



College Writing and Beyond: A New Framework for University Writing Instruction

By Anne Beaufort

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Composition research consistently demonstrates that the social context of writing determines the majority of conventions any writer must observe. Still, most universities organize the required first-year composition course as if there were an intuitive set of general writing "skills" usable across academic and work-world settings.

In *College Writing and Beyond: A New Framework for University Writing Instruction*, Anne Beaufort reports on a longitudinal study comparing one student's experience in FYC, in history, in engineering, and in his post-college writing. Her data illuminate the struggle of college students to transfer what they learn about "general writing" from one context to another. Her findings suggest ultimately not that we must abolish FYC, but that we must go beyond even genre theory in reconceiving it.

Accordingly, Beaufort would argue that the FYC course should abandon its hope to teach a sort of general academic discourse, and instead should systematically teach strategies of responding to contextual elements that impinge on the writing situation. Her data urge attention to issues of learning transfer, and to developmentally sound linkages in writing instruction within and across disciplines. Beaufort advocates special attention to discourse community theory, for its power to help students perceive and understand the context of writing.

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