 page "Article Summary Analysis" paper, an 8-10 page "Keywords Essay" based on the history of a keyword's use in scholarship in the discipline of English Studies, and a final seminar project, which will next be discussed in detail. The specific guidelines for Dr. Bauer's seminar project—one she describes as a "pretty conventional seminar paper" —is provided in the following, taken from the course's syllabus:

Seminar project:

In conversation with me and with other seminar participants, you'll develop an

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independent project that will culminate in a 12-15-page paper. We'll talk at length in class and in conference about ways to approach this project. My hope is that you'll develop it with an eye to a larger audience—that is, as a preliminary version of a conference paper, a culminating project, or an article. Projects may relate to any era or field of inquiry within English studies (including Rhetoric and Composition). Titles from our syllabus are eligible—provided you develop an argument that extends or departs from what we've covered in class—but I would also encourage you to consider other primary texts that interest you.

A. **Prospectus**: I'll want a prospectus from you on or around October 20. This write-up should include an account of the texts you're using and the questions you're asking, possible or probable arguments you'll be making, and any questions or concerns you'd like me to address in response.

B. **Workshops**: We'll have two draft workshop sessions at the end of the term (11/24 and 12/1). You'll have an opportunity to sign up for a date later in the term. You must post a digital copy of your draft to our course blackboard site approximately 48 hours before your workshop so that your classmates and instructor will have an opportunity to read and assess your work. I'll lay out more specific instructions for the workshops in mid-November.

A. **Final essay**: This should be a formal piece of academic prose, by which I mean that you should present a challenging, complex argument (preferably laid out in the first few pages) and support it with abundant textual evidence and careful analysis. The essay should be properly documented (MLA or Chicago style—your choice) and carefully proofread. Due date: Thursday, Dec. 10.

Dr. Bauer's seminar paper unit is spaced out into separate assignments and activities to allow students to brainstorm, draft, and discuss their ideas for their eventual final seminar project due at the end of the semester. In this way, Dr. Bauer's pedagogical approach to the seminar paper resembles a "genre chain" in action. By this logic, the individual conference students have with Dr. Bauer about their ideas for the seminar paper, class instruction, prospectus, drafts, and workshops all act as antecedent genres for the seminar paper, and the seminar paper acts as a potential antecedent genre for genres at work outside of the classroom with a "potential larger audience," such as "a preliminary version of a conference paper, a culminating project [the final project MA students in this program must complete to graduate], or an article." Dr. Bauer explains her reasoning

behind thinking about the seminar paper as a possible antecedent genre leading to other genres at work in the discipline below:

> Again, I tried to think about what kinds of writing do we expect from them in their later coursework, but also what kinds of writing do we just do in the field? We evaluate manuscripts, we review books...a lot of people who teach [Intro. to Grad. Studies] have them do a...conference paper proposal. My version of that was just a prospectus or proposal for the final paper because we're not setting it up as a conference. But that sort of proposing work... making something sound interesting without being too definitive yet about what exactly it's going to turn out to be.

Dr. Bauer speaks here of designing the "prospectus" she assigns in the course as a genre that mimics the conference paper proposal in that it is doing similar "proposing work" where a writer "[makes] something sound interesting without being too definitive." In addition to her comparison of the seminar paper prospectus to the proposal, Dr. Bauer also compares the collaborative nature of the writing workshop students participate in to provide each other with feedback on their drafts to similar work done in the discipline:

> For the final paper, we're doing much more elaborate whole group workshops where everybody has…a couple. So, on a given night, seven or eight people will get their work workshopped, and each student is going to read everybody's draft, but then they're assigned two people to whom they need to respond in more depth and in writing. So, I think that kind of writing…is super important to what we do.

Elaine Fredericksen and Kate Mangelsdorf describe a course, the "Graduate Writing Workshop" for graduate students from "various language backgrounds" (347) with a strong focus on "peer review groups who were given time to work together at almost every class meeting (349)." Though students were from different disciplines as well as language backgrounds, students found the collaborative nature of the Writing Workshop to be very helpful and "supportive," "enhancing [their] learning experience" and "[helped] in identifying other languages' writing styles" (356). Such graduate writing

workshops are becoming more popular in graduate pedagogy—particularly for ELL graduate student writers, but these courses are almost always open to native English-speaking graduate students as well. Dr. Bauer's strong focus on peer response in her course on the seminar paper takes advantage of this helpful model that many first year writing instructors utilize (and is therefore "super important to what" many instructors of English do"), but perhaps not as many instructors of graduate students, despite the fact that it eases anxiety of new graduate students who feel isolated in their struggle to produce a new genre by allowing them to see the various strategies, "writing styles," and similar struggles of their peers.

While Dr. Bauer does not require adapting instructional genres like the seminar paper prospectus into genres like the conference proposal outside the classroom, they are encouraged to do so in order to use their work in the seminar as a way to contribute to their possible future scholarly work. As an instructional genre, the seminar paper in Dr. Bauer's course serves several purposes other than as a means to produce work that could potentially lead to scholarly work outside the classroom in future contexts. The major purpose of the genre seems to be to teach new graduate students the kinds of research, interpretive and writerly skills they will need to utilize in their other graduate coursework (and, potentially, in their future scholarly work after graduation if they choose to continue). Dr. Bauer confirms this purpose when she shares the thought process behind the design of her course, in which she asks herself "what kinds of writing do we expect from [graduate students] in their later coursework?" Below, I discuss some of the major skills that Dr. Bauer aims to teach to her students with this genre—skills she sees as transferable to students' writing in their later coursework.

Research Practices

In addition to the primary text students must choose to analyze, they are also expected to conduct research to find scholarly sources that represent the critical conversation surrounding that chosen primary text. In the process, students learn how to conduct proper scholarly research and find relevant and reputable sources to contribute to their arguments. While conducting this kind of research, students become familiarized with the rhetoric of the scholarly article as they navigate the academic genre's conventions while also looking for evidence that supports their own work in the seminar paper.

Argument and Source Use

Dr. Bauer strategically designs her seminar paper to be "a little shorter" than most, "more like 12-15 pages rather than 15-18 or 18-20 because [she has] wanted to give [students] time to think through...framing and spend more time on the rhetorical work of setting up the argument." Students have the majority of the semester (from October to December), then, to develop their seminar paper's overall argument—an argument whose scope, according to Dr. Bauer has been "[narrowed]...a little bit" by the shorter length requirement. The time students are given to dedicate to this kind of invention, as well as the time spent in conferences and in class discussions and workshops allows for a potentially more nuanced and developed argument that is staking a claim—a claim that, ideally, is different from the claims other scholars are making in the field of English. In addition to developing a scholarly argument, Dr. Bauer expects students to use sources to support their arguments as "abundant textual evidence." Students learn to use this evidence as a way of explaining what conversations have already occurred on their topic

of choice in order to enhance their own analytical arguments different from the arguments of their sources.

Analysis of primary texts

Finally, Dr. Bauer's students are expected to choose their own primary texts to analyze in their seminar papers. Students exercise their close reading skills to discover significant passages in their primary text that they must analyze in order to craft their paper's arguments. Dr. Bauer is careful to specify that if students choose a primary text already covered in the course readings, students must "develop an argument that extends or departs from what [they've] covered in class," encouraging students to become independent scholars who are expected to create their own arguments and explore their own topics of interest, as long as those topics "relate to any era or field of inquiry within English studies (including Rhetoric and Composition)."

Student Perspectives

Erin and Nora were enrolled in Dr. Bauer's seminar and were quite encouraged by Dr. Bauer's design of the seminar paper unit, and seemed—especially, in the case of Nora, in comparison with her experiences in other courses that same semester—relatively confident in their abilities to produce the paper. Nora spoke highly of Dr. Bauer's scaffolding of the seminar paper unit, referring to it as "a stretched out writing process" that gives students "the time to work on something bit by bit and then...culminate it all at the end." Nora also describes Dr. Bauer's approach to the seminar paper unit as a pedagogy that embraces writing as a process with time for researching, drafting, and feedback:

> She kind of gets us to work on our final seminar project early on, so we do a bit of research, we're given stuff for that, we started a bit of drafting,… she

looks over it. So she has a writing process that's very useful...by the time...we get to actually giving in the seminar paper, it's already done.

The fact that Dr. Bauer provides students with such time to work up to a major seminar paper was valuable to students like Nora, who admitted she "kind of [procrastinates]" by "[convincing herself] that… [she] can take this day off, just relax...And then [she] just never gets to work." Nora also spoke highly of Dr. Bauer's usage of work shopping and peer response in her course, where students provided each other with feedback on their developing drafts of the seminar paper—a practice she was new to given the fact that her previous undergraduate experience in Kuwait did not utilize such practices:

> I've never done that. Usually it's just like, okay, you have a paper due on this day and you just work on it, and then that's what the professor sees and what the professor grades. But I've found this method very useful and,… you're more confident when you give in your paper, and then at the end of the day, you get a better grade than you would have gotten [otherwise].

Erin had similar things to say regarding Dr. Bauer's seminar paper, praising the freedom she had to choose her own topic as well as the fact that she could keep developing her ideas throughout the semester:

> [The] paper for [Dr. Bauer] was... a lot easier than I thought it would be? Just because I loved what I was writing about and I had the freedom to pick my own topic, and I got to, …develop it over the course of the semester, which was really helpful, kind of liberating, I guess, academically. Actually, I don't know, that paper wound up being 21 or 22 pages? It was supposed to cut off at 15, and I was like, no. No. I definitely still have everything in the world to say.

Erin felt so confident with her writing abilities and so "liberated" by the assignment construction that she exceeded the paper's length requirements, choosing to develop her ideas as fully as she could instead of stopping when she could have. She was also confident enough in her final paper to think about revising it for potential publication after the class had concluded, and had set up a meeting with Dr. Bauer to discuss those

revisions the following spring semester of 2016. In the following, she describes the plan

she and Dr. Bauer have put in place to begin that process:

> I'm actually going to see her this Friday to talk about the paper still because she thinks it's just either a great idea, or really cool…And I guess I'm reframing my argument and she thinks that it could be publishable at some point, just…down the road. But I guess the idea is good enough, which is really affirming. First of all, sort of reshaping the paper and the intro a little bit and getting the argument maybe somewhat more professional? I don't know what it means to reframe an argument...And then she said [we would] talk about next steps and I guess that means some of those really bottom line important details like, where? Where do I send this to?...What do I do next after I have this paper in reasonable shape?

Based on Dr. Bauer's recommendations, Erin planned to begin her revisionary

process for potential publication by reshaping her paper's structure, and reframing her

argument to meet the needs of a broader, yet still academic audience. Dr. Bauer also

planned to share with Erin what kinds of journals her work would be suited for, given her

own experience with publication in English studies. In addition to recommending Erin

meet with her to discuss these possibilities, Erin also mentioned that Dr. Bauer provided

helpful and constructive comments on her final paper, commenting on Erin's handling of

the content as well as posing "follow-up questions" to help her think of future directions

for her paper's argument.

Erin and Nora's experiences with the writing of a seminar paper in Intro. to Grad.

Studies seemed to contrast greatly with Erin's experience writing a seminar paper in

another one of her courses, "Sociolinguistics." I was not able to interview the professor of

this course, Dr. Hinsey, about what she values about teaching the seminar paper genre, as

she had left the institution for other employment at the time I was conducting my

interviews. If I had had a chance to interview Dr. Hinsey, I might have asked her how she

saw the seminar paper playing a role in her course's goals, and why she chose to assign it

when and how she did. My proceeding analysis, therefore, is based on Erin's experience

writing for the seminar paper genre in Dr. Hinsey's course, as well as the course's

syllabus and the seminar paper assignment description.

Erin consistently expressed anxiety about taking this course, mostly because it

was dense in theory and terminology she wasn't familiar with, and because it was a

course that required either a prerequisite undergraduate course ("Foundations of

Language"—an undergraduate course she had not taken the equivalent of) or the

professor's permission. The description of the course listed in the syllabus is as follows:

> Sociolinguistics is the study of language in its social context. As such we study language primarily as a means of communication and expression of identity as the identity of the speaker and of the speech community define the choice of the language. We will look at questions like: What are the different language varieties? Who speaks what language variety to whom, why, and with whom? What happens when we find languages in contact? What influences the speaker's language attitude? How does language spread, shift, die, or revive? In addition to the textbook we will also be reading scholarly articles that I will post online. This is a sociolinguistic course exploring the above questions in an interdisciplinary manner by using critical thinking.

Also, below is the description for both papers assigned in the course (one take

home exam essay and one longer, more traditional seminar paper) taken from the

syllabus:

> Papers: For the first (short) seminar paper you will receive a choice of 3 questions of which you are expected to answer 1 comprehensively at home. Length: 10-12 pages.
> Final paper; length appr. 17-20 pages. APA style, Chicago style, or MLA style accepted. Other than that, follow general standards for writing your seminar paper (number pages, font size 12, Times New Roman, double space, no plagiarism, etc.). Please attach a "works cited" list/bibliography at the end of your paper. Electronic sources such as Wikipedia and alike are not valid sources. Instead, I expect you to cite book chapters and journal articles. Please start your paper research 1 month (start no later than 11/10) before paper is due to allow some time for articles & books to be ordered via interlibrary loan if not available at our library. Your sources need to be related to your topic. It will be obvious if you incorporate articles that are picked out of convenience.

> As for the topic of your paper, you can go two ways: you can either pick a topic that we discussed in class and go more in depth OR you can pick a new topic that

has always interested you (might be related to a topic previously discussed). Either way, you need to come and talk to me about your topic BEFORE you start your research.

The course met once a week for two and a half hours. Similar to Intro. to Grad. Studies, it was primarily discussion-based, with discussion revolving around the required readings for each week. Dr. Hinsey was a professor of the Comparative Humanities Department. Prior to the start of the semester, Erin admitted, in her email questionnaire regarding what she might expect of graduate school, that she was unfamiliar with "writing for the social sciences" and "[had] gathered that the layout, format, and general intention behind the writings for this branch of study are markedly different than writing for/in the Humanities." This unfamiliarity Erin speaks of combined with her professor's pedagogical approach to the seminar paper genre caused some frustrations for her throughout the semester. The final seminar paper for the course, which was expected to be 17-20 pages in length (her "longest paper" that semester), was a particularly intimidating task for Erin.

Unlike Erin's course with Dr. Bauer, her Sociolinguistics seminar required little to no invention-based writing assignments or workshops meant to develop students' ideas throughout the semester, and was "just entirely discussion based...entirely reading based work." Dr. Hinsey did require students to conference with her regarding paper topics, which provided students with some direction regarding their final projects. She also assigned a midterm take-home exam containing three questions wherein students had to answer one in the form of a short essay, drawing from class discussions and readings to support their points. After the midterm exam, Dr. Hinsey also required each student to present on their future seminar paper's topic and scope, allowing the class to give them feedback on content. However, there were no explicit discussions regarding the writing of

the seminar paper genre—what it might be used for in the future, what kinds of genres (perhaps in the social sciences) this kind of paper might relate to, and how students might best approach the development of an argument in a Sociolinguistics seminar paper.

Erin describes the fact that the course doesn't require a lot of writing as "great but also sort of terrifying because we're going to get to midterm and we're going to have this thing due. It's going to be like, 'how does she grade? What...is she looking for? This is really long. Does this 20 page paper even make my thesis on page 8?...Is that normal?" In addition to these questions she had about the seminar paper's conventions and formal features in this course, Erin also felt intimidated by the fact that she had to pose a question and come up with an argument utilizing terminology and theory she found more foreign to her than what she was used to reading and writing about in her "home" subject of English literature:

> Ideally, you're covering a lot of ground with your research unless you just have no idea what the research is, I guess...and I feel like I could do that in a lit. course, or you know, even a theory course...it's not that the complicated subject matter's intimidating, it's really just how am I going to talk for that long?...Which, saying it out loud it doesn't really seem like a sensible fear...I'm starting out with 'what's a phoneme?' I'm starting out with Sociolinguistics, like I don't even know the terminology here and I've got to produce 20 pages that utilize it.

Erin's intentionally hyperbolic example of, "what's a phoneme?" (it is difficult to think of how this question might be answered in a dissertation, let alone a seminar paper) reflects her struggle to come up with a feasible question to answer in a 20 page seminar paper when she does not fully understand how arguments in Sociolinguistics are typically carried out or designed in a paper of this type. Also, asked if she received any smaller assignments that led students up to the point of writing the final seminar project, Erin replied:

[Dr. Hinsey] is just like, do it. And we're like, oh. Hmm. Sure!...She's been really accessible so far...The majority of the time...she does seem like she would be available to talk about things. Not that I would even know what to talk about. I'd kind of be like I don't know what any of this means. I mean, it's not that we're just going to necessarily go into it blind. But it's still going to be hard. We're going to go into a little blind. Go into it you know, sort of groggy, like, 'what is going on? I can't really navigate this that well.'

To describe her anticipation of the experience of writing her seminar paper for this course, Erin chose descriptors that represent vision ("a little blind"), orientation or focus ("groggy"), and sense of direction ("I can't really navigate this that well"). Interestingly, vision, focus, and direction all happen to be qualities that may have contributed to a well-developed paper. Erin, with an undergraduate degree in English, had some familiarity with what goes into a well-developed paper, but this previous knowledge did not seem to lessen her insecurities in writing a seminar paper for Sociolinguistics (more will be discussed on this kind of knowledge transfer, or lack thereof, in the next chapter). The fact that Erin felt lacking this kind of direction made her feel frustrated, as she was eager to perform her best, yet didn't quite have the tools she needed to make that happen. Luckily, she received more direction during class discussion, when Dr. Hinsey recommended a topic Erin had brought up as a comment about language and heritage for her final paper.

If you're of Mexican or Spanish descent and you're in America, …you begin speaking that language as a means of claiming heritage...We were talking about these several arguments in class, and I was like, yeah, but when do you get there? Is it like when you turn 15 and then you just decide I'm going to claim my heritage via my language now? What's the cut off there? So, I sort of kept probing a question in class and [Dr. Hinsey] said, 'well, that's your final topic. That's really interesting. Holy crap, just do it.' I was like, good. But I have no idea how to go about researching that.

Dr. Hinsey gave Erin a good suggestion for a question to explore for her final

seminar paper which made her feel more confident, though she was still left wondering how she might research the topic further. The kinds of research Erin was familiar with were, again, based in English studies, and she was not sure what kinds of research strategies to use to find the kinds of sources she needed for her Sociolinguistics paper. Unfortunately, after having written her final seminar paper in the spring semester of 2016, Erin did not seem to feel so confident about the project's outcome, and comments on her feelings regarding the writing process and product in the following:

> I pulled it off. I had like, I don't know, a billion sources and maybe it was a little source heavy? I don't know. But I can't have real thoughts about this subject. I mean, it was one of those classes where the subject matter itself was just so foreign to me, and…I was sort of like 30% lost just from the beginning to the end of the class, but...I got an A-, so whatever I did worked. It was one of those situations where you just turn in this like, hunk of paper and…you think you know what you said in it? But after a few days have passed you're like, I have no idea what my argument was.

The fact that Erin relied on "a billion sources" making her seminar paper "a little source heavy" speaks to the fact that she did not have as much confidence writing this paper than she did writing her seminar paper for Intro. to Grad. Studies. It is often easier, in other words, to overly draw from the voices of other scholars instead of using those voices to speak back to, counter, forward, add to, etc. a writer's own voice, particularly when the writer feels less than confident in their abilities to speak to a certain subject. Erin even admitted to not remembering her paper's argument a few days after she had turned it in. Perhaps the "grogginess" she felt earlier in the semester when reflecting upon her uneasiness about the upcoming assignment never went away. Or, perhaps she felt more hesitant about the writing experience for this paper, and ended up rushing through the process. Finally, she refers to her project as a "hunk of paper" instead of the "all-star great experience of a paper" descriptor she used to refer to her Intro. to Grad. Studies

seminar paper. A "hunk of paper" is lifeless, inert, and, in the case of Erin's experience, was useless once the course concluded.

Discussion: What Does this Genre Do, and is it Enough?

Why is it that the seminar paper is so often assigned? Though Dr. Bauer and Dr. Hinsey differed in their implementation of the seminar paper in their courses, both assigned it as their course's "final project," and both weighed it the most out of their graded assignments. Other than teaching research practices, analyses of primary texts, and practice with argument and source usage, it also allows students to demonstrate their knowledge of the theory, terminology and concepts that they have learned about in their class discussions and course readings. A quote from Hayot provided in the introduction to this section also speaks to some of the goals that instructors might have in mind when assigning this instructional genre—that "it can teach students to organize and manage an argument of an appropriate length; that it helps give students an intuitive sense of the shape of a twenty-five-page idea; and that it requires them (usually) to manage both primary and secondary sources" (13). Hayot also asserts that the seminar paper can often "[act] as a 'junior' or 'practice' article—it's about the same length as an article, is written in sentences and paragraphs, makes an argument, uses evidence, and so on" (13). By this logic, the seminar paper gives students practice in the process of writing a piece for publication in the future, if they choose to.

Is the seminar paper, however, the best approach to teaching these skills to new graduate students? In other words, as an instructional genre, is it "instructing" enough, and is it doing it in the best way possible? Finally, if, as Marta Aguilar asserts, "A *student* seminar paper is used to further disciplinary acculturation of (post)graduate students," is

it helping or heeding students' acculturation into the writing community of the discipline? (335). It would seem that my MA English participants would feel torn on this issue. For Erin, the Sociolinguistics seminar paper she had to write felt like what John M. Swales would call an "occluded genre." Occluded genres are, to review, "'out of sight' to outsiders and apprentices (such as graduate students) (Swales 2004, 18) and are therefore genres "only familiar to those with an 'in'" (19). Erin's Sociolinguistics professor had an "in"—she has most likely assigned seminar papers before and had in mind what she was expecting from her students regarding types of sources, argument construction, content coverage, and other conventions. Erin, however, was lacking that insider knowledge, both because she was new to Sociolinguistics as an area of study, and because she was new to the seminar paper genre in general. While a major reason why she felt more confident writing her Intro. to Grad. Studies seminar paper was because she was in her "home" discipline of English, she was also given much more of an opportunity to slowly build upon her paper's argument due to the extensive scaffolding Dr. Bauer implemented in her course's structure.

So, though seminar papers are often assigned to graduate students (the genre occurs most often in the Humanities, though it goes by other names outside of the Humanities), the formal features, purposes, and expectations of the genre are often hidden from graduate students, leaving a total understanding of the genre's conceptualization "out of sight" to those who are not faculty. Students are often aware that such a final paper will be expected of them from the start of the semester, but end up "[conceiving] of and [writing] these essays in the final three to four weeks of the semester," and when they are finished, many students find themselves "[putting] the

essay away and never [thinking] about it again" (Hayot 12). This description of the genre's shortcomings is supported by Patricia Sullivan's "Writing in the Graduate Curriculum." Though it was published over fifteen years ago, Sullivan's article is still one of the few studies that exist on "pedagogical practices of graduate faculty and on the writing practices of graduate students in literary studies" (285). Sullivan sets out to see "whether developments in critical theory and composition research were having a discernible impact on the pedagogical practices of graduate faculty" who were teaching graduate courses in literary studies (285). Her case studies followed two master's and two doctoral students enrolled in seminars on literature, and Sullivan found that "lengthy term papers," or what I have called seminar papers in this chapter, "were assigned and...due at the end of the term" and "little discussion occurred with regard to the papers in terms of their purpose, method of development, audience, or forum" (286). Though the lack of scaffolding that Sullivan describes here was Erin's experience in writing her Sociolinguistics seminar paper, Dr. Bauer's system of work shopping, drafting, and discussing students' seminar papers from early in the semester onward—as well as her encouraging comments regarding future publication opportunities—gave Erin the confidence to want to keep working with her paper after the course had ended. Dr. Bauer put more focus on the seminar paper as a process of "production" instead of privileging "the completed assignment," which seemed to be the case for Dr. Hinsey's seminar paper, as students were asked to turn in final papers without later receiving any feedback. Dr. Bauer also purposely designed the course to include more writing practice than reading practice—a tendency Sullivan found to be uncharacteristic of the courses she studied. Students were only asked to write smaller exercises throughout the semester to

"give formal evidence of their reading of literary texts," unlike Dr. Bauer's smaller, gradual assignments meant to help students develop their ideas for the course's final project.

One might wonder, though, how much more helpful it might have been to have had Erin envision her Intro. To Grad. Studies project not as a seminar paper from the start, but as a genre operative outside of the classroom with a larger audience in mind—say, a conference paper. This is a pedagogical approach that Dr. Morse, an administrator in the Graduate English Department, describes is slowly taking the place of the implementation of the seminar paper among faculty:

> I do know of conversations that I've had with other graduate faculty about dissatisfaction with the seminar paper. You know, the idea that it's a fake genre, which is silly, I mean, it's a genre, but it's not well-suited maybe to what it does. And there are certainly...concerns that the seminar paper asks people to do too much, too soon. So, hey, here's the first time you've read post-colonial romances, let's go ahead and write a huge paper on those, even though it might be the first time you've had any sustained interaction with that as an area of inquiry.

Dr. Morse mentions how some call the seminar paper a "fake genre," which seems similar to Elizabeth Wardle's term for "mutt genres," or the genres "teachers [assign] [that] mimic genres that mediate activities in other activity systems," but "are quite different from and serve very different purposes" in a given class "than they do in other disciplinary activity systems" ("Mutt Genres" 774). In other words, though the seminar paper is, as Dr. Morse qualifies, a real, instructional genre occurring in the classroom, it borrows from genres that really exist in the discipline of English, like the scholarly article or the conference paper. It makes similar rhetorical moves, but moves that are not as developed, thorough, or situated as they would be in these other genres. These moves are difficult for new graduate students to replicate in the span of a course, which would echo Dr. Morse's thoughts that the seminar paper "asks people to do too

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much, too soon," which usually results in "faculty that get dissatisfied with the result" they receive from students, finding that these papers are "a million miles wide and an inch deep." This is why, according to Dr. Morse, faculty in his program are considering replacing the seminar paper genre "with other genres" like "a conference paper,...literature reviews, book reviews, or things that seem to have a bit more utility" for graduate students who are looking to participate in the discipline in the future as scholars. Another option Dr. Morse says is possible as an alternative to the seminar paper genre would be to assign "draft articles and somehow try to sequence them out" in the scope of a course, which would mean that they would be "a bit messier" and instead of attempting to "[present] a completed argument" in a seminar paper, "they might only get halfway through, but it looks and feels more like the sort of work that they would be doing as a publishing author" instead of the work they might produce as "a student...being asked to demonstrate mastery in a certain area."

Dr. Morse's comments here might help explain some of why Erin had so much trouble with her Sociolinguistics seminar paper. It was, indeed, her first time having a "sustained interaction with that as an area of inquiry," and it was the first time she had read about Sociolinguistics topics. This is common for graduate students in the first semester—while they are not always new to a whole discipline, they are new to many topics of scholarly inquiry. Perhaps asking a new graduate student like Erin to write 20 pages on this kind of topic might have been "too much, too soon," and a smaller and potentially more useful genre to her (in terms of her future work as a scholar) might have been a conference paper. Or, perhaps a work of writing that only required her to "get halfway through" might have eased her fears and frustrations a bit, as she would not have

been responsible for "[demonstrating] mastery" and posing a completed and sufficiently supported argument in a scholarly conversation she was not yet extensively aware of, making it harder for her to "address existing professional debates in a significant way" (Hayot 13).

However, assigning genres like the conference paper, the book review, or the literature review in a seminar is still removing these genres from their usual professional contexts—students would still be writing it "for" the instructor even if they are trying to envision a larger audience. So what, then, is the solution here? Though the seminar paper is becoming frustrating for some faculty to assign because of the results they are getting from students, like Dr. Morse asserts, many English faculty still see its merits as an instructional genre to teach students the fundamental interpretative, analytical, and argumentative skills they will need going forward in their graduate education. But, no matter how close assignments come to resembling genres students might be expected to enact as professional scholars outside of the classroom (instead of instructional "mutt genres," like the seminar paper), or even if professors attempt to assign real genres that occur in the disciplines like Dr. Morse proposed, they are still course assignments, and will be written to fulfill requirements by an instructor, not a review board, or conference audience. As I brought up in my previous section about the seminar report, there are many scholars who are skeptical of attempting to teach genres that are not "school" or "instructional genres," as "genres are too complex and varied to be removed from their original contexts and taught in the artificial environment of the classroom" (Hyland, *Genres and Second* 150). However, as long as instructors are aware that students writing a section of a draft article will not be exactly the same as a draft article written outside of

a course, as it will most likely need to be unfinished to make it doable in the scope of a semester, there is no reason why a "real" genre like this could not be assigned to new graduate students. Also, it is important to remember that graduate students are often in the position to actually publish writing (with the guidance of a mentor), like Erin was hoping to attempt. They can also present their own work at conferences. They are capable, then, of writing these genres for contexts outside of the course while in coursework, with an eye for possible publication or presentation. Wouldn't taking advantage of these kinds of opportunities by giving graduate students the chance to attempt writing these genres themselves in the scope of a course be incredibly helpful, especially considering, like Dr. Anderson in Physiology, disciplinary instructors have a wealth of writing expertise to draw from in their instruction? After all, as Charles Bazerman has argued, "students are aided most by learning how to understand and participate in specific writing situations, including learning and responding to the local criteria and expectations, as well as strategically deploying task-relevant techniques" (Bazerman et al. 89). If new graduate students do not have the time to apply for such opportunities in their first semester, they could certainly return to this work and develop what they started with the help of a mentor, and would maybe be more likely to do so if their work was for a real genre in the discipline.

If instructors are still not comfortable taking the route of assigning disciplinary genres that occur outside of the classroom, what might be needed in the case of students like Erin struggling to produce what is required of her by such instructional genres as the seminar paper? More conversations in the classroom about how such instructional genres resemble, replicate, differ from, or mimic professional scholarly genres in the discipline,

as well as carefully scaffolded assignments that allow students to build upon an idea throughout a semester to lessen their anxieties would be a start. Both Erin and Nora seem to have responded well to Dr. Bauer's treatment of this scaffolded, process-based approach, as it gave them the time they needed to gain confidence in their topics and arguments. This approach, combined with conversations that promote transparency and awareness of professional scholarly genres at work in the discipline of English (many of them also occluded) and how the formal features, purpose and audience of a given instructional genre compare might help create a compromise between instructors who value the seminar paper and instructors who value only assigning genres that closely replicate genres at work outside the classroom in the professional scholarly realm. Either approach—assigning real genres in operation in the discipline or assigning instructional genres—would be best served by including all three of the genre pedagogies that Amy Devitt describes: "teaching particular genres" (an explicit approach), "genre awareness," and "genre critique" ("Genre Pedagogies"). If a new graduate student is being assigned a conference paper, for example, they should also be taught a) the common conventions and formal features of this genre, b) an awareness of what genres like this one as well as other, similar genres accomplish for writers, and how writers might choose which genre works for them, and c) the chance to critique models of this genre, giving students samples to replicate, but also to question. The same should go for instructional genres like the seminar paper. What conventions of other genres in the discipline does it replicate? Differ from? How might students think of this genre in relation to genres they will need to write in the future as scholars? What kinds of models could they look at and critique in order to get a conception of how this genre can be manipulated or changed?

Allowing for these kinds of questions in a course for new graduate students might give students more of a chance of transferring knowledge gained about genres of the discipline when confronting new genres in the future.

Conclusion

Given the fact that Dr. Morse is aware of faculty assigning more genres than simply the seminar paper in English graduate courses, and the fact that Dr. Anderson was receptive to student feedback regarding writing instruction for new graduate students (in his implementation of the "How to Write a Scientific Research Paper" presentation as the first seminar presentation of the semester in his course), it seems as if instructors of courses designed for new graduate students are becoming more aware of the need for more graduate disciplinary writing instruction. New graduate students are in particular need of this kind of instruction regardless of discipline, as they are new to graduate school in general and do not have as much awareness of graduate genres as many instructors seem to think they do.

The graduate pedagogies I am proposing in this chapter regarding utilization of all three of Devitt's described approaches for genre instruction (explicit instruction, genre awareness, and genre critique) are mainly discussed within the scope of introductory courses that are disciplinary. In other words, introductory courses for new graduate students that are offered within a certain discipline instead of WAC courses that are open to graduate students of all disciplines. I am of the mind that "teaching needed genres in discipline-specific courses...can embed instruction in context more deeply" and that discussing genres within the context of a certain discipline " 'gives skills flesh and bone" and "turns 'conventions' into meaningful rhetorical craft and opens up one pathway to a

genre'" (Devitt, *Writing Genres*, 149). This is certainly not to say, though, that WAC courses offered with a multidisciplinary focus are not also very important. As Fredericksen and Mangelsdorf found in their Writing Workshop for graduate students of a number of disciplines and language backgrounds, students were able to learn valuable lessons regarding the language and conventions of other styles of disciplinary writing, making students "more aware of audience differences and writing style preferences across disciplines" and causing them to "pay more attention to stylistic matters" in certain types of discourse that they had "typically shrugged off as being 'just [their] way of writing'" (Fredericksen and Mangelsdorf 359). These are lessons about audience and rhetorical awareness that a monodisciplinary course would not be able to teach as well, given the fact that most students are coming to the course with the same disciplinary background (though there are obviously exceptions to this). Perhaps these kinds of courses would be even more capable, also, of implementing the kinds of assignments that embrace a meta-awareness of the concept of genre overall than a disciplinary course would have time for. Instead of having to focus a lot of its time on teaching writing alongside of content knowledge, WAC multidisciplinary writing courses for graduate students could focus on how to "gain conscious critical awareness of how genres work" and to "practice moving within genres" and "discover that genres allow a range of choices, as well as set constraints" (Devitt, *Writing Genres*, 200). This can be done by asking students to research genres occurring in their own disciplines—the kind of mini-ethnography assignment that Mary Jo Reiff has assigned both her undergraduate and graduate students ("Accessing Communities").

I also do not want to make the argument that learning the genres of the discipline earlier on in their graduate coursework is only helpful for graduate students who are planning to continue onto the PhD. I am aware that not all master's students are going on to more studies after getting their Master's degrees. Steve Simpson argues that "we must better account for the variety of ways in which graduate students will use the literacy practices acquired in graduate school" and that "currently, much of our research on how graduate students learn to write assumes a scholarly context for writing or assumes a trajectory from graduate school into an academic position (or fails to account for a trajectory at all)" (9). While this is true, students who plan to finish their graduate education after the master's level may still appreciate the approach to genre instruction I describe in this chapter, as it gives them more of a likelihood of transferring knowledge of how genres work to future professional contexts. The time spent discussing the roles of genre in a certain discipline and how the formal features of these genres are designed to meet certain social purposes might help these students think more critically about the genres they encounter in their work places—how to choose the right genres for the right purposes, how to manipulate certain genres for their own needs, etc.

Finally, teaching genres from a standpoint that encourages critique and awareness to new graduate students might help in making writing for the discipline both in and out of the classroom context less intimidating. Though teaching genres of the discipline to students has its critics who believe that this perpetuates "the dominant discourses of the powerful and the social relations that they construct and maintain" (Hyland, *Genre and Second*, 18), therefore "[inhibiting] writers' creativity and self-expression," I believe that as long as genres are being taught alongside of awareness of such genres' rhetorical

purposes and the opportunity to critique models of genres, students are not being forced to reproduce "the dominant discourses of the powerful" (Hyland, *Genre and Second*, 19). I believe this would only be true if genres are being taught through a purely explicit approach (do x, y, z—like Dr. Anderson's template) without giving students the chance to question the social purposes and constructions of genres of their discipline. Most graduate students appreciate transparency, like Erin, Nora, Carly, *and* Lisa, who all told me that they were constantly guessing at how to produce the genres they were being assigned, as well as how they might even use the work they did to produce similar genres in future contexts. I believe the kinds of genre pedagogies that Rhetoric and Composition scholars propose for first-year writing, like the pedagogies described by Amy Devitt that promote more of a meta-awareness of genres and their purposes, would be invaluable to new graduate student writers as well.

CHAPTER FOUR

GRADUATE WRITERS IN TRANSITION: WHAT TO DO WITH ANTECEDENT

UNDERGRADUATE GENRE KNOWLEDGE

When you're in undergrad, you just see all these...articles and you're like, how even? I'm just trying to get through this article so I can reference it and get on with my life...Now it's like...we're reading articles just to see how articles are written. - Erin

This quote, taken from Erin (one of my MA English students of this study) represents how new graduate students might come to learn about the differences between the reading and writing they learned as undergraduates and the reading and writing they are asked to do in graduate school, and how they might build upon such previous knowledge as graduate writers. In Erin's case, she was aware of the difference between the ways she was now expected to read scholarly articles (how they were structured and designed) and the ways she was now positioned in the discipline (as a colleague who could potentially publish such articles herself someday) because she was aware of how differently her use of such articles were as an English undergraduate student (to quickly reference the work of other scholars quickly in a paper to show her instructor she had done her research). Not all graduate students, though, come to such realizations immediately.

First semester Master's students are in a difficult state of transition. Not only are they often in new geographical locations, they are also meeting new people, learning from new professors, and are now scholars being seen as colleagues for the first time.

What many new graduate students see as the most difficult transition, however, is the one they must make from previous writing situations (most often, undergraduate level writing practices) to the kinds of writing they must now produce at the graduate level. This issue manifests as knowledge transfer. For new graduate students, the issue of transfer happens in multiple ways. They must transfer their knowledge from the genres and strategies they learned as undergraduates to try to learn how to produce writing at the graduate level—a strategy that for some, does not always work, and hampers their learning processes. Some graduate students also find themselves trying to navigate a new discipline when entering graduate school, making writing knowledge transfer even more difficult, as disciplines differ in how they value and understand the work of writing.

Before I delve into a discussion of how some graduate students of this study identified their own experiences with writing knowledge transfer, I will first provide a brief review of the scholarship on transfer theory in Rhetoric and Composition and a few disciplines Rhetoric and Composition scholars have borrowed from to develop their own theories of transfer and how it applies to the teaching of writing. Rhetoric and Composition scholars have most commonly researched transfer in how it applies to first-year writing contexts. Early applications of the term "transfer" in the field of Rhetoric and Composition borrowed from theorists in the discipline of Psychology and Education—theorists like D.N. Perkins and Gavriel Salomon (1988; 1989) and John Bransford, et al. (1999)—to hypothesize how theories from these disciplines might apply to how students carry knowledge from first-year writing to their later, more discipline-specific writing situations (Carter 1990; Foertsch 1995). Later Rhetoric and Composition scholars moved away from relying so much on terminology from Psychology and

Education to developing their own theories of how knowledge transfers from first-year writing to other courses/contexts and how Rhetoric and Composition teachers might be more mindful of teaching for transfer (Bergmann and Zepernick 2007; Nelms and Dively 2007; Wardle 2007, 2009; Fraizer 2010). Rhetoric and Composition scholars have also examined the transfer of writing knowledge that students bring to the first-year writing classroom, and how that antecedent knowledge positively or negatively transfers to what they learn in first-year writing (Reiff and Bawarshi 2011; Rounsaville 2012; Rounsaville et. al 2008). Fewer studies have examined the act of writing knowledge transfer from course to course when neither of those courses are first-year writing (Ford 2004; Roozen 2010)—in other words, transfer from one specialized discipline-based classroom to another. Fewer still have researched how graduate students transfer from past writing contexts (like their undergraduate writing experiences or work contexts since obtaining their Bachelor's degrees) as they learn how to write as graduate students.

What follows is an examination of how graduate students experience varying levels of difficulty and success transferring and transforming knowledge from their undergraduate writing practices. My own conception of transfer draws from the work of Rebecca Nowacek in her *Agents of Integration: Understanding Transfer as a Rhetorical Act*. Nowacek theorizes transfer as more complicated than just an "application" of one knowledge set gained in one context to another, new context. Instead, she sees transfer as "an act of reconstruction" in which "both the old and new contexts—as well as what is being transferred—may be understood differently as a result. One context may provide a way of seeing possibilities where none existed before…" (Nowacek 25). So, instead of simply applying a previously gained concept to a new context, the actor doing the

transferring instead "recontextualizes" the information being transferred—a process that involves both the "act of application and the more complex act of reconstruction" (Nowacek 26). As well as offering a more complicated and nuanced definition of knowledge transfer, Nowacek pushes back against definitions of transfer that encourage binaries like "negative," "positive," and "zero" transfer. Such definitions stop interpretations of transfer at the mere recognition of failed transfer, often by those in power (instructors, for instance) instead of the actor doing the transferring. Instead, Nowacek makes the case that students might see transfer happening in their own work or understandings even if these acts of transfer are not deemed successful by evaluators of their work. In other words, "sometimes a lower grade might be attributed to an act of transfer. To adopt a view of transfer as recontextualization, then, is to recognize that evaluations of 'positive' and 'negative' transfer might be assessed not solely according to performance on an academic assignment but also within the individual students' conception of self and larger trajectory of intellectual and emotional development" (Nowacek 27). Transfer, then, is closely tied in with identity and students' sense of worth as learners. By making interpretations of acts of transfer as merely "negative," scholars are missing opportunities to learn more about how students see their own acts of transfer playing a role in their identity formation as scholars. Also, in conceptualizing actors who transfer as "agents of integration," a term Nowacek defines as "a metaphor that foregrounds the various ways in which a successful act of transfer is a complex rhetorical act," Nowacek grants writers and readers more agency in the transfer process— representing them as grappling with complicated rhetorical demands and often overlapping discourses. I see, then, the kinds of "transfer as recontextualization" my

students described themselves to be making as existing on the spectrum that Nowacek represents in the following matrix (Fig. 1):
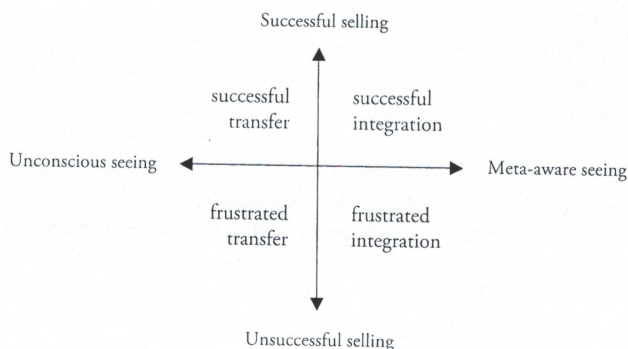
Fig. 1: Nowacek's "Agents of Integration" Spectrum

Nowacek's matrix describes the levels at which writers are or are not able to understand that they are indeed performing knowledge transfer (Meta-aware seeing vs. unconscious seeing), and the levels at which writers are able to "sell" their finished product to their target audience (successful vs. unsuccessful selling). As I will demonstrate below, Erica, a new MS student of Social Work, experiences frustrated transfer as she attempts to make comparisons between the kinds of composing and reading she did as an undergraduate English major and the new kinds of composing and reading she is being asked to do in her graduate Social Work coursework. Nowacek defines frustrated transfer as "situations in which the connection is neither consciously seen nor effectively sold"—a situation that can come about when "a student perceives, however dimly, a conflict between the expectations of two contexts" and responds by "[abandoning] that line of connection-making" (41). Noticing stark differences between the writing situations of Social Work vs. the writing situations of English, Erica

experiences frustration, causing her to abandon the connections she might be tempted to make between the two contexts. Though, as I will also argue, Erica's abandonment of these connections is not a total lost cause (as the concept of "negative transfer" might imply), as it leads Erica to begin to develop her own understandings (however dim and unconscious those understandings were at that point) of how the discipline of Social Work shapes its ways of knowing.

Disciplinary Transitions: Frustrated Transfer When Shifting to New Ways of Knowing

> *It kind of feels like I'm being asked science and math...questions? But, with English Literature kind of information. And that's been extremely difficult for me. It...feels like I'm just not understanding. - Erica*

As an undergraduate, Erica majored in English Literature. The animated way she spoke of her experience with English indicated how much she enjoyed studying what she did. The time away from academia, the switch in discipline of study, coupled with the other complications in her life had Erica quite nervous to begin graduate school, regardless of her experience working at a non-profit closely related to her discipline. During our interview, Erica exhibited signs of distress. She fidgeted while we were talking and her voice wavered with emotion. It was easy to see that her experience with her first semester of graduate school was not an easy topic for her to discuss.

Making the transition from her previous discipline of English to her current discipline of Social Work was difficult for Erica. The new kinds of writing expectations coupled with the theoretical concepts she was expected to learn—ones that were meant to give meaning to the real life contexts she was used to working in as a Social Work professional at a nonprofit—made Erica feel like she could not transfer the knowledge

she had gained as a writer in English to her graduate level writing in Social Work. Her

time away from academia only exacerbated these frustrations, as she found that the way

she was expected to compose and research for assignments had changed. Below are the

main differences that Erica identified between her past writing practices as an

undergraduate English major and her writing practices for her Social Work graduate

coursework, and how I see her as experiencing "frustrated transfer" on Nowacek's

spectrum of agents of integration.

Transitioning to APA: Disciplinary Citation Practices and Style Requirements as

Rhetorical

> *Documentation in all its various forms is often viewed by students as a kind of academic hieroglyphics—meaningful to the priestly few, but largely unintelligible to the uninitiated. (Mueller 6)*

One of the difficulties Erica had with her writing for her Social Work coursework

was coping with the new requirements for her to write in the style of the American

Psychological Association (APA). Erica first spoke of her difficulty with APA style in

how she felt rules being rigidly forced upon her. Erica felt that the APA style conventions

contrasted dramatically with her experiences writing for her undergraduate literature

courses:

> The way you write [in APA style] is so much different than when I was in school before. I was very comfortable and great with writing when I was in undergrad. As a matter of fact, it was my strongest thing. I did an English literature degree, so I wrote all the time. And...comparing literature pieces and the way I wrote that, there was no specific style requirement. You just had to note your sources, but as long as you put the information in there, it really didn't matter...This style is so specific and so...detailed...and if you don't do it this certain way, it's not right. If something's out of order,...it's a big problem. And...that was just totally...culture shock to me and difficult to get used to.

Erica did not remember such rigid rules for formatting and citation from her time as an undergraduate English major. She described that the formatting of a document, in-text citation conventions, and a References page was now much more structured and specific than she was used to, resulting in a kind of "culture shock" for her as a writer. She later referenced the Purdue Owl Writing Lab website as her source for following APA format and noted that it was "very confusing" for her to navigate and still felt "unsure if [she] is using it right." Faced with new conventions for documenting and describing her sources both in her References and in-text, as well as new ways to learn how to design her documents, Erica felt lost, even with the resources available to her to guide her, like the Purdue Owl Writing Lab. In addition to the technical difficulties of learning the formatting conventions for a new documentation style, Erica's confusion regarding the use of APA style for her graduate writing compared to the MLA style she was used to in her past undergraduate literature courses might also have stemmed from the differences between the disciplinary means of knowledge creation that are reflected through the rhetoric of the chosen citation practices of each discipline—Social Work and English. The formatting/citation conventions required in her undergraduate classes, Erica states, required that "as long as you put the information"—or the citation of the work being interpreted or mentioned—"in there, [the style requirement] didn't really matter." Erica may have been a bit more forgiving of MLA style here—the standard style used in English courses—as MLA does still have its "style requirements" for documenting sources, but she was correct in her assumption that there are differences in how much each style privileges the amount and type of information that describes cited sources for the reader.

One technical difference between the MLA and APA citation styles is the level of importance each style places on an author or authors of a specific work. In each work's References page, APA requires that the first names of authors in each citation entry are abbreviated to initials, instead of full first names. This convention downplays the importance of each author as an individual, instead prioritizing the research at hand. The decision to make this a required convention in APA style is not arbitrary, but rather a rhetorical decision that reflects the priority the social sciences and sciences place on the "author" as a social construct. Robert Connors explains what this convention might convey rhetorically:

> If authors' first names are reduced to initials, they should get over it. If 'the research' is made to have more reality than the persons who conducted it, so much the better. What is important is that the march of science not be impeded by any issues that would cloud the referential efficiency of what is, after all, a professional literature. (242)

What Connors argues here is a reflection of the way that disciplines in the social sciences and sciences conceptualize the "author." MLA style and disciplines in the Humanities require writers to cite full names of individual authors in Works Cited lists—a convention that places values their individuality along with the content or contribution of their specific piece. Connors' description of APA's treatment of authors, however, implies "referential efficiency" and the "reality" of the research being cited in order to make it as easy as possible for readers to recognize the specific contribution of each article to the "march of science." Diane Dowdey feels similarly to Connors, claiming that "The social sciences as well as the sciences tend to view knowledge as progress, as a process of accretion," describing the practice as one "that decreases the sense of the individuality of the author" and also speaks to the practice of APA requiring the capitalization of "only the first word of a book title" which "also decreases the emphasis

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on the language of the original author" (339). Carrie Shively Leverenz even goes so far as to argue that the citation of authors' initials "downplays the particularity, the humanness of the researcher" (191). While Erica does not make explicit mention of this particular convention in APA formatting rules, it is a possible contributing factor for why she might feel uncomfortable with the transition to APA style from MLA—the priority her professors put on her own individual interpretation of texts through literary analysis is not as valued in APA. Rather, the "efficiency" and "reality" of her documentation and source use in her writing is prioritized.

This prioritization of thorough documentation of research content and each work's contribution to the "march of science" over the individual author connects to an issue, discussed in more detail below, that Erica had with transitioning to a writing style that she described as more "concise" than she was used to in her writing as an undergraduate English major. While her undergraduate English courses encouraged thorough individual interpretations of texts and detailed analysis of quotations from those texts, Erica found that her writing for her Social Work graduate courses required the opposite, as concision was valued over in-depth and drawn out analysis.

Though different from the writing Erica was used to in her undergraduate work, both of Erica's "Human Behavior in the Social Environment" (hereafter referred to as "Human Behavior") course and "Social Welfare Institutions, Policies & Services" (hereafter referred to as the "Social Welfare") course involved quite a bit of writing. Human Behavior was a sequence course, meaning that the second "half" of the course would be offered the following spring semester with the same professor and the same students. Dr. Oliver, the professor of the course, was teaching it for the first time, and in

our interview, commented on how "wonderful [it was] how [her students] want to be able to apply the knowledge academically to what they're going to be doing in the field" for their eventual internship experience. The course sequence is described in the following excerpt from the syllabus:

> The purpose of the Human Behavior sequence with its two courses (601 and 619), is to help students breathe life into the abstract idea of person-in-environment. The Human Behavior sequence is a foundation sequence that provides content about theories and knowledge of the human bio-psycho-social-development, including theories and knowledge about the range of social systems in which individuals live…This sequence provides an understanding of the interactions among human biological, social, psychological, and cultural systems as they affect and are affected by human behavior...Students are taught how to evaluate theory and apply theory to client situations.
> SW 601 focuses on society at large (e.g. social movements, social institutions and social structure), larger environments (e.g. physical environment, communities and formal organizations) and small groups.

Social Welfare, the second required course Erica was taking, is also described in the following excerpt from the course syllabus:

> Social Welfare Institutions, Policies and Services will explore the historical context and evolution of social welfare policy and the ways in which dominant values and contextual factors shape policy in a broad range of social welfare arenas. Particular emphasis will be given to analyzing poverty and income maintenance programs. The course will also focus on social work as a profession and how social work issues, values, and ethical dilemmas are experienced in social policy. Relationships between disenfranchised populations and social welfare policies and practices will be stressed, giving particular attention to institutional racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, and ageism.

The Human Behavior course required students to write "Application and Demonstration" papers ranging from 3-5 pages throughout the semester, with the exception of one longer paper, an "Analysis of a Human Behavior and Professional Discussion" (8-10 pages). The Social Welfare course required students to write a 3-5 "Ethical Analysis of Poverty" paper, a five-page "Case Policy Analysis and Recommendation" paper, a group project on an "Oppressed Group" composed on the

course Wiki page based on interviews and research, and a five-page "Critical Thinking Paper." Erica had a hard time in her courses adhering to the new level of concision that many of these writing assignments required of her. Erica especially struggled with the length of the 3-5-page papers she wrote for both courses, as she was used to expanding much more on small ideas in her writing for Literature:

> All the stuff I'm supposed to cover in the paper is like a page and half, and I'm like...if I elaborate...even if I just said one sentence about everything on here, that's a page and a half... So it's...trying to elaborate and cover everything that you're supposed to cover in that amount of pages and just trying to figure out...what to leave out and where you can cut, and what's most important...because I only have this much, and it all seems important.

Being able to prioritize information in this way was difficult for Erica, because it "all [seemed] important." This may be a reflection of Erica's struggle to comprehend the theoretical material these assignments are asking her to engage with, but it also may be a reflection of her previous experience as an undergraduate English major—a time when she was encouraged to embrace drawn-out close readings of small passages in works of literature:

> When I was in undergrad and did English Literature,...I'm sorry, but if you could spend 5 paragraphs talking about...two words, that was great. They loved that. They wanted you to go on for 5 paragraphs about one sentence in a Shakespeare thing. That was a good thing. So I got used to writing...just...explain this until you beat that dead horse to death. Because...in that realm, that was a positive,...and here in this realm it's like, eh, you've got to just really cut that stuff back and get it all concise..and it's like, oh my gosh, I'm not used to this.

Erica's thoughts here reflect how she sees the disciplinary differences between the ways Social Work and English define adequate critical analyses of texts. While Social Work encourages brevity and only stating what is necessary for a reader to understand the writer's points quickly, Erica sees English as valuing writing that takes its time to explore the smallest of details in a text, giving the writer more space in which to delve deeply into

a textual observation. She is allowed, in English, to "beat that dead horse to death," and spending "five paragraphs" talking about "one sentence" in a work by Shakespeare was evaluated positively. The genre conventions that Erica describes here regarding the work of the "literary analysis" she was assigned frequently in many iterations as an undergraduate English student are similar to those described by English professors in a study conducted by Laura Wilder, in *Rhetorical Strategies and Genre Conventions in Literary Studies: Teaching and Writing in the Disciplines*. Wilder conducts an analysis of *topoi*, or patterns of argumentative moves that she identifies in literary criticism (12 literary journals and 28 recent published articles). Wilder's analysis is an updated version of Fahnestock and Secor's 1991 chapter, "The Rhetoric of Literary Criticism," and uses many of Fahnestock and Secor's *topoi* in her analysis.

Wilder interviews thirteen professors over several years from two different institutions about their consideration of the *topoi* in their evaluations of undergraduate English student writing, and found that while many were "unaware of the extent to which disciplinary rhetorical practices and values have come to tacitly permeate their discourse and expectations," they were able to pinpoint several ways in which they use Wilder's *topoi* to evaluate student writing (Wilder 65) and were "[notably consistent] in their evaluative criteria" (Wilder 80). Two of these *topoi* were "Appearance/Reality," a commonplace that Garrett-Petts defines as one that "assumes the presence of a 'hidden meaning'," or duality in a text (54), and "Ubiquity," or when a critic either "finds many examples of the same thing, or [he or she] finds one thing in many forms, up and down a scale of grandeur and abstraction" (Fahnestock and Secor 87). According to Wilder, the Appearance/Reality topos would be "invoked" when professors would use verbs like, "

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'deepens,'" "'exposes,'" and " 'complicates'" to indicate that a student writer explored beyond a "surface reading of a text" (82). Appearance/Reality was also invoked in professors' description of how students' writing did not meet expectations, writing that consisted of "'heavy-handed symbols' that never 'moved' beyond the obvious'" (82). The Ubiquity topos was used to describe writing that did or did not succeed in its usage of quotations from primary texts in analyses, and represents "how the use of general abstractions such as 'evidence' or 'use of quotations' may be inflected with disciplinary genre-specific significance" (Wilder 83). Writing deemed more successful by professors was described to "perform appropriate 'close reading' practices" by "quoting sparingly" and "glossing the lines" afterward, while a less successful use of quotation used evidence that was "pages long" with "no highlighting of specific sections to...support a clear thesis," making the students' reading of the text "totally surface" (Wilder 84).

Looking for Ubiquity and Appearance/Reality in student writing is valued less in Erica's Social Work courses and APA style. Concision, instead, is valued over lengthy analyses of texts in APA style, the chosen documentation style for Erica's Social Work graduate program. APA style values the brief paraphrasing of texts over the kinds of direct quotation that the professors of Wilder's study were describing. While this does imply that writers are making an interpretation of the text they are quoting when paraphrasing, it is expected to be the closest as it can be to the original text. In other words, this kind of work is concise summarization, not the subjective analytical work of interpreting a passage that Erica was used to performing for her undergraduate English courses. A preference for paraphrasing over direct quotation in APA, Diane Dowdey argues, is because "it is not exactly language that is privileged but ideas only" (337). In

other words, readers of texts written in APA style expect to be presented with the ideas of a work so they can quickly grasp the point of the research. The subtle language-use of the author of a work—and the author's subjective interpretation of that language—is less important as well as less immediate. This means that "text is not privileged in this system" in the same way text is privileged in MLA style, "nor is elaboration on tangential points encouraged" (Dowdey 339). APA style is instead designed for ease of information comprehension and communication, and not for what Charles Bazerman describes as "the close consideration of competing ideas and subtle formulations" (140).

This type of concise and data-driven writing style emerged from what Susan Mueller calls "the concerns of a group of journal editors and managers (anthropological and psychological journals, in this case) about the uniformity and reliability of the articles they received," resulting in expectations for writing that Erica found to be foreign compared to her experiences writing as an undergraduate English major (7). After all, even many normal rhetorical conventions such as transitions, thesis development and support, flow, not to mention conclusions, do not apply" when it comes to the major concerns of those expecting APA style writing from their students (Mueller 7). APA style, instead, for a genre like the experimental report (common in the sciences and social sciences and outlined in detail in the APA manual), asks writers to focus "on the experiment and its results, not on the reader and not on the experience of the writer/social scientist" (Mueller 7). The aim of writing in APA style is for the reader to "be able to validate the authors' interpretation based on their original research data" and "their interpretation alone is not enough" because "the interpretation is only one part of the process for APA; for MLA, the author's interpretation is the critical piece" (Mueller 8).

Considering these differences in documentation styles, it is no wonder Erica was feeling out of place as a writer. She had moved to a discipline with a documentation style that valued the paraphrasing, summarizing, and referencing of sources' research in a concise way that promotes the ease of communication from a documentation style that valued detailed analyses of text passages as well as her own subjective interpretation of what she read. She was allowed to, in her words, "beat that dead horse to death," and write pages on something as small as a stanza. This led to frustrated transfer for Erica—she found that she was not able to transfer the knowledge she had gained in writing for her undergraduate English program to the kinds of writing she was expected to perform in her Social Work graduate writing assignments in APA style not only because of the differences she noticed in technical formatting, but differences in overall attitude toward concepts like what it meant to be an "author" of a piece and what it meant to refer to a text alongside one's own writing. After all, choosing a citation style for work published in a particular discipline does not only represent the technical means through which scholarship is referenced. Ken Hyland argues that citation also "represents choices that carry rhetorical and social meanings" (344). In other words, the kinds of citation conventions that are required in the APA style Erica was learning "[offered] insights into the knowledge-constructing practices of disciplinary communities" that she was not yet familiar with (352).

Theoretical Concepts and Disciplinary Ways of Knowing

In addition to her struggles conforming to the new requirements of APA style in her coursework, Erica also had difficulty understanding the dense theoretical social work texts she was assigned for reading. She identified this struggle not with the transition to

graduate level work, but to the transition to her new discipline of Social Work. She

explained that during the first few weeks of the semester, she was attempting to keep up

with all of her course reading, but was struggling to comprehend the theories she was

reading about:

> Obviously, you know, [it is] very different reading. A story...hopefully pulls you in and gets you involved, and that's fun kind of reading for me. Then what I'm doing now...what I've found a lot of times when I did try to read,...it was like this theory, that theory, this theory, that theory...They were thrown together...It just seemed like I was reading the same words applied to different theories over and over and over.

> Erica later made a comparison to the kind of reading she did in her coursework as

an undergraduate when she was asked to read and analyze fictional texts. Her reading for

Social Work was not as pleasurable to her and was densely packed with theoretical

concepts. She furthered her comments on this struggle in the following:

> I remember the first chapter in Human Behavior was just all the different theories. And it just went through all of them, and I had read it all, every word, slowly, **like I would normally read**, trying to understand it. She gave us a quiz in class, [with questions like] "which theory would that be?" I was lost. I was completely like, that sounds like about 5 of them I read. I don't know which one you want. It was scary because it was right at the beginning. It was maybe the second or third class. I honestly walked up to her in class and said, "I'm not sure if I should be here. Because...you don't understand, it wasn't like I just didn't know one or two of them. I was clueless." And she was really great. She said, it's like that with the theories because they do have so much overlap and there are similarities, and it's very confusing. And she said no, it doesn't mean that you can't get this. I thought I was...I guess I'm just going to say the word. I felt really stupid. And I was like, how could I have read all of that? And coming to class and basically feel like I got nothing out of it. That's what it felt like. It just confused me. It was very confusing reading.

> Erica's comment that she read her Social Work textbooks "like she would

normally read" perhaps harkens back to her experience reading for English, when she

was used to close reading "every word" of literature passages, "slowly," for literal and

figurative meanings. This reading strategy worked for her in the past, as an undergraduate

English major. However, now faced with readings from Social Work textbooks like

Dimensions of Human Behavior: Person and Environment, by E.D. Hutchison, and

Social Policy and Social Change: Toward the Creation of Social and Economic Justice,

by Jillian Jimenez, this strategy was only causing Erica frustration. Erica spent so much

time trying to comprehend every word of the text, she was unable to remember the larger

theoretical concepts each chapter focused on, giving her the feeling that she "got nothing

out of [the reading]." Her inability to remember these concepts for the class and

subsequent failure on a reading quiz left Erica feeling very emotional. She felt "clueless"

and "really stupid," and felt like she was "not sure if [she] should be" in her program.

Such fears are common to graduate students at any stage of their programs, and can most

easily be described as the "impostor phenomenon." This condition was coined by

psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Ament Imes that describes graduate

students who experience an "internal experience of intellectual phoniness." This term

developed from a 1978 study conducted by Dr. Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne A.

Imes in which they worked with groups of over 150 women (all of whom had earned

Ph.D.'s) they classified as "highly successful" in "individual psychotherapy, theme-

centered interactional groups and college classes" (241). Clance and Imes describe their

concept of the impostor phenomenon in the following:

> Despite their earned degrees, scholastic honors, high achievement on standardized
> Tests, praise and professional recognition from colleagues and respected
> authorities, these [students] do not experience an internal sense of success. They
> consider themselves to be 'impostors.' Women who experience the impostor
> phenomenon *maintain a strong belief that they are not intelligent*; in fact, they are
> convinced that they have fooled anyone who thinks otherwise. For example,
> students often fantasize that they were mistakenly admitted to graduate school
> because of an error by the admissions committee. (241)

> Descriptions of the impostor phenomenon, elsewhere described as the

"impostor syndrome," was common among many of the graduate students in this study, though most strongly by Erica, who admitted outright to feeling "stupid" and not sure if she should even be in her program after her first quiz. For example, though Erin (one of the English MA's from my previous chapter) seemed a bit more confident with her potential in her program, she also used language that would indicate feelings of impostor syndrome when trying to learn how to write as a graduate student: "Me and a lot of the people in the cohort feel that we're kind of just making this up as we go along and we *keep getting away with it*? And we're like, 'how do we keep doing this?'" The notion of "getting away with it" implies that Erin might be using some sort of trickery or deception in order to prove to others that she belongs in her program. In other words, Erin feels as if she is deceiving her professors and her program administrators into thinking she is capable of producing graduate-level writing and thinking. Clance would most likely group Erin in with the individuals she describes in her book, *Impostor Phenomenon: Overcoming the Fear that Haunts Your Success*, as "hiding behind Impostor Masks" (9). The people Clance describes in her study (all from her own practice) are "afraid...that somehow they've tricked others into believing they're more capable and knowledgeable than they really are" and "they're all concerned that the next time they have to prove themselves or repeat their past performances, they will fail" (Clance 17). Erin had similar concerns for her future graduate writing. Below, she described the process she went through as she experienced surprise at succeeding at an assignment, but regardless of this success, goes back to her previous levels of insecurity:

> We feel that and we just keep trying to deal with it and I guess write through...that kind of stress and incorporate as much research as we can. We just keep...going. And then we really don't know if we're doing it correctly, but then it turns out okay. Right? So then by the end of the process we're thinking, "well maybe that

wasn't such a big deal after all. Maybe it didn't need to be that formal or it didn't need to be that...rigid or stressful or maybe we could've just really relaxed a little bit, you know? Maybe it was a little more freeform than we thought.." Sort of relief in retrospect almost. But then it just automatically starts again—the stress of not knowing what you're doing and that graduate level writing is this big, unattainable perfect thing and how in the hell am I...going to get to that level?

Even when Erin is able to perform successfully in her coursework, her cycle "automatically starts again" because she feels as if she still does not have access to the answers, and is still making it up as she goes along. These feelings of inadequacy and questioning of belonging are compounded for students like Erica who are not only entering graduate school for the first time, but are switching to a new and different discipline with very different discourse expectations. Erica continues to explain these stark differences in her description of how the reading for her English degree and the reading for her Social Work courses contrast:

> A lot of the things that I've read since [then] in both classes have been confusing to me. Not clear cut. And I wouldn't expect Social Work to be clear cut, don't get me wrong. All of the gray and vagueness...that's just what Social Work is. I mean, you have to have that. It can't be black and white. You're dealing with people. But it makes it really hard for me. Because, with Literature, of course it wasn't black and white, but you didn't have to answer questions based on a fact, black and white, there is a right answer to this question. It was more or less all just your insights and your opinions. And [with] this, well, there is a right answer, but...I can't find the right answer in the midst of all of this vagueness. It kind of feels like I'm being asked science and math...questions? But, with English Literature kind of information. And that's been extremely difficult for me.

Erica may be speaking here of the struggles she has connecting dense, almost scientific theoretical discourse with Social Work's main aim—the study of people. To Erica, people cannot be seen as "black and white" "facts." In other words, in her career at the non-profit community center, Erica may have been used to thinking of visiting clients in less scientific ways—the experiences these people brought with them were diverse, complicated, and never "black and white." The reading quizzes she was being assigned in

her courses, however, were "[asking] science and math questions, but with English Literature kind of information." The quizzes were also about texts that presented information about Human Behavior, or people, as facts and theories. The ways Erica was being evaluated as well as the fact that she was asked to recall definitions of complicated theories made her think of her experiences with science and math, but not to English, as fictional texts represent people in more diverse, artistic and creative ways—representations that Erica seemed to prefer. The "English Literature kind of information," then, might refer to how Erica understands the *task* or *philosophy* behind the information she was reading in her Social Work courses—ways to think about why people do what they do, and how they make choices their lives.

Erica was being asked to think about and put theory behind the real life contexts she had already encountered at her non-profit job after graduating with an English degree. Pam Green Lister, in "Mature students and transfer of learning" discusses similar potential obstacles for adult students returning to academia after a prolonged period, stating that "sometimes the wealth of their personal experiences can inhibit engagement with theory as they have taken an 'everyday social approach' to problem solving that has worked for them to this point (Secker 1993)" (164). The combination of having to comprehend social science theories she was unfamiliar with and applying those theories to real work she had been participating in for many years may made it difficult for Erica to successfully demonstrate her understanding of such terms through quizzes and short critical analysis papers. Erica's comprehension difficulties may have also have stemmed from the disconnect in her Social Work courses between the theory she was learning and

the real, lived practice of social workers—the kind of practice she was already familiar with in her full-time job.

The theory/practice divide is a continuing concern for many disciplines, including Social Work. Concerns like these have led to such symposia as the 2013 *Critical Considerations, Successes, and Emerging Ideas for Bridging the Research and Practice Gap in Social Work* at the University of Houston, a symposium "[focusing] on identifying novel solutions to build a more durable and complete research-practice bridge" because of a "major challenge in social work and allied fields—the translation of research-based practice knowledge into real-world settings" (Parrish 405). Allen Rubin, the keynote speaker at this Symposium, reiterated his concerns for this divide, noting that "practitioners by and large have devalued research studies and rarely utilized them to guide their practice" (408). It is no surprise, then, that this divide between theory and practice is still an issue in the curricula of current graduate Social Work programs like Erica's. The difficulties Erica was experiencing in trying to understand and apply the theory she was learning to the lived work of her discipline were warranted, given the admission by scholars to the divide between research and practice in the work of the discipline at large. Class time dedicated to discussion of this common disconnect in Social Work, as well as how specific theories might relate to and inform the lived experiences of social workers, could help students like Erica connect theory to lived work in the field.

Finally, in her previous experience with academia in her English program, Erica was used to being creative and to choose how she, as a writer, might interpret the texts she read. What she saw as "black and white" theory in her Social Work reading was a

very different, more scientific and theoretical mode of interpreting the world around her, and she had trouble reconciling the ways this new discipline conceptualized and structured the knowledge it applies to the study of people. Erica was, therefore, experiencing "frustrated transfer" in her attempts to transform or reconstruct the antecedent strategies that were successful for her when reading and writing in her undergraduate English program into strategies that would help her succeed in her assignments for her graduate coursework in Social Work. Not only was she at a new and more demanding level of education, she was also moving from one discipline to another, attempting to make connections between discourses that felt so disparate to her that she felt as if she might not belong in a Social Work program. Her methods of reading every word of a textbook slowly and taking her time to develop her arguments as much as she felt was necessary—practices she described as helping her to succeed as a student of English—no longer worked for her in Social Work, a discipline that values concision and logical application of dense terminology to the real life social contexts she was surrounded with at her job.

This was not a complete loss for Erica, however. Her awareness of these disciplinary differences meant that Erica had a unique perspective that her other peers may not necessarily have had. Because she was new to the discipline and therefore able to compare how another discipline does its knowledge-making, she was able to describe *why* Social Work might value the types of writing and reading that it does. It is also hard to deny that Erica's experience with the work of textual interpretation, close reading, and dual meanings will contribute to her future research and career in Social Work. Not only will she be familiar with the science of the discipline, she will also be able to analyze it

through the eyes of a literature student. She may notice detail and nuance in her clients'

experiences and lives that students without her educational background might miss. The

work of studying people, like the work of interpreting literature, can be quite subjective,

and perhaps if given the opportunity to reflect on the similarities between the ways of

knowing in her two disciplines instead of only the differences she was dwelling on, she

might have felt a little less like a fish out of water.

Erica's professor, then, may have missed an opportunity to integrate Erica's

knowledge of the disciplinary differences and similarities between English and Social

Work into the course itself, as well as to discuss the *role* of theory in the discipline, and

how its application might inform students' future social work practice. Erica's whole

class may have benefited from reflections on why Social Work circulates knowledge the

ways that it does, and how these methods of circulation compare and contrast to a

Humanities discipline, like English. These conversations could have especially helped

Erica, who felt so strongly that she was not understanding the new ways of writing and

reading for Social Work that she suffered from impostor syndrome and insecurities that

made her feel as if she did not belong. Instead, talking about these disciplinary

differences and similarities, as well as the differences in graduate writing compared to

undergraduate writing in general, could help students like Erica come to terms with what

is now expected of them (either at the level of graduate study in general or in a new

discipline).

Making room for these discussions and reflections of disciplinary similarities and

differences in knowledge construction and circulation is important especially given the

fact that Social Work, in particular, is a discipline that many students come to after

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having pursued other educational paths. Two administrators that I interviewed from Erica's Social Work graduate program, Dr. Nickerson and Dr. Merritt, shared that 40% of their incoming students "come from social work" and 60% "come from everywhere else." Most of their students, they said, come from "Psychology, Sociology, Criminology, Communications, Nursing" and they "also have a lot of students who will be re-tracking," or completely changing tracks after having a career in another discipline, like Business, but most students come from the Social Sciences. When asked if faculty express concern with the fact that students come to the program from different areas, Dr. Nickerson and Dr. Merritt said, "no, that's normal for Social Work. That's why we have a two year program for them. It's a special program for them because there's a one year program. So, I don't think so."

Both administrators also mentioned that "faculty actually prefer" students coming from disciplines other than Social Work "because they can work with them for two years" and "shape them into becoming social workers, think ethically, think social justice, think the kind of social work thinking that you want them to have." Dr. Nickerson and Dr. Merritt also added that faculty prefer getting students from the discipline of Psychology because "they have read a lot of research" and "a lot of Human Behavior stuff," "know theoretical perspectives," and are aware of "good research from nature," making them "stronger students." While Dr. Nickerson and DR. Merritt describe faculty as preferring Psychology students over students coming from other Social Science backgrounds, the fact that faculty do recognize that students from certain disciplines may have specific strengths that they bring to their coursework might indicate an openness to

incorporate students' experiences in these other disciplines more explicitly into their instruction.

Intradisciplinary Transitions: Transforming Antecedent Undergraduate Knowledge through Successful Integration

Instead of saying I'm going to use this aspect of this theory to talk about this part of this book, it's like, well when this theory came to be. It's a much broader scope with the critical conversations you have to interject yourself into. More reading, more pages, more information. I guess that makes sense in graduate school. - Erin

Not all graduate students have as difficult of an experience transforming and reconstructing antecedent knowledge from undergraduate writing contexts to their graduate writing experiences. Not only was Erin continuing in her undergraduate discipline of English, she had entered a MA English program at the same institution where she received her Bachelor's degree, and had familiarity with faculty as well as the English Department overall. According to her descriptions of herself as an academic, she had a firm grasp on literary theory and came into her program relatively confident in her research interests. While she expressed some anxieties about being asked to produce graduate-level instructional genres—particularly in a course like Sociolinguistics, where she was new to the discipline—she exhibited an impressive ability to describe the differences in scholarly expectations of graduate writers compared to the same of undergraduate writers. Erin is what I would describe as a student who has learned how to enact "successful integration" in her attempts to transform her antecedent undergraduate writing knowledge—Rebecca Nowacek's term for students who "consciously see a connection and successfully sell it to their audience" (41). Erin was, in other words, able to describe the new ways she was being asked to invent, research, and shape/produce

knowledge at the graduate level compared to what tasks she was asked to perform as an

undergraduate—and how her antecedent knowledge *without* being reconstructed in this

new context would not work for her (as is). Below, I will discuss the various ways in

which I interpreted Erin describing herself as transforming and reconstructing her

antecedent knowledge regarding reading strategies, research strategies, and writing

process to meet the requirements of her graduate coursework.

Transforming Antecedent Reading Knowledge

When describing her reading process for her graduate coursework, Erin noted

some key differences from her experience reading for undergraduate coursework. In the

following passage, Erin discusses how she sees the *purpose* of reading scholarly articles

to have changed since beginning her graduate coursework:

> When you're in undergrad, you just see all these...articles and you're like, how
> even? I'm just trying to get through this article so I can reference it and get on
> with my life...Now it's like...we're reading articles just to see how articles are
> written, right? [In] some class periods it's almost like the thesis is redundant or
> the thesis is unnecessary. We're not talking about that. We're talking about the
> layout of the article, rhetorical strategies, we're talking about...okay, obviously
> the author wrote a cool thing down, it got published, hurray! But...how did it get
> there? How did they develop this thought? How did they get from the first
> sentence to the last? What twists and turns did they make?

Erin's language when describing her experience reading articles as an

undergraduate implies a sense of passivity—of getting through the work of reading

articles in order to move on from the experience. As an undergraduate, Erin kept track of

what to reference as she went with an eye for "getting on with [her] life" in order to pass

in her work. Her description of the question, "how even?" would also imply a sense of

confusion at the genre of the scholarly article. Also, while an undergraduate, Erin

describes herself as narrowing her focus to an article's thesis statement—a technique she

now sees as inadequate for writing at the graduate-level. Though Erin's description of

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how she read an article's thesis statement as an undergraduate involved an element of critique, it is reminiscent of David Bartholomae's description of the "one right answer" method, or when students search for the "answer" in a text, like a thesis statement. Bartholomae adds that this reading tendency stems from "the language of reading instruction" that is typically "loaded with images of mastery and control" (96). David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky further this theory of reading in *Facts, Artifacts and Counterfacts*, arguing that this method makes "meaning [become] something external, something contained in a text...rather than something that results when a reader or writer finds language to make the presentation of meaning possible" (11). The reading process that Bartholomae and Petrosky describe here contrasts with the "one right answer" method, as a reader has now found their own way to make meaning of a passage, much like Joseph Harris, in *Rewriting*, describes in his theory of "forwarding" a text, or "[testing] the strength of [a text's] insights and the range and flexibility of its phrasings" and "[rewriting] it through reusing some of its key concepts and phrasings" (38). These reading strategies are much more kinetic and active than the undergraduate reading strategy of passively referencing a text.

As a graduate student, Erin describes herself as reading scholarly articles much more deeply with an eye for their construction and, as she later phrased, as "rhetorical sort of models." She also reads articles with an eye for what made them successful enough to be published. Later, she describes this critical reading practice as "like diagramming a sentence" but "diagramming an article as you go." She questions parts of the article like "the kind of evidence they're looking at or depending on," and how effective it is in proving the author's arguments. Being able to "look at articles with an

eye toward layout, form, function, rhetoric" gave Erin a sense of confidence in her potential to publish similar pieces herself once day, "like [she] could contribute to the field a little bit...with a little practice." Erin's graduate reading practices described here were encouraged by an assignment given to her by her Introduction to Graduate Studies professor, Dr. Bauer, in which students were to "choose a full-length article (at least 15 pp—not a "note" or a forum contribution) from a peer-reviewed scholarly journal or edited collection" (the entire assignment can be found in Appendix) and identify and critique the article's argument, claims and evidence, and strengths and weaknesses. Dr. Bauer asks students to consider evaluative factors like where the article is situated in a scholarly conversation, how the article is structured, and whether it leaves "unexamined assumptions" for the reader. Dr. Bauer also compared her assignment to the genre of "a micro book review" that asks writers to "[represent] the text, but...also [offer] some kind of evaluative commentary on it." Erin found this assignment to be a helpful exercise in learning how to read scholarly articles, as well as making her "feel like [she knew] what is going on" and "like [she] could contribute to the field a little bit...with a little practice."

Nora, another MA English student in the same course, however, had a bit of difficulty in completing this assignment, or performing what she called "scholarship analysis." Nora "[had] a hard time figuring out how to assess someone's writing in that way" and even after she had turned in the assignment and had it graded, still felt like she "hadn't completely grasped the way [she] should go about critiquing someone else's articles...especially when it's a peer reviewed article that's on the databases." To help herself through this assignment, Nora noted down when Dr. Bauer asked evaluative questions about articles from the class readings. She then would "checkmark all of these

things to see if she [could] find them, and then arrange them somehow into an essay." When Nora got her comments back from Dr. Bauer on her assignment, she noted that Nora had trouble with transitions because she "didn't know how to connect" her ideas. Unlike Erin, it sounds as if Nora might be having trouble seeing herself as enough of an authority to critique peer-reviewed articles. Though Erin felt like this assignment made her feel as if she could eventually contribute to the field, Nora felt the opposite, and answered only the evaluative questions Dr. Bauer suggested in class, resulting in a paper that lacked Nora's own connections and felt disjointed. While Erin was able to identify, then, that her antecedent undergraduate strategy of looking to texts for a quick reference or to find the main idea of an article and quickly critique it was not going to work for this assignment, Nora was unable to make the transformation of her past reading and critique strategies of past articles work for her in this new context.

The Writing Process: Transforming Antecedent Invention and Research Strategies

At the invention stage of the writing process for her graduate coursework papers, Erin found that her strategy for choosing a productive topic as an undergraduate would no longer serve her well. As an undergraduate, Erin found that in her writing intensive courses, she would be preparing for a large term paper by brainstorming her thesis statement—an invention task that she found was not adequate to prepare her to write her graduate papers. Erin explained that her graduate school professors were "more focused on the questions you're forming or the questions you're posing," while "in undergrad courses at this point in the semester, you would be already trying to figure out your thesis statement." In her graduate coursework, however, her professors were more interested in "only [arming] [students] with a question" that will lead them to their paper's eventual

topic and lead them "into [a] huge field of thought." Erin's analogy she used to explain the difference between graduate and undergraduate researchers further illustrates her points: "it's just a lot more like, go, young explorer—what's your question? Not like sit down, young writer, write your thesis statement. It's just kind of different. It's a little more exploratory, maybe."

The differences in authority in Erin's choice of metaphors here are striking. A "young writer" who is sitting down and writing a thesis statement because they have been directed to has much less autonomy than an explorer who has been tasked to come up with their own question to lead them to their topics of interest. Erin's young writer is also stationary and in place, while explorers are in motion and actively discovering new terrains of knowledge. Though Erin now knows of these differences and that her antecedent invention strategy of starting with a thesis statement before writing a paper would no longer work for her, she was still tempted to regress back to what she did previously, as it was what she knew. When asked about her upcoming Sociolinguistics seminar paper—one she dreaded because she did not know the discipline as well as she did English—Erin admitted that she "just [wanted] to write [her] thesis statement and run" because she had "always done that" in the past. As an undergraduate, she admitted that 99% of the time this tactic [was] great" but when it didn't work, she ran the risk of her "argument [imploding]" because she "[got] so far through [a paper] and then [she] [started] to see [her] argument [wasn't] going to work" but "there [was] no way [she] [could] turn back now." Possibly due to Erin noticing that her professors now encouraged her to "arm" herself with a question before conducting research on a possible paper, she knew that she could not now "write [her] thesis statement and run" as she often found

herself doing as an undergraduate writer. She could move on from a quick and expedient

invention tactic of choosing a thesis and hoping for the best outcome, to giving herself

room to explore and develop a question while researching potential areas of interest

before delving into an argument—even if she resists this reality on occasion. As Erin

later stated: "In undergrad it was very much like, if you can find something and it says

anything remotely relevant, put it in. It doesn't matter. Put it in the paper. But now it's

like, no, okay, I'm actually taking my sources more seriously and figuring out how

they're actually going to impact my argument."

In order to conduct research for her course projects, Erin also noticed a difference

in accounting for larger scholarly conversations than she had done as an undergraduate

researcher:

> You have to draw from a lot more. Like, you have to speak to entire fields, right?
> You have to draw from entire fields of thought and orient yourself in much larger
> critical conversations...During these papers...the ones I've looked at in the Writing
> Center...it's broad strokes. I guess it's because it's 20 pages. Instead of saying I'm
> going to use this aspect of this theory to talk about this part of this book, it's like,
> well when this theory came to be. It's a much broader scope with the critical
> conversations you have to interject yourself into. More reading, more pages, more
> information. I guess that makes sense in graduate school. You know, condensing
> a much larger amount of information in papers seems to be the kind of order of
> the day.

In order to make her arguments as a graduate student, Erin said she felt she had to

"draw from entire fields of thought" instead of cherry-picking one "aspect" of one

"theory to talk about [one] part of [a] book." Her sense of responsibility to account for

larger conversations perhaps grew from a reading assignment she was given in her

"Introduction to Graduate Studies" course, which required students to choose entire

scholarly journals "that relate to [their] interests and...read them throughout the

semester." The assignment is described in the course syllabus, and can be read in the following:

> At the beginning of the term, I'll ask you to choose a scholarly journal in an area that interests you. You'll read multiple issues of the journal, perhaps beginning with the most recent and working backward, with attention to its range of authors and topics as well as to the methods, tone, and structure evident within individual articles. This assignment does not include a formal writing product, though I'll ask you from time to time to share insights from your reading.

Similar to Erin's undergraduate reading strategy of "referencing" texts quickly for class discussions or for use in her writing, she also more superficially utilized texts in her research as an undergraduate. Her strategy of "[using] this aspect of this theory to talk about this part of this book" reflects this selectiveness. As an undergraduate, she found one small aspect of one theory from a resource to interpret or analyze one "part of [a] book" to support a given paper's argument. Whereas as a graduate student, she has learned to move beyond the quicker, more superficial strategy of providing a single theory as support for an argument, and now has learned how to account for a "broader scope" to situate the arguments she is making among "critical conversations" that she must "interject [herself] into" as a scholar. It is also interesting to note that Erin got a glimpse into what accounting for a "larger scope" looked like in consulting with graduate students at her job in the university's writing center, allowing her to transfer knowledge from her work context to her knowledge of what she was expected to perform as a graduate student.

Dr. Bauer's (Erin's "Introduction to Graduate Studies" professor) "Journal Reading" assignment allowed Erin to think more broadly when considering her scholarly areas of interest in asking her to "find an entire journal that speaks to several trends regarding what [she is] interested in." As Kenneth Burke might argue in *The Philosophy*

of the Literary Form, Erin has learned that before entering a parlor, "others have long preceded [her], and they are engaged in a heated discussion" and that she must learn how to "put...[her] oar" in the conversation when she has felt she understood the arguments at play (110). Dr. Bauer's comments reflect and reinforce her pedagogy in teaching students how to account for research trends in students' areas of interest:

> I would also say [there is an] emphasis in writing in graduate school that you're entering a scholarly conversation and that you're going to make some kind of contribution...You need to answer the so what question. So, if the argument I'm advancing is credible and defensible, what changes about how we read this text, or about how we think about this abstract set of questions?...Most of us who teach undergraduates, especially upper level, try to get them thinking about those questions. But I would say it's more of an imperative at the graduate level, as they're expected to be responsible to the scholarship in a more thorough way, and at some point they're supposed to be entering the scholarly conversation, which is tricky. And I would say with any academic writing, the framing is the hard part. Why does it matter? What are the implications of what I'm doing? Where does it fit in this terrain that I'm trying to explore? And I think Master's students particularly may not have been addressing those questions of framing as energetically before.

Dr. Bauer speaks here of the differences she notices between the expectations she has for her undergraduate English students and her graduate English students regarding how students' arguments need to be more situated in the discipline at large. In other words, graduate students are responsible for accounting for the scholarship before theirs, how their own arguments relate to, diverge from, or build upon such scholarship, and how they might move forward as what Erin termed "young explorers" (and, interestingly, Dr. Bauer in her description of scholars who are questioning how they fit in the "terrain" they are "trying to explore") to make their own contribution to the discipline. As Dr. Bauer states, this is a much more "thorough" and "tricky" expectation for graduate students to meet, especially for new Master's students, given their novice status in their programs. Erin's realization regarding how different her approach to scholarship should

be as a graduate student may have been helped by Dr. Bauer's carefully scaffolded approach to her "Intro to Grad Studies" course that built upon students' research and writing slowly throughout the semester (described in detail in Chapter 2). Either way, Erin was able to successfully reconstruct the knowledge she had gained as an undergraduate regarding reading, invention, and research strategies into knowledge that she was able to utilize as a graduate writer. In Nowacek's words, Erin seemed conscious of the collision of her past knowledge with the knowledge she was gaining as a graduate student, allowing her to reach new understandings of both contexts. She was successfully understanding these connections between past and present contexts, and was able to "sell it to her audience" through the work she was producing in her courses.

Conclusion

Erin and Erica's experiences with transfer were very different. Though both past undergraduate students of English, the reading and writing strategies they identified as antecedent knowledge as they discussed their graduate work were more easily utilized by Erin than they were by Erica. While Erin was able to both identify and transform her undergraduate reading and writing strategies to meet the expectations of her graduate coursework, Erica, while aware of her previous strengths as an undergraduate English student writer, was not able to make connections to and transformations of knowledge to her new disciplinary context of Social Work. While Erin experienced successful integration in her abilities to transform the research strategies and invention processes she had learned as an undergraduate English student to her graduate coursework, Erica instead experienced frustrated transfer as she tried to make comparisons between her

undergraduate reading and writing practices from her English courses to the kinds of writing and reading her graduate Social Work courses expected of her.

This difference in transferability is most likely due to the fact that Erin chose to stay within her undergraduate discipline as she pursued graduate studies, and the fact that Erin was also attending the same institution where she received her Bachelor's degree probably made it even easier for her to make comparisons between her old and new strategies, as she was familiar with the faculty and English Department. Erin seemed to be using what Psychological researchers Gavriel Solomon and David Perkins would call "low-road transfer," a kind of transfer that "primarily reflects extended practice; distance of transfer depends on amount of practice and the variability of contexts in which the practice has occurred" ("Rocky Roads" 115). Erin had certainly had a lot of practice reading and writing within the English discipline, and was even in a very similar context by remaining at the same institution she received her undergraduate education. This does not mean the transition to graduate school was easy for her, as exhibited by her feelings of impostor syndrome, but when asked to describe the differences between her reading and writing for graduate school and her reading and writing for her undergraduate, she was able to describe how she transformed her antecedent strategies quite well. She seemed, in other words, very aware of how the strategies she had utilized in the past would need to change to meet the new expectations of her graduate coursework.

Erica, however, needed to find a way to make "high-road transfer" happen in her graduate coursework, or what Solomon and Perkins would call transfer that "depends on the mindful abstracting of knowledge from a context" ("Rocky Roads" 115) that is different from the context at hand, or "the explicit conscious formulation of abstraction in

one situation that allows making a connection to another" ("Rocky Roads" 118). While she was aware of her strengths in close, critical reading strategies, for example, or her ability to expound upon her own interpretation of texts she read (both abilities taught to her in her undergraduate English program), she was not able to find a way to connect those abilities to the reading and writing she needed to perform in her Social Work courses because she saw these two disciplinary contexts as too disparate. Had Erica had more opportunities in her coursework to share and reflect upon the disciplinary differences between Social Work and English, she may have had an experience more similar to that of Erin. On the surface, Erica was struggling to reconcile these differences, finding herself in unexplored territory both as a graduate student as a Social Work student.

However, given the chance to tease those struggles out a bit more, Erica could have come to realize how her English background might help her read and write as a Social Work student instead of hamper her. If her professors had made room in their courses to discuss differences in disciplinarity and how students might reflect upon their past disciplinary reading and writing practices compared to the same in their new discipline (not a steep request, given the fact that most Social Work students of Erica's program come from other disciplines), students like Erica might find it easier to experience transfer as Nowacek's "act of reconstruction." Erica's antecedent knowledge of writing and reading in English, for example, might have allowed her to "see possibilities" in Social Work writing "where none existed before," if given the chance to reflect upon how that knowledge might compare to what she was currently learning as a Social Work student. Erica's strengths as a close reader and as an interpreter of fictional

texts, for example, could be seen as a major strength in the Social Work profession, as

she has been trained to see the "gray and vagueness" in texts—words Erica chose to

describe the work of Social Work, since "you're dealing with people." Erica also

describes the work of English to be similarly gray, though the ways she was expected to

write about such grayness was less scientific and fact-driven than the writing she was

expected to do in her graduate coursework, particularly the work revolving around dense

and esoteric theoretical concepts. If Erica's professors embrace the grayness of Social

Work and give students like Erica more of a chance to relate these dense concepts to real

world (gray) situations involving real people and their complicated lives and experiences,

it could help students like Erica relate their strengths as English students to their work as

Social Work graduate students.

Since new graduate students are already experiencing a major transition to a new

level of their education, students like Erica who are making disciplinary transitions as

well need to have extra opportunities to reflect upon how their antecedent reading and

writing knowledge from their previous undergraduate disciplines compares to not only

the work of graduate school, but the work of their new discipline. While this kind of

instruction may not have completely lessened Erica's struggles as a new graduate student,

it may have helped her realize her own strengths as a reader and writer, and perhaps she

may not have had such an identity crisis in her first semester when she worried that

maybe she had chosen the wrong path. Also, as Nowacek reminds us, successful transfer

does not always require an "external viewer" to deem it successful:

> The term *agents of integration* suggests a unit of analysis that focuses on the
> student's sense of self: it may be that a student feels a sense of integration, even
> when an external viewer might see that transfer led a student to interpret a task in
> ways that made the task more difficult and the final text less successful. By

redirecting attention to the student's experience of transfer, the agents-of-integration construct puts the individual as meaning maker at the center of conceptions of transfer and integration. (39)

Nowacek's concept of transfer gives students like Erica more agency in recognizing their own acts of transfer. Though an external viewer's acknowledgement of successful transfer does provide a sense of validation for a writer, the resulting text is not always a complete representation of what kind of transfer occurred when a student like Erica sits down to write a paper or read from a Social Work chapter for her coursework. Perhaps given the chance to reflect more upon her past writing practices in the discipline of English and how those practices might compare to what was expected of her in her new discipline, Erica might have found it easier to gain confidence as new graduate student.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

"In grad school, the papers are longer and more research has to go into them...And you feel like you don't know what you're doing and feel totally like— not crippled by anxiety or anything—but just really uncertain and like,'how did I do that? How did I do well on that?' And then [you have] to go into the writing center and totally profess or seem to know what you're doing...like all the time." - Erin

I included this quotation from Erin as the epigraph to this concluding chapter because it brings the conversation back to this project's origins. It represents the several recurring issues in many new graduate students' experiences. Confronted with new genres, dense and difficult reading, seminar discussions, and many more novel and intimidating rhetorical situations, new graduate students are "really uncertain" most of the time. Like Erin, they question their abilities. They feel like they "don't know what [they're doing]." And often, coupled with these uncertainties, they are expected to simultaneously take on roles of authority even when they feel just as insecure and unsure about writing as their students or writing center clients feel. These issues are ones that I remember having as a new graduate student (and continue to struggle with, though at lesser levels now), and issues that brought me to this research in the first place. This project aimed to understand how these issues might be alleviated for new graduate students by studying how students described what they were learning in the first semester, what they thought about what they were learning, what they struggled with, what they felt they did well, and how the writing, reading, and research they were doing

compared to the same writing, reading, and research practices they learned as undergraduates. By getting this kind of glimpse into new graduate students' lived experiences of their first semester, I explored how to best provide new graduate students with the kinds of instruction they need in that first semester, and how to make the transition to graduate-level writing an easier one so they do not always feel "really uncertain...all the time."

I made the decision to examine the experiences of new graduate student writers during the first semester instead of as they were working on their major culminating projects (like dissertations and theses) because I wanted to see what students make of the transition they go through from undergraduate writing to graduate writing. To analyze what my students made of that transition in writing situations, I used Rebecca Nowacek's notion of acts of transfer as rhetorical acts that "integrate," "reconstruct," "transform" and "recontextualize" past knowledge in order to meet the needs of new writing situations in Chapter 4. Specifically, I analyzed what I saw as both "frustrated transfer" and "successful integration" in students' descriptions of their experiences with attempting to apply past knowledge to the new kinds of writing they were assigned at the graduate level (Nowacek). I proposed that in order for new graduate students to be able to enact the kinds of successful integration that Erin experienced (when she transformed the knowledge she gained as an undergraduate writer to knowledge that would work for her graduate writing situations) they need more explicit opportunities to reflect upon their past writing contexts and the knowledge they already bring with them, and how that past knowledge might compare to their new graduate writing tasks. Nowacek's notion of writers as "agents of integration," I argue, is particularly apt to describe new graduate

student writers who are trying to find their place in their programs and trying to work through struggles with scholarly identity, as the concept "suggests a unit of analysis that focuses on the student's sense of self: it may be that a student feels a sense of integration, even when an external viewer might see that transfer led a student to interpret a task in ways that made the task more difficult and the final text less successful" (Nowacek 39). The metacognitive-focused pedagogy I propose would allow new graduate students to come to their own understandings of the possibilities of transfer, and to notice when they "[feel] a sense of integration" when tackling new graduate-level writing tasks.

Next, I wanted to see how graduate programs and professors prioritized the kinds of instruction they see as necessary to provide their students in the first semester, as this is often the time when graduate students are taught the kinds of strategies, practices, and genres they will need to know to succeed in their graduate programs (and sometimes beyond). In Chapter 3, I analyzed two instructional genres described by the students of two disciplines as genres they were assigned in their coursework in order to examine how effective the students thought they were, as well as in light of the learning goals described by professors and administrators regarding the role of the course in the program overall. I also incorporated how the professors of the students of my study saw the introductory courses they were teaching played a role in preparing their graduate students for the kinds of writing they might expect in their programs (or elsewhere), what kinds of instructional genres they assigned their students, and what the overall rhetorical goals of these instructional genres were. I propose that WAC/WID scholars help faculty who are teaching discipline-specific introductory graduate writing courses to teach how instructional genres they assign compare to contrast with disciplinary genres that exist

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outside the classroom or in future graduate courses, so new graduate students can reflect upon how they might recontextualize the knowledge gained in composing instructional genres for future writing situations. I also make the point that professors of these discipline-specific introductory graduate writing courses, even if not in the discipline of Rhetoric and Composition, have writing expertise of their own to share with their students that WAC/WID scholars would not be able to provide.

The first semester is also a particularly vulnerable time for graduate students, as I found was the case for the students like Erin, who was quoted in the epigraph to this chapter. In Chapter 4, I analyzed several comments from my students describing their fears that they might not belong in their programs and that they were producing writing for their coursework without feeling like they knew what they were doing. I attribute these comments to the psychological phenomenon of the "impostor syndrome," a term used to describe such common fears among high-achieving students and professionals (Clance and Imes). By learning more about how graduate students felt about the kinds of writing instruction they were receiving, I aimed to come to a more nuanced understanding of what kinds of instruction are still lacking and needed in order to support students like Erin, Nora, Carly, Lisa, and Erica during what is one of the most anxious, impostor-syndrome-producing semesters for many new graduate students. My study advances the conversation in Rhetoric and Composition on graduate student writers by proposing more explicit and intensive writing instruction for first-semester graduate students across the disciplines, particularly in the form of genre pedagogy that promotes reflective thinking about past writing contexts, as well as how instructional genres compare to or contrast with disciplinary genres outside the classroom context. It also adds

to studies on graduate student education in Rhetoric and Composition by examining the lived experiences of new graduate students as they navigate the transition to graduate school and graduate-level writing through case study—a type of study that has not yet been conducted on new Master's student writers from multiple disciplines.

In the following section, I will describe, based on the research I have conducted in this study about these students, the kinds of pedagogical recommendations I have for effective graduate writing instruction across and within the disciplines.

Pedagogical Suggestions

Designed from a writing across the curriculum perspective, introductory graduate writing courses that are open to new graduate students across the disciplines are excellent opportunities for graduate students to learn the kinds of meta-awareness of how genres make social actions possible, how they change over time, how they connect to other genres in systems, how they work to develop and circulate disciplinary knowledge, and how issues of power and access arise when we think about who in a discipline has the power to change genres that have remained unchanged. These kinds of pedagogies that foster a meta-awareness of genre are similar to the "critical genre awareness" pedagogy Amy Devitt proposes—a "pedagogy that recognizes the limitations of explicit genre teaching and exploits the ideological nature of genre to enable students' critical understanding" ("Teaching Critical" 337). Devitt believes that "teaching critical genre awareness will help students perceive that impact and make deliberate generic choices," since "genres will impact students as they read, write, and move about their worlds" ("Teaching Critical" 337). Introductory interdisciplinary graduate writing courses allow for these kinds of conversations about genre, allowing students to explore how these

generic structures operate in their individual disciplines. In collaborating with peers who are potentially in a discipline other than theirs, graduate students can learn about the ways scholars from other disciplines write, thereby creating opportunities to learn how the writing in their own disciplines differ. These kinds of courses are currently offered at many institutions, including the university this study was conducted at. This particular course is offered at the master's level. It is aimed toward graduate students and undergraduates who are planning on pursuing graduate study or writing a thesis, and asks students to research into the kinds of research genres and publishing practices that scholars in their future disciplines produce, as well as to reflect upon how their language and literacy backgrounds shape their own writing practices.

These kinds of introductory interdisciplinary writing courses for new graduate students are important, as they allow for peer conversations across disciplinary boundaries about genre, research writing, and publishing practices, and teach the kinds of meta-awareness of the work of writing that will help students analyze new genres of their discipline when they are encountered and will also help them to make decisions about choosing genres for their own rhetorical purposes. The kinds of pedagogies I recommend based on this study, however, would be most advantageous if implemented in introductory graduate writing courses that are discipline-based, as students have a lot to learn from faculty members who frequently do their own writing, publishing, and communicating in the discipline. Though many of these faculty members across the disciplines do not have expertise in writing instruction per se, they do have discipline-based writing experience that they can share with their students, and the collaborative faculty outreach efforts of WID programs can help faculty implement this kind of

discussion into their courses. In addition to drawing on the disciplinary writing expertise of faculty, these introductory courses would benefit from the kinds of instruction that make room for discussions of *how* any given instructional genre relates to, differs from, and compares to genres that are at work in constructing and circulating the knowledge of a given discipline. How might the seminar paper, for example, relate to the genre of the conference presentation? The grant proposal? The journal article? In allowing for these kinds of comparative discussions, graduate students might be more able to transfer what they have learned about writing successfully to meet the expectations of an instructional genre to situations in which they must write a genre like the conference presentation.

Also, these courses could make room for the critique and close analysis of samples of disciplinary genres. In analyzing and breaking down the moves of such samples—as well as the rhetorical justification for such moves and what rhetorical purposes are reflected in the conventions of given genres—graduate students can reflect upon what makes these genres effective. As I stated in Chapter 3, teaching genres from a perspective that encourages critique to new graduate students might help in making writing for the discipline both in and out of the classroom context less intimidating. Though I agree with other scholars that teaching genres by giving students a list of conventions and rules to follow is problematic, I believe that as long as genres are being taught alongside of awareness of such genres' rhetorical purposes and the opportunity to critique models of genres, students are not being forced to reproduce "the dominant discourses of the powerful" (Hyland, *Genre and Second*, 19). These pedagogies would also of course be beneficial in other levels of graduate seminars (not just ones that are considered introductory), but are crucial for graduate students who are just entering their

programs and need this kind of explicit instruction so they are more prepared to take on the work that will be expected of them later on in their graduate programs.

It is also important to remember, as I stated in Chapter 3, that not all graduating Master's students go on to academic careers, and therefore discussion of such discipline-based academic genres would not be totally applicable to their writing experiences in their professional lives after graduation. However, the time spent discussing the purposes of disciplinary genres and how the conventions of such genres are designed to meet social purposes might help such students reflect on how they might choose the right genres for the right purposes in their professional contexts and how to manipulate or change genres based on what rhetorical situations they are met with.

Some Limitations of this Study

Some limitations that may have impacted the generalizability of this study include both the gender, number and type of the graduate students I recruited. As I discussed previously in Chapter 2, I recruited only female graduate student participants for this study. This was unintentional, but the students who were able to participate ended up being female. The study was conducted at one university, so this impacts generalizability of graduate students' experiences across the disciplines as it only examines graduate students from one institution. Also, because of the time frame, I recruited five students from three disciplines. I cannot, therefore, totally generalize about graduate student writing experiences across the disciplines at my chosen research site on a large scale. An advantage of recruiting a small number of students was that I was able to conduct more of an in-depth study of each individual student. This kind of focused and narrow attention to the data I gathered about these five students (the kind of attention that made it possible to

tell such in-depth stories of individual students' writing experiences during their first semester) would not have been as feasible if I had recruited a larger number. Also, my chosen method of the case study does work well for smaller numbers of participants, as it allows for this kind of close attention to the analysis of individual subjects. Case studies also do not necessarily aim for generalizability as much they aim for transferability. The transferability of case study research allows the reader to make their own interpretation of a given study that they then transfer to other contexts.

In addition to my sample size and sample type, I was—as I discussed in Chapter 2—unable to gather the number of samples of graduate student writing that I originally planned to collect at the onset of the study. The graduate students of my study intended to send me such writing, but perhaps because of how busy and stressful their first semester experiences were, several forgot to carry through on this task (which is perhaps a reflection of why studies like these are needed in the first place). This study is therefore focused on what graduate students told me about their writing experiences without being connected to analyses of the writing they were producing. Even if all of the students had sent me samples of their writing, though, I would have thought it necessary to dedicate additional interview time to involve students in the process of analyzing their writing samples. Considering that a glimpse into graduate students' experiences during their first semester was the heart of my study—in other words, how graduate students described their own lived experiences in developing their writing processes, strategies, struggles and successes as they made the transition to graduate-level work—my own textual analysis of their writing would not have been appropriate to the goal of this project. I would have needed this additional text-based interview time with graduate students to

involve *them* in the work of analyzing their writing, giving them the opportunity to explain the decisions they made in individual writing tasks—how they arrived at the arguments they did, how well they thought their arguments were structured, how they intended to use sources, and how they felt about the final product that they turned in for evaluation.

Without this kind of perspective from students, I would only be interpreting their writing based on what I saw happening in their texts, and would be straying from my project's eventual goal—to examine what *students* thought about their experiences with writing these texts during their first semester. While valuable, the kind of interviewing I would have needed to involve students in this analytical work would have required additional time. I would not only have had to ensure that graduate students sent me their writing ahead of time, I would also have had to schedule additional time with the students to interview them discussing this writing. As I had a difficult enough time scheduling interviews to discuss their general lived experiences with writing in the first semester overall, this would most likely not have been feasible, given how busy and overwhelmed the students already were. Also, as a graduate student myself who was limited to a certain time period in which to gather this data, I did not have much time to spare either for additional interviews. I believe this kind of text-based interviewing, though, would be incredibly valuable for case studies like this one on new graduate students in the future.

Recommendations for Future Research

More research is still needed in Rhetoric and Composition that examines the lived experiences of new graduate students across the disciplines as they make the transition to graduate-level writing, reading, and research. Such studies should also not limit their

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focus to only ELL graduate students, as graduate students for whom English is a first language do need more reading, writing, and research support as well. This is not to say that ELL graduate students should not be studied in this way. Research should continue to be conducted on ELL graduate students as they learn how to write for the graduate-level, as they are often learning what it means to write for graduate school at the same time that they are experiencing a new culture and a different language than their first. These students, therefore, need focused attention and research needs to examine how graduate writing pedagogies might be most successful in instructing ELL students, in particular. Scholarship from the areas of EAP and ESP has been very dedicated to this kind of research on ELL graduate students (see Chapter 3 for a brief review of EAP and ESP scholarship on international graduate student writers). However, the same cannot be said of Rhetoric and Composition research on graduate student writers, especially research that examines native English-speaking graduate students' writing experiences.

In addition to case studies examining new graduate students' writing experiences, more work can be done on an institutional level to assess what kinds of writing support and introductory writing courses are currently available to new graduate students across the disciplines, as well as research into what kinds of writing instruction that new graduate students feel they need more of. Luckily, this kind of work is developing with the creation of organizations like the Consortium on Graduate Communication. The Consortium was founded in April, 2014 and is "an international association whose members provide professional development in written, oral, and multimodal communication to students before and during their (post-)graduate academic and professional programs" (Graduateconsortium.org). The activities of the CGC "include

face-to-face and online opportunities to discuss and share resources, pedagogy, research, curricula, and program models for graduate communication." The Consortium, in addition to putting on yearly institutes for faculty and scholars to come together to discuss best practices for graduate communication instruction, provides resources like "graduate students' communication needs analysis surveys" that administrators have designed to assess what kinds of support graduate students at their institution felt they needed. The site also provides sample syllabi for discipline-based and interdisciplinary graduate communication courses from institutions across the country (and some international institutions as well), and a bibliography "to support instructors who are selecting textbooks or creating or revising curricula or materials for their graduate communication courses." *Supporting Graduate Student Writers: Research, Curriculum, & Program Design*, a book edited by founding members of the CGC, includes more in-depth studies of what kinds of support are available to graduate student writers. Nigel Caplan and Michelle Cox, for example, in "The State of Communication Support: Results of an International Survey," "report preliminary findings from an international survey of more than 200 respondents from 160 institutions" that "provide a textured account of the graduate writing support landscape internationally, identifying what form such courses and programs take, what departments or campus entities offer them, and what gaps exist in coverage" (Simpson 12). Caplan and Cox find that the fragmentation of graduate writing support was a common problem at universities, respondents stating that "their universities lack a centralized unit to provide graduate student support or even information about support" (Caplan and Cox 38). What universities did provide was that "certain departments or schools offer classes or workshops, meaning that the level of

communication support available depends to a great extent on the student's choice of field and program," which Caplan and Cox state is "a key difference between undergraduate programs and graduate programs, and a reason why comprehensive graduate communication support may be difficult to build" (38).

These kinds of studies conducted by scholars like those involved in the CGC who are increasingly concerned with the kinds of writing support available to graduate students are crucial if we are to begin to address the lack of writing support for many graduate students across the disciplines. The very fact that the CGC was founded is a good sign that faculty are beginning to really recognize that graduate students need more explicit writing instruction than they are currently being offered. Many of the sample syllabi, references in the CGC site's bibliography, and even the studies described in *Supporting Graduate Writers*, however, tend to focus on international graduate student writers who are ELL. Also, none of these studies focus solely on new Master's students as they make the transition to graduate-level writing. The kinds of attention paid to graduate communication support by the CGC is also needed for graduate students who are just beginning their studies, and *all* graduate students—not just international graduate students who are ELL. Going forward, Rhetoric and Composition scholars—particularly those interested in WAC/WID pedagogies—should look beyond the scope of English Graduate Teaching Assistants to study the experiences of new graduate students as student writers, so we can develop our understanding of how new graduate students across disciplines handle the transition to graduate-level writing, and therefore better the kinds of support available to them as they make this difficult transition.

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APPENDIX A

Department of Physiology
SEMINAR REPORT

DATE: Time spent: h   Student Name:

<u>Speaker</u>:
<u>Seminar title</u>:

Introduction:

Hypothesis:

Method(s):

Results and Interpretation of Mechanisms:

<u>Evaluation</u>
Positive:
Negative:

APPENDIX B

ENGL 601: Article summary/critique project
Choose a full-length article (at least 15 pp—not a "note" or a forum contribution) from a peer-reviewed scholarly journal or edited collection. (If a collection is published by a university press, you can assume that it's peer-reviewed). The article/chapter should advance an argument, so a "state of the field" piece or review essay would not be appropriate. It's in your interest to choose an article that somehow aligns with your final seminar paper topic.

As you work through the article, consider the following questions (which we're also using in class to analyze academic writing):

1. What's the argument? What claims are being advanced, in other words? How does the author situate this work within existing scholarship—that is, what pressing question(s) or gap(s) in knowledge does the piece address? How is the scholarly conversation being advanced or revised or changed?

2. How are these claims advanced and supported? What evidence is brought to bear and where does it appear to come from? How is the article structured? Is there an explicit statement of the thesis? If so, where does it appear? What framing strategies (introductory gambits, concluding gestures) are used? What's the author's tone toward his/her materials or objects of study? How does the author introduce and treat the work of other scholars? How does this piece position or seem to imagine its readers?

3. How useful or effective or convincing do you find this article? What's it useful FOR? Where does the evidence seem especially compelling? Where does it fall short? Are there unexamined assumptions that weaken the piece? Does the body of the article fulfill the expectations laid out in the introduction? What would you identify as the piece's chief strengths and weaknesses?

You'll develop a 4-5 page paper out of these considerations. In that paper should somehow address all three categories (argument, methods/structure/tone, and critique/evaluation), but the order and emphasis is up to you.

Timelines:
Send me the citation information for your article no later than 10/16. I'll use that info to establish workshop groups of three or four students for 10/27. If your article is not

electronically accessible, you'll need to send a PDF to me and to your groupmates by 10/26. For our class meeting on 10/27, bring paper copies of your COMPLETE draft to share with your group. We'll work extensively with these in seminar.

The final paper is due on Friday, Oct 30 (NOT 11/30, as it says at one point on the syllabus).

CURRICULUM VITA

Meghan Hancock

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Education

PhD in Composition and Rhetoric   May 2017
Department of English
University of Louisville
> Dissertation: "New Genres and New Challenges: Five Interdisciplinary Case Studies
> of Master's Student Writers"
> Directed by Dr. Bronwyn Williams
> Readers Dr. Karen Kopelson, Dr. Andrea Olinger, Dr. Beth Boehm, and Dr. Paul
> DeMarco

Master of Arts in English Language and Literature   2011
Concentration in Composition and Rhetoric
Department of English
University of Massachusetts Boston
> MA Final Project: "Flying to Miss: Reevaluating the Concept of Misreading as
> Manifested in Student Writing"
> Directed by Dr. Stephen Sutherland

Bachelor of Arts in English   2008
University of Maine Orono
Graduate *cum laude*

Honors and Awards

School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies Dissertation Completion Award   2016
Awarded to "outstanding Ph.D. candidates" to complete and defend dissertation

Publications

"The Absent Professor: Rethinking Collaboration in Tutorial Sessions." *The Journal of Human Architecture*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2010, pp. 43-56.

Selected Conference Presentations

"The Stakes are High: Cultivating Identity via Graduate Student Writing." The Conference on College Composition and Communication, Portland, OR., 2017.

"Between a Narrative and a Hard Place: Crafting Identities in Institutional Spaces." The Cultural Rhetorics Conference, East Lansing, MI., 2016.

"New Graduate Students' Experiences with Writing: A Cross-Disciplinary Case Study." The International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference, Ann Arbor, MI., 2016.

"Should I Know This Already?: A Case Study of New Graduate Students' Experiences with Writing." The Conference on College Composition and Communication, Houston, TX., 2016.

"Varied Constructions of Memory and Identity: The Expansive Potential of Graphic Memoir." Joint Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Conference, New Orleans, LA., 2015.

"Innovative Responses to Struggling Graduate Writers: Reexamining the Genres We Teach and How We Teach Them." The Conference on College Composition and Communication, Tampa, FL., 2015.

"New Genres and New Struggles: Responding to Graduate Students' Frustrations with Writing." The Thomas R. Watson Conference, Louisville, KY., 2014.

"Writing Centers as Imaginative and Safe Spaces: Responding to Graduate Students' Frustrations with Writing." Joint International Writing Center Association/National Conference on Peer Tutors and Writing Conference, Orlando, FL., 2014.

"The Absent Professor: The Presence of the Professor in Tutorial Sessions." Center for the Improvement of Teaching Conference, Boston, MA., 2011.

"Networking Knowledge: Teaching Reading and Writing in a Cohort." University of Connecticut Conference on the Teaching of Writing, Storrs, CT., 2011.

"Popular Culture and Critical Pedagogy." Joint Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association Conference, San Antonio, TX., 2011.

"Reading and Writing Centers as Lighthouses for Shipwrecked Students." National Conference on Peer Tutors and Writing, Baltimore, MD., 2010.

Professional and Administrative Experience

Assistant Director of Graduate Student Writing   2013-2015
University of Louisville Writing Center
- Conducted writing workshops sponsored by School of Interdisciplinary and Graduate Studies
- Gave classroom presentations and writing workshops for faculty and graduate students on the Health Sciences Campus (HSC)
- Conducted outreach for the Writing Center by meeting with faculty and administrators to promote the Center's services on the Health Sciences Campus
- Collaborated with HSC administrators to plan a "writing interview" assignment for an incoming graduate class of The Integrated Programs in Biomedical Sciences during orientation
- Performed writing consultations on main campus and Health Sciences Campus
- Co-directed the Writing Center's first online dissertation retreat
- Assisted with tutor training on working with ESL students

Assessment Reader   2015
General Education Assessment of Oral Communications
University of Louisville

Writing Placement Reader   2010-2012
Academic Support Services
University of Massachusetts Boston

Teaching Experience

Part-Time Lecturer   Spring 2017
University of Louisville Composition Program
      ENG102: Intermediate College Writing, 1 section
      ENG303: Scientific and Technical Writing, 1 section
      ENG306: Business Writing, 1 section

Graduate Teaching Assistant (Instructor of Record)   2012-2016
University of Louisville Composition Program
      ENG101: Introduction to College Writing, 1 section
      ENG102: Intermediate College Writing, 5 section

ENG310: Writing About Literature (for non-majors), 1 section

Full-time Lecturer 2011-2012
University of Massachusetts Boston Composition Program
ENG101: Freshman Composition, 3 sections
ENG102: Advanced Freshman Composition, 2 sections

Teaching Associate (Instructor of Record) 2010-2011
University of Massachusetts Boston Composition Program
ENG101: Freshman Composition, 2 sections

Co-Teacher 2010
Directions for Student Potential Program, University of Massachusetts Boston
- Taught incoming students Critical Thinking alongside a mentor as part of a program that at-risk students must pass before being admitted to UMass Boston
- Advised students regarding placement into fall semester courses

Tutoring Experience

Writing Consultant 2013-2015
University of Louisville Belknap Writing Center and Health Sciences Writing Center

Writing Consultant 2011-2012
University of Massachusetts Boston Graduate Writing Center
- Provided semester-long process-oriented individual tutoring to graduate students

Tutor 2009-2012
University of Massachusetts Boston Reading, Writing and Study Strategies Center
- Provided semester-long process-oriented individual tutoring to undergraduates
- Led writing, reading, study skills, and time management workshops
- CRLA certified, Master level III

Peer Tutor 2007-2008
University of Maine Writing Center
- Completed an internship and four semesters as a peer tutor, which involved working one-on-one to help graduate and undergraduate writers in drop-in and process-based sessions
- Worked to assist the director with budgeting, record-keeping, and scheduling

Tutor 2008-2009
Literacy Volunteers of Bangor
- Prepared weekly lessons focusing on improving reading and writing skills of

- an adult learner with low literacy levels who had recently emigrated from Africa

Professional Development

University of Louisville Digital Composition Colloquium   2015

University of Louisville Composition Program
- Attended two-day colloquium for instructors focusing on the use of digital tools and best practice discussions regarding digital pedagogies

Consortium on Graduate Communication Summer Institute, Yale University   2016

"Bridging Language Teaching and Writing Studies in Supporting All Graduate Writers"
- Attended three day institute consisting of expert presentations on graduate communication, collaborative work sessions on research projects, and structured discussion groups with scholars, instructors and administrators interested in graduate communication pedagogies

Safe Zone Training for English Department Faculty   2016

University of Louisville LGBT Center
- Attended a "Speak Out Panel" put on by members of the U of L LGBT Center, during which members shared their coming out stories
- Participated in training to become an LGBT ally and attended an info-session on supporting LGBT students in the classroom

Service

Peer Mentor   2014-2015

University of Louisville English Department
- Mentored a first year Master's student and a first year PhD student, helping to ease their transition into their graduate programs

Officer   2014-2016

English Graduate Organization
- Served as PhD student liaison, Co-Vice President, and Social Chair

Memberships

National Council of Teachers of English
Consortium on Graduate Communication
International Literacy Association

Additional Experience

"The Public Life of Poetry" Exhibit   2010

Rare Books Room

Boston Public Library

Fiction Editor   2010
Breakwater Review