How Composers Write across Contexts: Teasing Out Conditions for Transfer

- Students' lives have a relationship to the academic curriculum

- Students find the academic tasks worth more than a grade

- Students grow into expertise by *behaving as experts*

How People Learn

Expanded Edition

Brain,
Mind,
Experience,
and
School
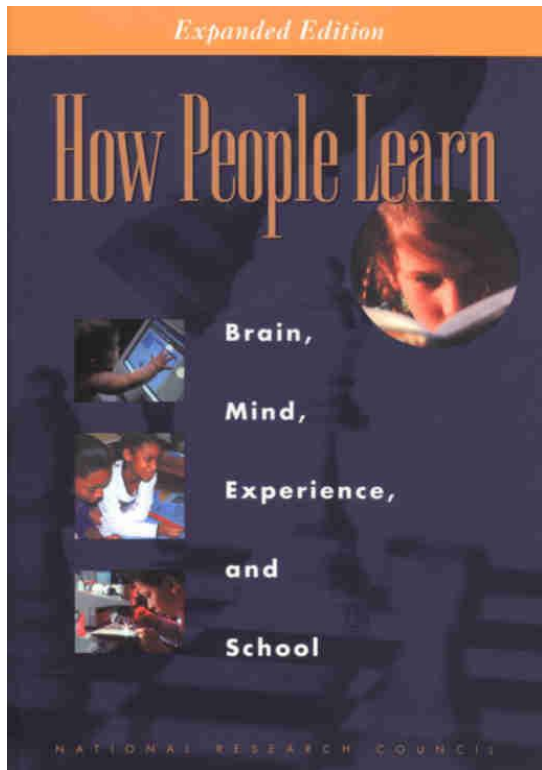
- Prior Knowledge

- Novices and Experts

- Mental Maps

- Contextualized Practice

- Explicitness

- Reflection

Transfer: What It Is, What We Know about It

The ability to take what we have learned in one context and use it well in another.

Transfer is affected by the degree to which people learn with understanding rather than merely memorize sets of facts or follow a fixed set of procedures.

Appropriately arranged contrasts can help people notice new features that previously escaped their attention and learn which features are relevant or irrelevant to a particular concept.

It takes time.

Perkins and Salomon's Conditions for Transfer

Thorough and diverse practice

Explicit abstraction

Active self-monitoring

Arousing mindfulness

Using a metaphor or analogy

Theory of Transfer from Writing Studies

--DePalma and Ringer's *adaptive*

--Hayes' *dynamic*

--Wardle's *repurposing*

> →a new context signals the potential for transfer, an adaptive, dynamic process through which a writer repurposes what s/he knows and can do for a new task in that new situation/context

Process Works: Is Process Enough?

Do Students Have Enough Conceptual Knowledge?

It seems like every semester I take at least one cool class and I get so pumped about the class-you know, really wanting to apply what I learned. But then I go into another class the next semester and the teacher is saying exactly the opposite of what I learned the last semester-and then I focus on the new class. It never seems to end.

Teaching <u>for</u> Transfer

KEY TERMS—
READING, WRITING, ANALYZING

REFLECTIVE CURRICULUM:
READING, SHORT ASSIGNMENTS,
e.g., What did you learn
about genre from this writing task?

THEORY OF WRITING

THREE CLASSES FOR COMPARISON

8 Key Terms

Rhetorical Situation/Exigence

Audience Genre

Reflection Context

Knowledge Purpose

Discourse Community

Key Understandings about Refection

- Reflection needs to be designed throughout the curriculum.
- Reflection needs to be explicitly taught.
- Reflection brings with it a curriculum— tacitly or explicitly.
- There are default contexts for reflection.

Theory of Writing

Reflection-in-Presentation

Cumulative

Made Knowledge

The reflection-in-presentation asks students to identify key terms they believe are most important to their writing practices and to theorize about that choice. In other words, it asks students to create their theory of writing, using the idea of their own "made knowledge" about writing and the idea of reflection as both theory and practice.

Perkins and Salomon's Conditions for Transfer

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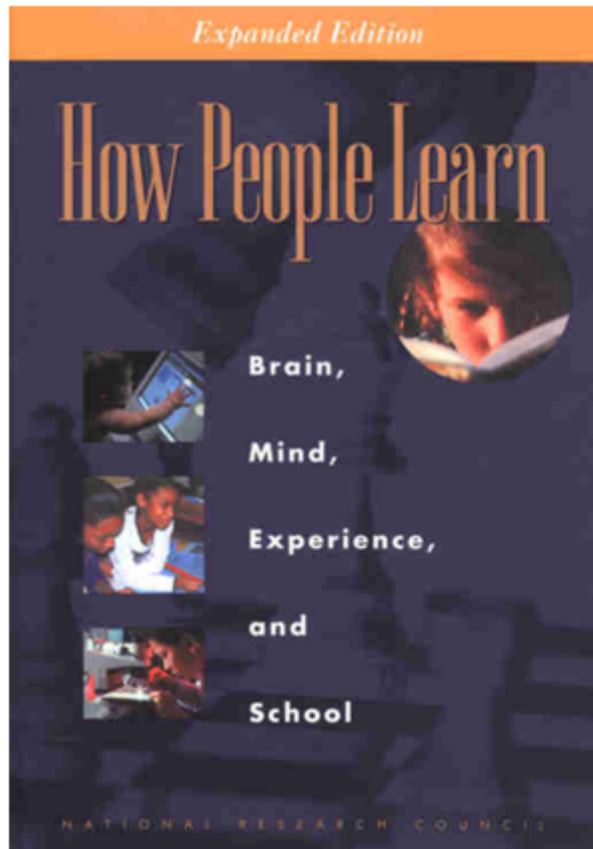*Arousing mindfulness*

Using a metaphor or analogy

And for Writing

- A Theory

- Valuing and A Future

- Modification

Condition One:
A RHETORICAL THEORY OF WRITING
through key terms

Expanded Edition

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Brain,

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School

NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

"Novices' knowledge is much less likely to be organized around <u>big ideas</u>; they are more likely to approach problems by searching for correct formulas and pat answers that fit their everyday intuitions" (49).

key terms for writing

Older Terms	Newer Terms
Invention	Rhetorical Situation
Drafting	Purpose
Revising	Genre
Editing	Audience
Reviewing	Reflection
Re-drafting	Discourse Community
Polishing	Context
Publishing	Knowledge
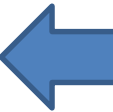
ASSIGNMENTS

"In writing the dialogue and the expository paper on WWII I saw the effects of genre. The effects were very distinct because the topic of the papers was the control."

the metaphor of control

SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE

I have this poster I had to create for my chemistry class, which tells me what genre I have to use, and so I know how to write it, because a poster should be organized a certain way and look a certain way and it is written to a specific audience *in a scientific way*. I wouldn't write it the same way I would write a research essay – I'm presenting the key points about this chemistry project not writing a lot of paragraphs that include what other people say about it or whatever. The poster is just the highlights with illustrations, but it is right for its audience.

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TRANSFER: BRINGING AUDIENCE TO PERSONALITY DISORDER (ILL STRUCTURED PROBLEMS)

And then I thought about my topic, which was Borderline Personality Disorder, and who would care about it, and…I kind of felt like I knew how to write this even before I started, like I had an idea of how to make it happen.

Anyway, the professor didn't really give us an audience so I thought about, obviously, him, but also any students who might have the disorder or their family members do or whoever... So I had my _audience_ and my _purpose_ and then the _genre was just essay_... And also the _context_, which was the other part I always think about for writing – this was just the class and the professor, but I also thought about all these people who take psych meds and how doctors just prescribe them and we don't know if people really need them all, and it's just the drug companies, you know, selling their pills, so I thought about that too, for context.

Condition Two:
The Future (Is Now):Knowledge to Go

Hakel et al.
Hilgers et al.
Robinson and Tolar Burton
The Meaningful Writing Project

Genre
Audience
→Time and Participation

Probably the biggest aspect I came to change (and improve) in my writing is the realization and understanding of the audience. I never used to pay attention to the audience I was writing to. I would just write my argument, pretty much ignoring everything else. In this class, we were taught to use invention to persuade. In order to use invention, all available means of persuasion for any given situation have to be understood. Our audience is a very important aspect to understand when persuading or arguing. For example, you wouldn't want to use slang or talk the same way you do to your friends if you are writing a letter to the president of a company or organization (this also relates back to the Discourse Communities assignment). You can see in Project 2 and Project 3 how I wrote in letter format. This is because they were each directed to a politician. I didn't want to write to a general public (ex. "All highway drivers" or "All American people") because these people can't do anything about the problem. I wrote specifically to politicians who can propose/pass a bill or vote to make a change. Considering my audience has brought another aspect to all of my papers, in and out of English class. In this lab report, written this semester for my Engineering 120 class, I noticed myself constantly thinking about my audience. I would say to myself things like, "Would my professor want me to say this?" or "Would this wording be appropriate here?" I took into account the way supporting graphs, as instructed by the professor, should go near the text that refer to them. The headers and most of the wording are also good examples of this. I wouldn't talk to most of my friends using the same words I did in this report. (Osti)
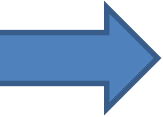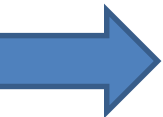
Academic Discourse Communities

When I'm describing...so in my description of how the pathogen becomes...like develops

resistance to antibiotics, I talk about specific antibiotics, specific strains of the pathogen,

and specific alleles in DNA strands, like very specific loci that the average person probably

would not understand. [...] So discourse community in this situation....obviously I'm not

defining every single term that I use. If I were not speaking to this specific discourse

community, for example, I probably would not have listed specific antibiotics and I wouldn't

have been as specific with listing alleles and stuff.

Concurrent Transfer

As far as applying this to my job-well, that's an interesting question. So often we think of technical writing as being "voiceless." But since this class I have really begun to see the voice (and lack of objectivity) in technical writing. … Actually <u>practicing technical writing has been a really wonderful complement to this class</u> because I can relate so much of what I've learned to a field that is supposedly a sterile environment--free from all that we have been learning in this class.

Everything I have learned about voice and about the multi-faceted nature of stories-all of it applies to technical writing. For example, just today 1 received some documentation from a developer, and I cut out nearly half of what he said because it was too technical (it wasn't in the right voice). I rewrote most of it in the voice that is appropriate for my company, and I left out a lot of it because I didn't think it was important to the user.

I really think we all do this every day, but being more aware of it can only make us better writers and communicators

Condition Three: "Conditionalizing" Theories of Writing

Modifying Terms for Interior Design

It's a lot of genre and audience because you want to…your audience is your client, and they most likely won't know what you're talking about in design terms, so I think that's important to have a very good idea of what you can and can't say to allow them to understand because they're going to be the end user and so if they don't understand it's kind of pointless. And then I think each one of these writings is a very specific genre because they're—you know—all specialized and used for different things.

COGNITIVE AND SOCIAL APPRENTICESHIPS

AUDIENCE BECOMING REAL IN CO-CURRICULARS
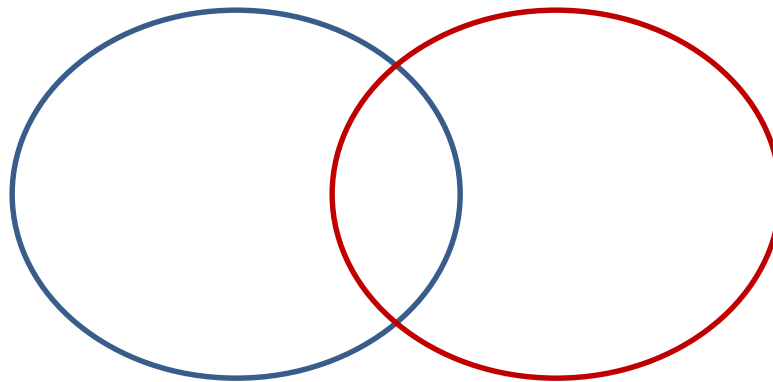
Cognitive Apprenticeships

Social Apprenticeships
*the importance of roles,*
reiteration, and reciprocity

Museum of Everyday Writing

🔍

:: Home   :: Artifacts   :: Exhibits   :: About   :: Links   :: Bibliography   :: Submission ▸

Write to contributors
Create social media
Host f2f events
Upload artifacts
Curate exhibits

W_____iting that is studied and
c_____writing composed by a
fa_____), however, is dedicated
to_____d. We believe these texts
a_____tain social relationships
r_____can be a resource for
_____everyday writing.
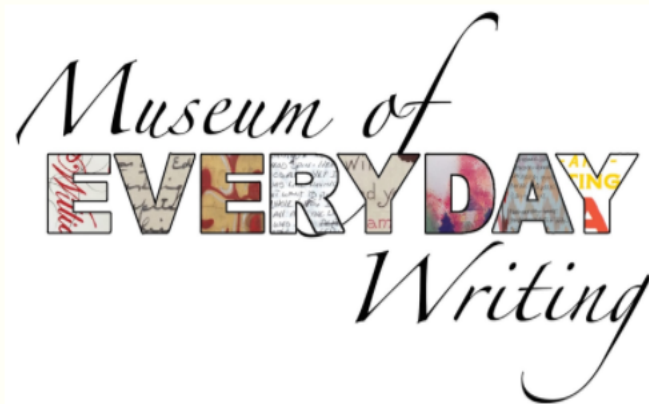
If you would like to see what the museum has to offer, begin by browsing our Artifacts or perusing our curated Exhibits. If you would like to know more about how we define everyday writing or about how we constructed the museum, check out the About page. If our museum has piqued your interest in everyday writing, we encourage you to connect to other related websites on our Links page or find new academic resources in our Bibliography. Like other archives, our collections are constantly growing; if you would like to become part of this project by submitting some of your own everyday writing for the museum, see our Submissions page. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at everydaywritingmuseum@gmail.com.

Museum of EVERYDAY Writing

Roles and Reciprocity in Bible Study

This semester my writing heavily involved tailoring what I wrote to many different audiences. I co-lead a Bible study and that contains 3-4 levels of audience writing [including] Bible study notes for myself, bible study notes I share with my co-leaders, and questions tailored to different girls with newer and deeper faith. [For] Box of Love, a RSO [Recognized Student Organization] on campus, [I] present[ed] ideas to my friend, the president of the organization [and] ideas to the club members.

TRANSFERRING FROM MARKETING FOR A PITCH

Initially composing in Microsoft Word, Jin realizes that in Word she had

   this very long document for like little itty bitty words, and I'm like, "okay, this format

   would just fit so much better in a PowerPoint" and that reminded me of how in a lot of

   corporate or business situations when you're presenting an idea or pitching a project you

   do it in a PowerPoint in front of a room with board members […] it helped

   compartmentalize my ideas on why I thought this was a good idea, how we would

   implement it and everything. And so that format just fit what I needed to present in a

   really good way.

Unlike web sites and papers on topics I enjoy writing about, I found writing my resumé to be dreadfully boring and uninteresting. Consequently, I can honestly say that I just threw my paper together without much thought. However, later in the year I found myself having to assemble <u>a real resumé for several internship opportunities</u>. <u>I went back to the resumé</u> I created for the first paper and realized that, rhetorically speaking, it was not suited for the position I was looking for. So I went back to it and <u>re-designed</u> it, this time using my enhanced understanding of rhetoric to make a better argument. As you can see, this version of my resumé is far more visually appeasing and better organized.

To an employer looking for interns, this resumé not only fits the job description better but the added visuals dramatically increase my ethos and hints at other talents in addition to programming.

PROCESS

part of my secondary education was finishing my Architect's Associates for drafting. So I used to think of things on paper in blocks and chunks, and I would move them around like that. And eventually, when I was doing more projects and keeping schedules . . . what I do is I draw blocks out on a paper, and they'll go down the left-hand side, say from top to bottom, and then next to that block is the information of that project. And I think eventually I suppose in a way that's sort of a bullet point . . . I see it parsed out. . . when I'm thinking about writing five pages, I will visualize okay what's the first three quarters of the page supposed to look like? And the bottom quarter into the full second page, what is that going to look like? So again it visually parses out like that. And that actually helps me establish the rhythm of the paper and where the idea is going to be presented. How do they segue into one another . . . then I'm not so worried.
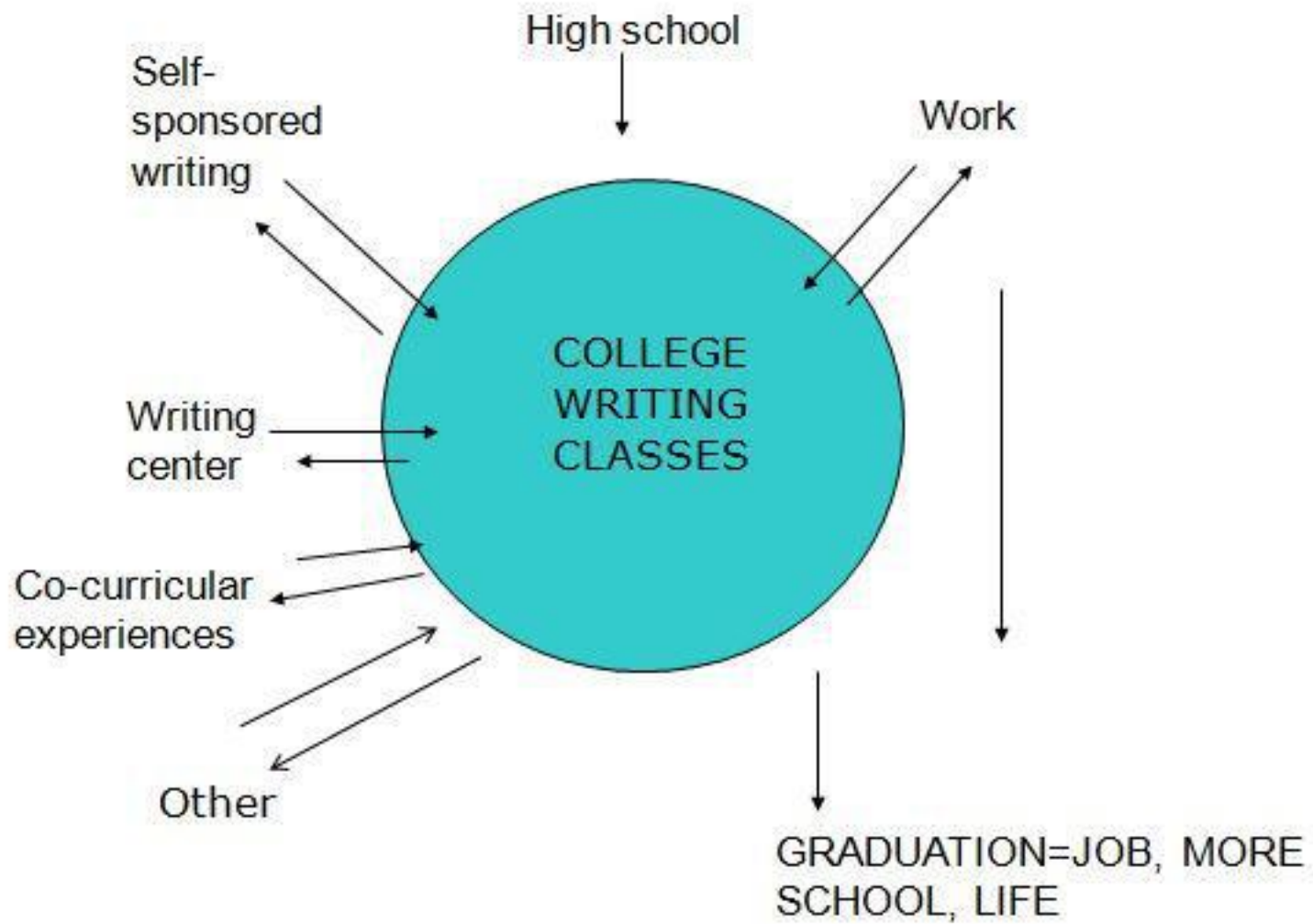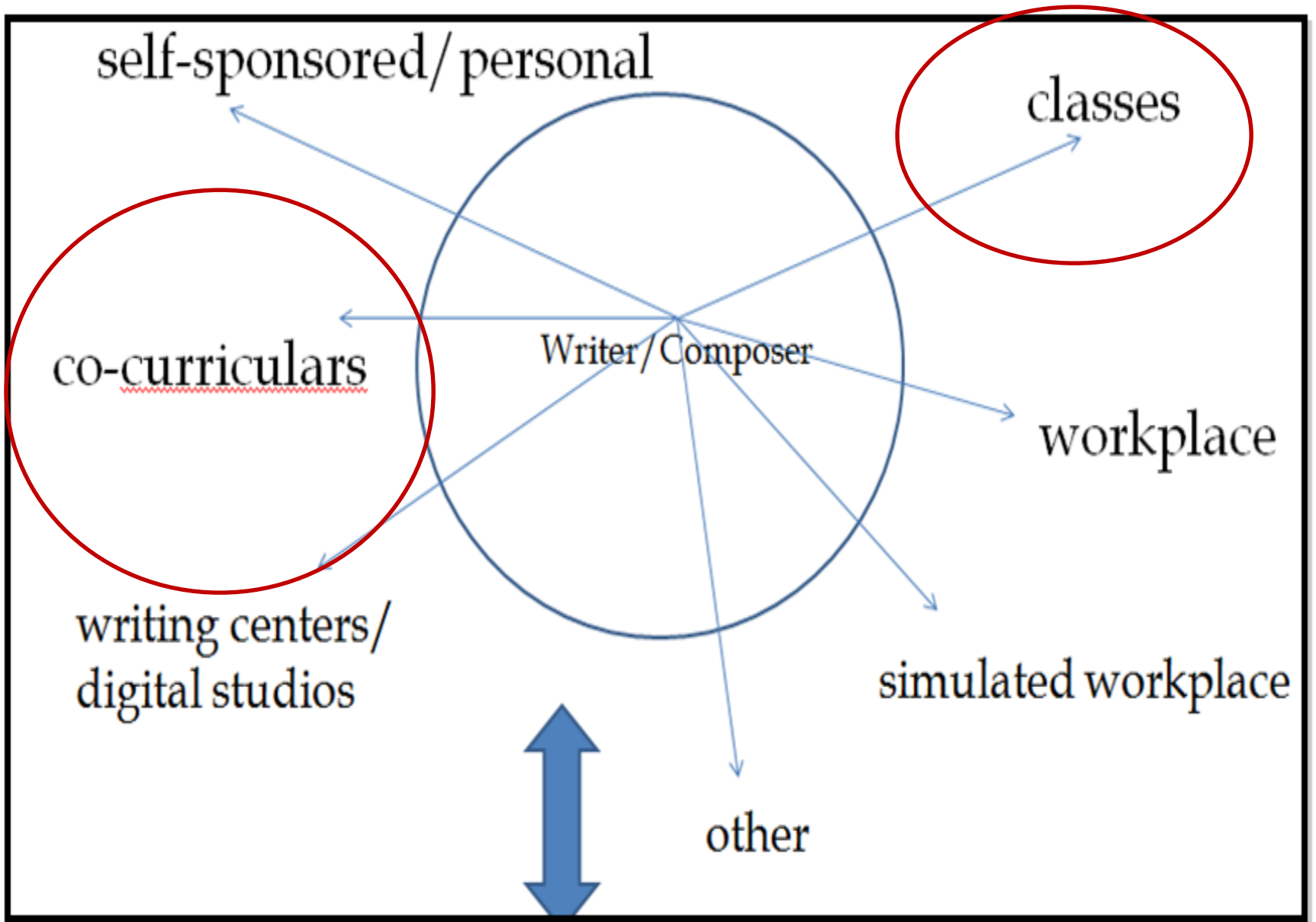
But Nothing is Perfect . . .
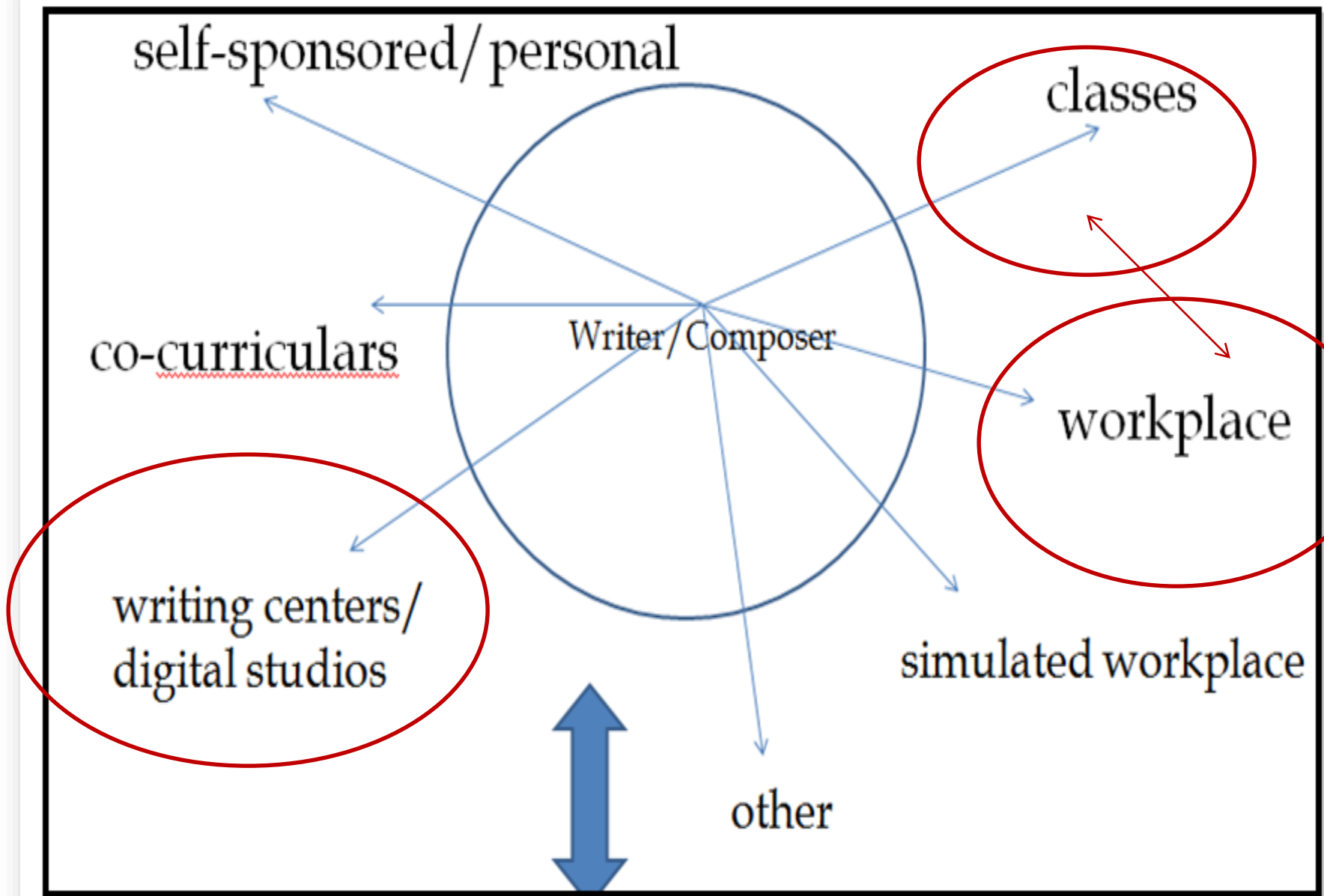
Blogger→2500 reviews of books
Student→Review of literature

The perceived connection is unhelpful: "the connection hasn't provided [her with] substantive ways of dealing with the challenges of a new context and new genres" (75).

Static transfer

What This Means: For Teaching …

1. Ask students what they can bring forward and how they can use what they are learning <u>about writing (FACTS; CONCEPTS)</u> and about <u>how to write (PROCESSES)</u>.

2. Identify the <u>big WRITING ideas</u> and have students work with them: what do they do with them?

3. Ask <u>students to compose "in twos":</u> genres, audiences, media.

4. <u>Ask students what they learned</u> (aka, to reflect) in such composing: <u>share answers</u> for community learning.

5. <u>Design for reiterative practice: reiteration, roles, reciprocity</u>.

What This Means, for Research …

<u>A Theory</u>: The Uptake of the Curriculum isn't 100%. How Do We Change That?

<u>A Future</u>: How Do We Help Students Imagine Possible Futures? How Do We Learn Enough to Help Them Do That?

<u>Conditionalizing/Modifying</u>: How Do We Help Students
(1) Understand the Time Needed to Develop as Writers,
(2) Participate in Both Cognitive and Social Apprenticeships,
(3) and Reflect Meaningfully on Them?

How Composers Write across Contexts: Teasing Out Conditions for Transfer

thank you!