ABSTRACT

LOGAN CLEM. Fostering Generative Dispositions for Transfer with Place-Conscious Education. (Under the direction of Professor Chris Anson.)

This project works with the underexplored complementarity of two distinct approaches to teaching first-year composition (FYC): teaching for transfer (TFT) and place-conscious education. First, I propose that a productive crosspollination between the two models might result from a mutual reorientation toward central terms like “local,” “community,” and “place,” especially if done in a way that more fully considers the mutuality of material, affective, and discursive dimensions of students’ daily lives. Second, I propose that this reorientation might have productive implications for classroom practice and research on transfer. TFT approaches argue that a composition course should help students develop a vocabulary for talking about writing and a conceptual framework through which to analyze and understand writing in future contexts. However, a question remains regarding through which content these vocabulary and concepts can best be taught. I argue that place-conscious education provides TFT models with a possible answer to this question of content by using the physical and geographic spaces and places that are important to students’ lives as content through which to develop rhetorical, genre, and discourse community awareness. This approach to FYC could positively impact the extent to which students transfer knowledge to other contexts, both across the curriculum and outside of the university, by producing more generative value dispositions toward FYC concepts and knowledge. In other words, I argue that a teaching for transfer model supplemented by content chosen through a place-conscious orientation might help students see more clearly how their learning in FYC will be valuable in future writing contexts in the university, in the workplace, and in extracurricular contexts. Following these proposals, I provide and discuss course materials used in one pilot version of this synthesized approach taught in Spring 2020 at NC State, including major projects, scaffolding assignments, discussion activities, and assigned readings.