Preparing EAP Students for the Transfer Climate: EAP Instructors' Perceptions of the Role of EAP Courses

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Abstract

Although the issue of learning transfer has been given much attention in English-for-academic-purposes (EAP) research, the factor of transfer climate could be investigated further. The current study examines what the instructors of EAP perceive can be done to prepare students for the transfer climate. The transfer climate refers to the nature of the target context of instruction and the support for learning transfer perceived by a learner in that target context (Burke & Baldwin, 1999). The target context in EAP education is the discipline courses that students take alongside or after EAP courses. The transfer climate may be supportive or unsupportive depending on whether such discipline courses accommodate for students' transfer of EAP skills. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with 22 EAP instructors and, subsequently, three of them were observed to see what actually happens in their EAP courses (Borg, 2015). The findings outline eight steps that can be taken to prepare students for the transfer climate, seven within EAP courses, and one within discipline courses. From what was observed, few of the steps that participants mentioned in the interviews were actually implemented in the classes. Both practical implications and implications for future research are outlined.

Keywords: *English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Learning Transfer, Transfer Climate, Instructor Perceptions, Teaching-for-Transfer*

Introduction

A fundamental goal for English-for-academic-purposes (EAP) education is that learners transfer EAP skills beyond EAP courses to future academic and professional contexts. EAP is a field of research and instruction that deals with the English needed to perform academic tasks such as when undergraduate students need to write academic papers and conduct presentations (Charles, 2012; Matekainen, 2024). That is, the skills that students obtain in EAP courses are intended as academic tools to help them better navigate future contexts such as disciplinary courses they go on to take. Therefore, students' transfer of learning is very important in order

to ensure the success of EAP courses. The concept 'transfer of learning', also known as 'learning transfer', occurs "when learning in one context or with one set of materials impacts on performance in another context or with other related materials" (Perkins & Salomon, 1992, p. 6452). To illustrate an example of learning transfer in EAP education, it can occur if a student transfers the skill of annotation from an EAP course to reading in discipline textbooks.

There has been a body of research across a number of fields, referred to as teaching-for-transfer (TFT) research which is based on the promotion of learning transfer (Cheng, 2007; Currie, 1999; Depalma & Ringer, 2011; Haskell, 2001; James, 2006, 2008, 2012; Jeon, 2022a; Johns, 1988; Kvasova, 2024; Perkins & Salomon, 1992; Shrestha, 2017; Yayli, 2011; Yu, 2023). This area of research has addressed a number of factors that affect learning transfer. For instance, some studies have examined the impact of having similarity between the learning context and the target context (James, 2006, 2008, 2010; Leki & Carson, 1994; James, 2014; Zarei & Rahimi 2014; Green, 2015). To illustrate the impact of context similarity in a study by Zarei and Rahimi (2014), they conducted student interviews and analyzed writing samples to examine students' transfer of EAP skills to different tasks and different courses. Findings showed that participants transferred different learning outcomes variably, with more instances of EAP transfer to English and psychology courses as opposed to courses in hard sciences like chemistry which are not as similar to EAP courses.

Conversely, the factor of *transfer climate* has not received much attention in TFT research. Transfer climate refers to the nature of the target context of instruction and the support for learning transfer that an individual learner perceives in that target context (Burke & Baldwin, 1999). To illustrate, certain target contexts, such as discipline courses that do not engage students' EAP skills, can be viewed as unsupportive transfer climates for EAP transfer. James (2010) is the only EAP education study that explicitly investigated the challenges EAP students face from the transfer climate. They did so by conducting semi-structured interviews with EAP students to examine the challenges they faced while using EAP skills in discipline courses. They advocate the investigation of transfer climate in the EAP context since EAP education involves learning contexts (i.e., EAP courses) and target contexts (i.e. discipline courses). Their findings reveal that among the challenges that EAP students perceived was a lack of support for EAP transferf due to: discipline instructors not valuing writing quality in their assignments, and student peers in the disciplines having a negative attitude towards EAP transfer).

Based on James' (2010) study and relevant workplace training research (Burke & Baldwin, 1999; Holton, 2005; Holton et al., 1997; Holton et al., 2000; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993), transfer climate in the EAP context can be supportive/unsupportive based on these components:

- Discipline instructors' expectation that skills from EAP courses will be applied to their courses;
- Discipline instructors' and student peers' demonstration of skills from EAP courses will be applied to the discipline course;
- Discipline instructors and student peers making connections between the discipline course and EAP course;
- Discipline instructors and student peers demonstrating positive attitudes toward EAP courses;
- Potential rewards for learning outcomes such as points towards grades.

It is worthwhile to conduct TFT research that examines *EAP instructors'* perceptions of how they think their courses can prepare students for transfer climates they may face. Although James (2010) investigates transfer climate in the EAP context, they did not investigate EAP instructors' insights on this issue. Nonetheless, one of their implications for future research suggests EAP instructors could have a role in preparing students for different kinds of transfer climates they may come across by (a) raising students' awareness of the variation they may perceive in support for learning transfer and (b) help students decide how to react appropriately in these situations (p.143). Addressing this gap in EAP research can examine whether EAP instruction is giving students the optimal chance of transferring EAP skills to target contexts. Not only do EAP instructors need to have an awareness of what promotes transfer in their own courses, but also how students can be prepard for certain obstacles for EAP transfer in target contexts. In response to such research, this current study will be guided by the research questions:

RQ: What do EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate?

Teaching-for-Transfer

To date, no research has directly investigated EAP instructors' perceptions of ways to prepare students for the transfer climate; however, there are relevant findings in existing TFT research which examine approaches that promote EAP transfer. TFT studies in EAP education appear to mainly highlight learners' perceptions of their transfer of EAP skills and the approaches that promote it. On one hand, some of these studies are based on approaches that make the context of EAP courses similar to the target context, discipline courses (Flowerdew, 2016; Green, 2015; Hill et al., 2020; Hyland, 2002; James, 2006; James, 2008; James, 2014; Leopold, 2011; Wardle, 2009; Zarei & Rahimi, 2014). For instance, there has been a body of research arguing for an English for specific academic purposes (ESAP) approach for the instruction of EAP courses (Flowerdew, 2016; Hill et al., 2020; Hyland, 2002; Wardle, 2009), which focuses on students' academic English needs for specific disciplines. Such tasks may involve preparing students to use a referencing style or a writing genre specific to certain disciplines. As explained by Hill et al. (2020), the underlying rationale behind these studies' emphasis on an ESAP approach is that specific EAP skills will transfer more easily than general EAP skills (p. 3). In their study, they examine the learning transfer in an ESAP course specifically for engineering students with the use of student interviews and analysis of their writing assignments. The findings indicate learning transfer occurring from this ESAP course to lab reports and log sheets in an engineering course.

On the other hand, other TFT studies are based on approaches involving abstraction. Abstraction requires learners to use EAP knowledge by not transferring as it is to future contexts, but by making that knowledge abstract in that it can be transferred to a variety of contexts or situations (Cheng, 2007; Yayli, 2011). A recent action-based study by Jeon (2022a) sought to promote transfer by developing and implementing pedagogical tools that stimulate abstraction of knowledge. These tools include: (a) giving students feedback on writing that is oriented towards promoting transfer, (b) requiring students to write journals to reflect on what they transferred, and (d) an activity for students to apply their learnt knowledge to a prompt for a subsequent writing course. Jeon (2022a) evaluated the effectiveness of these TFT tools from

students' perceptions through interviews and course evaluations. Among the interview findings was that a number of participants mentioned this approach activated their awareness that knowledge of tools like PowerPoints in the writing course can be transferred to other courses. As the methods of these mentioned studies indicate, they primarily focused on EAP students' perceptions of EAP transfer. Similarly, abstraction of genre knowledge was revealed in Perez-Llatada's (2024) findings after implementing an instructional approach that attended to digital genres of professional and public science communication. The findings revealed that students abstracted rhetorical structure of traditional academic genres and utlized that knowledge for the new digital genres they were learning in the EAP course. This refers to abstraction of knowledge that is backward-reaching in nature. Backward reaching transfer refers to abstraction of previously acquired knowledge when it seems useful and relevant in a current learning task (Perkins & Salomon, 1992).

Nonetheless, there have been some TFT studies that sought out discipline instructors' perceptions of whether their courses can contribute to students' transfer of EAP skills. For one, discipline instructors can promote EAP transfer by providing written feedback on assignments involving EAP skills. To illustrate, in Knight et al.'s (2021) study, nearly half of the discipline instructors valued the use of written feedback on written assignments to cultivate students' writing skills. Second, discipline instructors can also reflect on their courses' in terms of their support and responsibility towards EAP transfer. (Spack, 1988; Zhu, 2004; Leki, 2006; Nelms & Dively, 2007). In Nelms and Dively's (2007) study, discipline instructors' reflections pointed to how some discipline courses may not have any writing assignments, and this can cause a lack of opportunity for the transfer of EAP skills.

There appears to be a sparsity of TFT studies particularly from the EAP instructor's perspective on this issue. For one, Jeon, (2022b), conducted a qualitative case study seeking out the perspective of a single EAP instructor on promoting EAP transfer. Their findings revealed that this instructor viewed EAP transfer as important both within their course and also beyond it to disciplinary courses. However, this instructor did not have many ways to promote such transfer other than explicitly indicating to students that they can use EAP skills in other courses. More recently, James (2023) conducted an interview study with a total of 26 EAP instructors examining their perspectives towards promoting EAP transfer. Their findings outline a number of ways these instructors mentioned they promoted learning transfer including: telling students directly; encouraging students to think how they can transfer EAP skills beyond the course; having students practice writing to a variety of (disciplinary) audiences. Their findings also highlight some challenges that EAP instructors claimed to experience including: a lack of flexibility in the EAP curriculum to promote transfer in terms of lack of time and too much content to cover.

Although James (2023) and Jeon's (2022b) findings shed light on EAP instructors' reports of promoting EAP transfer, EAP instructors may not consider whether disciplinary courses accommodate for such transfer. Such a concern motivated Almuhanna's (in press) interview study which probed to see in what ways EAP instructor's perceive discipline courses are (un)supportive transfer climates. Their findings revealed that EAP instructors perceived both supportive aspects of transfer climate such as (opportunities to transfer EAP skills in certain discipline courses through assignments) , and unsupportive aspects of the transfer climate such as (certain discipline instructors' unrealistically high expectations towards writing in their

courses). Nonetheless, it would be worthwhile to examine whether EAP instruction accounts for students potentially facing unsupportive transfer climates. Such an investigation would extend on these existing studies by examining what EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for transfer climates after transitioning to discipline courses.

Methodology

The research outlined in this paper is part of a larger study. Interview data used in the larger study generated abundant findings, some of which address the research question of this current paper. A qualitative methodology was used for this study. Creswell and Poth (2016) claimed that qualitative research can be a powerful tool to study "research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems" (p. 37). In terms of this current study, it inquiries into the meaning EAP instructors ascribe to transfer climate. That is, EAP instructors may perceive the transfer climate as having a significant impact on EAP transfer and that students need to be prepared for it.

Participants and Recruitment

The researcher invited EAP instructors from the three institutions in Kuwait to be participants in this study. After obtaining approval from the ethics board at Arizona State University, the researcher recruited participants from English departments of two institutions through convenience sampling. After that a snowball sampling technique was used for further recruitment. With regards to the demographic details, the participants varied in terms of their gender, teaching experience, and teacher training. With a total of 22 participants, they were a majority female group, with 13 female participants, and 9 male participants. The participants' teaching experience varied with some having around 20 years of experience while others with around 3 years of teaching experience. All the participants are qualified to teach EAP course, however, there were a total of 5 participants who were also trained in particular disciplines such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, traditional linguistics, and business.

Data Collection

Data was collected through individual semi-structured interviews. In a summary of twenty empirical studies based on second language teacher beliefs on a range of issues, the majority of these studies used interviews as the data collection method (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015, p. 491). Teacher beliefs is an area of research that includes the study of perceptions, similar to the focus of this study. Therefore, such research illustrates the appropriateness of using interviews as the data collection method investigations involving instructors' perceptions. To provide convenience and flexibility to participants, the researcher conducted online interviews via the conferencing platform Zoom. The interviews took 30 minutes on average. The open-ended nature of the questions allowed participants to bring up anything that they think can be done, in the EAP course or elsewhere (e.g., in discipline courses), to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate. To ensure triangulation, observations were also conducted in order to compare with the interview data. That is, observations were conducted in order to investigate what actually happens in the instructors' classrooms (Borg, 2015). Out of all the interview participants, 3 agreed to be observed. There was a total of three observations sessions per instructor in which the researcher discretely sat at the back of the class and took field notes.

For the sake of privacy, there was no video or audio recording and the instructor solely relied on the field notes.

Analytic Procedure

Since the researcher was after the content that participants say rather than the manner in which they say it, a broad transcription of the interviews was sufficient. To carry out the analysis, units of analysis were identified from the interview transcripts and then moved to a category which, as Tesch (2013) mentions, represents one 'pool of meaning' (p. 122). What is meant by a 'pool of meaning' is, when units of analysis are assigned to a category, they are contextualized once again into a category of units that all contribute to a similar pattern towards the research question. For the analysis of observation data, the researcher implemented 'instructional chaining' where each unit compiles meaningful episodes of an entire lesson (VanDerHeide & Newell, 2013). For one, the researcher reviewed the field notes and accordingly created a timeline of episodes for each lesson observed (see Appendix 1 for a sample timeline of the instructional episodes), which made it a more efficient process to go back and detect specific instances where the teacher prepared students in some way for the future transfer climates they will encounter.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity and reliability of my data analysis, the researcher used inter-coder reliability procedures. The researcher asked a professor who had taught EAP courses for many years to also code the data. This aligns with Creswell's (1998) use of peer review which involves a second qualified individual to review the data that has been analyzed. The second coder coded 20% of the total units of analysis from the interview data. In alignment with James' (2010) study, a formula provided by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used to calculate the percentage of reliability. A percentage of inter-coder reliability was achieved after the other coder's second round of coding, which came to 92.7%. Also, one month later, the researcher re-coded 20% of the units of analysis. In comparing this new round of coding with my previous round, the intra-coder reliability came to 95%.

Results

Categories will be outlined below on EAP instructors' perceptions of what can be done to prepare students for unsupportive transfer climates. These steps are listed below from most to least mentioned. There are steps mentioned that can be done in EAP courses and steps outside of EAP courses.

Focusing on General Academic English Skills and Subskills

Many of the participants mentioned general academic English skills that they practice with students. They considered such general skills as transferable to coursework in discipline courses. While some participants provide a broad description of general academic skills, such as 'reading', and 'critical thinking', other participants specify subskills such as skimming and scanning. In the following excerpt, a participant mentioned a subskill of reading, which is 'reading to write', readings assigned in order for students to write about what they read.

Participant: Due to things like students' lack of exposure to reading materials, another aspect I would like to include is getting them to read let's say more, and then maybe write something about it. (Transcript from interview with participant 11).

The three participants who were interviewed and also observed mainly generated data that fell under this category. In their interviews, these three participants mentioned targeting general academic skills such as demonstrating effective research writing, critical thinking, and use credible sources. When it comes to their observations, it was discovered that the majority of what was actually done in their lessons aligned with this category also. The first participant who was observed diligently addressed intended learning outcomes mentioned in the syllabus of that EAP course, for instance, '*mastering different essay types such as compare-contrast essays*'. This was also a learning outcome that this participant mentioned in their interview. Similarly, the second participant who was observed seemed to tackle intended learning outcomes such as '*being able to gather and evaluate online sources*'.

Focusing on Academic English Genres

Responses of this category mention preparing students with academic English writing genres that the participants perceive as useful to students to take with them to the discipline courses. In the excerpt below a participant mentions that their EAP course prepares students with practice of 'compare and contrast' essays, and he assumes students will detect this kind of writing when they transition to discipline courses.

Participant: I teach students *compare and contrast style essays,* so if they are given in a biology class, you know, compare the atmosphere of today to that over 1000 years ago you know the question could be as simple as that, which obviously requires a deep thoughtful answer. And I am hoping that a student would be able to think oh! *Compare, right, I remember 'compare and contrast',* how do we start *that kind of essay* [emphasis added]. Yeah, I am hoping that the skills that we teach would prepare students to deal with different conditions within their discipline courses. (Transcript from interview with participant 14).

Making Explicit Connections to Discipline Courses

While the previous categories are about target learning outcomes, this category is not about an outcome but rather a process of EAP instructors giving students explicit connections to discipline courses. This category includes participants' statements that they take initiative to emphasize the importance of EAP knowledge for discipline courses. Such connection-making is made verbally by emphasizing the importance of utilizing EAP skills. In the following excerpt, the participant explains that she stresses to students the importance of writing skills they learn in the EAP course for the disciplines in a number of ways.

Participant: Yes, of courses, as they need writing in different you know courses, I, and I always stress this point, because I told my students, you have to make use of this course, because these principles, you will apply them [emphasis added], not only in this writing course, even taking exams, answering short answer questions, you know for an exam, or even writing their assignments. The assignment depends, it could be an essay, it could be a mini research about the subject, or even a presentation. All in all,

in these types of assignments, assigned in different courses, of course, they (the students) need to reflect their writing skills [emphasis added]. (Transcript from interview with participant 7).

In the majority of the observation time instructors were teaching towards learning outcomes in the EAP curriculum without explicitly articulating whether and how such knowledge can be transferred to future academic, reading, and writing contexts. For instance. Only one out of the three instructors observed actually did something in an observed class that aligned with this category. This participant had mentioned to their students that business majors would be expected to write a final project which is why they would benefit from writing courses. They also explicitly mentioned to their students a number of times during observations that his course, ENGL 110, is challenging but beneficial for students in terms of research writing for when they have to take the next required EAP course, ENGL 112.

Focusing on Discipline-Specific English
Data under this category includes participants mentioning practice in discipline-specific English and how they think it aids students in their transition to the disciplines. Such exposure can involve texts and jargon specific to certain disciplines. In this excerpt below the EAP instructor mentions exposing students to articles of different disciplines, and that such reading practice involves students being exposed to discipline-specific text and jargon. The EAP instructor explains that because of this, when their students move on and transition to the disciplines, reading should not be a struggle for them.

Participant: Now how can these courses, both of them, help in the discipline courses? You know, the students will be using the reading and writing skills. Reading will be very very much easier (for students when they enter the disciplines) because they already read a lot of articles with me, again, they are introduced to a variety of articles, it's something specific I try to expose them to a variety of articles, but it's not everything [emphasis added]. (Transcript from interview with participant 1).

Conducting Needs Analysis
Data under this category include participants' statements of collecting information on what kind of writing and EAP-related needs there are in discipline courses. The excerpt below reflects this category. The participant in the response below mentions that instruction in their EAP program needs to be based on needs analysis that is more systematic, investigating what kinds of genres students are faced with when they enter the disciplines.

Participant: there needs to be an awful lot more needs analysis. Also in this organization that I work in, I'm not involved in actually writing the curriculum. But the person that is developing the curriculum hasn't carried a needs analysis on the disciplines. So when I said we're teaching narrative, we're teaching summary, but you know they're kind of general genres but I'm sure there's more specific needs within each of the disciplines and that kind of information needs to be accessed more systematically than it is now. It's not good enough for me to say yeah I think summary is relevant, I

think narrative is no, no, there should be a proper needs analysis conducted. (Transcript from interview with participant 3).

Putting More Emphasis on Student Responsibility for their own Learning and Preparing for the Disciplines

Responses under this category state that, students, and not only EAP programs, need to have some responsibility to become prepared for whatever they face in the disciplines. To elaborate, some participants suggested requiring students to learn independently so that they can learn to familiarize themselves with the EAP skills, genres, and terminology they need for the disciplines. In the excerpt below, a participant made the point that students should also have some responsibility for their advancement in EAP skills through independent reading and writing.

> *Participant: Remember when I told you that it is the student's responsibility, you know, you might be introduced to a course where the English is a bit different, let's take the mathematics course. The language is brief. The terms are different, etc. So it is your responsibility as a learner to accommodate yourself with all these details. Something extra to include would be something called independent learning. [emphasis added] Students can go home and do the reading. I may ask each student about their major and I tell them go and search on google for different articles related to your major and then start reading about it. (Transcript from interview with participant 3).*

Having More Initiative from Discipline Courses

Under this category, participants mention that what could help prepare students for the transfer climate is rather than discipline instructors expecting that students will automatically transfer EAP skills, that they also take initiative to actively accommodate for that transfer. In the excerpt below, a participant suggests that discipline instructors can take initiative by better understanding the proficiency level of students entering their courses. This involves discipline instructors visiting to observe EAP courses to understand students' levels, and teaching a unit from their discipline course.

> *Participant: I'd also like to have an instructor from the disciplines come in and teach a unit or teach one or two lessons, so that they can see where the students are and let them see what they're going to be exposed to (in terms of EAP instruction)... so if I could incorporate into my course some sort of cross discipline communication as part of the preparation for matriculation I think that would benefit everyone [emphasis added]. (Transcript from interview with participant 4).*

Providing Students with Digital Tools for EAP

Data under this category is a statement from a single participant mentioning incorporating digital tools as a way to cater to the process of academic writing. One participant mentioned there being a need to promote digital tools that help equip students to be more efficient academic writers. As illustrated in the excerpt below, the participant is explaining how EAP students are not being exposed to the digital tools that real academics are using these days to

make their writing process more manageable in terms of referencing, synthesizing, and managing grammar.

> *Participant: So obviously those type of genres are kind of standard genres that would be used across all disciplines so in terms of that, yes, but I don't think we're doing enough of teaching students, how to use the tools that you need when you're an academic writer, so you know things like word processing tools, tools that help them with grammar, tools that help them to you know, synthesize research. I think academic writing in Kuwait is a little bit old fashioned in terms of not allowing students to use those digital tools, when in reality, I mean I'm doing my thesis myself, you know I'm a native speaker I use all those tools. [emphasis added]. (Transcript from interview with participant 3).*

Summary of Research Findings

After outlining data excerpts that represent each category, Table 1 below provides a summary of the findings. On the left, the table indicates the number of participants who mentioned something in the interviews that falls under each category. For instance, a total of 16 participants mentioned something in relation to focusing on general academic English skills and subskills to prepare students for unsupportive transfer climates.

Table 1

Summary of Interview Findings

What do EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate?	Number of participants who mentioned this
Focus on general academic English skills and subskills	16
Focusing on academic English genres	6
Focusing on discipline-specific English	6
Making explicit connections to discipline courses	4
Conducting needs analysis	3
Having more initiative in discipline courses	3
Put more emphasis on student responsibility for their own learning and preparing for the disciplines	2
Provide students with digital tools for EAP	1

Summary of Observation Findings

After conducting three observation sessions with three of the instructors who were already interviewed, it was discovered that the majority of what was actually done in their lessons aligned with the interview data category 'Focus on general academic English skills and subskills'. In the majority of the observation time instructors were teaching towards learning outcomes in the EAP curriculum without explicitly articulating whether and how such knowledge can be transferred to future academic, reading, and writing contexts. Only one out of the three observed participants explicitly stated to students the benefits of EAP skills in discipline courses. Apart from that, there were a number of things participants claim to implement in the interviews as ways to prepare students, such as 'conducting needs analysis'; 'putting more emphasis, on student responsibility for their own learning and preparing for the disciplines'; 'providing students with digital tools for EAP'), but these things were not

observed. While this could mean that those participants do not implement this, it may also be due to the fact that only 3 lessons were observed for those three participants. Table 2 below illustrates the interview categories that were reflected in the three instructors' actual EAP instruction.

Table 2

Comparison of Interview and Observation Findings

What do EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate?	Number of participants who practiced this in their observed teaching
Focus on general academic English skills and subskills	3/3
Focusing on academic English genres	0/3
Focusing on discipline-specific English	0/3
Making explicit connections to discipline courses	1/3
Conducting needs analysis	0/3
Having more initiative in discipline courses	0/3
Put more emphasis on student responsibility for their own learning and preparing for the disciplines	0/3
Provide students with digital tools for EAP	0/3

Discussion

Motivated by the sparsity of research from the EAP instructor perspective on learning transfer, this study is the first to explicitly investigate steps that EAP instructors think can be taken to prepare students for unsupportive transfer climates. Therefore, this study's findings extend scholarly work on learning transfer in EAP education (Cheng, 2007; Currie, 1999; Green, 2015; Hill et al., 2020; Johns, 1988; Leopold, 2011; Shepherd, 2018; Yayli, 2011) by drawing attention to the factor of transfer climate. Although there have been a few studies that bring attention to the EAP instructor perspective on promoting EAP transfer (Jeon, 2022b; James, 2023), the findings of this current study touch upon whether EAP instructors have any consideration towards the impact of the transfer climate on EAP transfer.

In analyzing both interview and observation findings, there seemed to be similarities and differences among participants in how they see the role of their courses towards EAP transfer. For one, based on the majority of participant responses, EAP instructors may generally take sole responsibility for students' transfer of EAP skills. In this study, when EAP instructors were asked what they would include further to prepare students for the transfer climate, the majority of them suggested steps within their EAP course or program. Apart from the three EAP instructors whose responses suggest that discipline instructors have some responsibility, under the category 'Having more initiative from discipline courses', the rest of the participants suggested ways to prepare students better through their courses. Therefore, the findings point to the possibility that EAP instructors would not place as much responsibility on discipline instructors for EAP transfer as themselves, and that there may be more of an emphasis on preparing students for the transfer climate within the learning context as opposed to the target context.

Moreover, participants of this study mention varying degrees of preparation towards the transfer climate in discipline courses. The majority of participants simply mentioned targeting learning outcomes of their EAP course such as focusing on certain general academic English skills and subskills, which they think prepare students for the transfer climate. Such

participants who simply focused on learning outcomes have a typical assumption as EAP instructors that transfer will take care of itself (Perkins & Salomon, 1988; Carillo, 2017). During one of the observed participants' classes, they seemed to teach the expected EAP curriculum without actively trying to help students develop a habit of 'transfer thinking' (Jeon, 2022a, p. 627).

All three of the observed participants, as well as 13 other participants who were just interviewed, seemed to have an English for general academic purposes (EGAP) approach to instruction which involves preparing students with general academic skills that are supposed to be transferrable to all disciplines. Such transfer between two different writing contexts, also known as high-road transfer', is more challenging than 'low road transfer' which occurs from EAP courses that simulate future writing contexts such as courses that follow an English for specific academic purposes (ESAP) approach. Therefore, in order for students to be able to develop transfer-oriented thinking, EAP instructors would need to do more than simply teach skills that are deemed transferrable and actually prompt students in some way towards such connections. As the interview data indicates, 4 out of the 22 participants of this study, claimed to address this issue by articulating to students explicit connections to discipline courses. This indicates that most of the participants either do not think to give such explicit connections or do not think it necessary. On the contrary, studies such as Shepherd (2018) highlight the importance of instructors making such transfer connections explicit to students. With regards to the observation data on this issue, only one of the observed participants actually articulated explicit connections to discipline courses in their EAP class.

Although the majority of participants seem to be aware of transfer climate variation, there being supportive and unsupportive transfer climates in disciplinary courses, many of them do not seem to actively draw students' attention towards this. Based on the interview data, it appears that the majority of participants perceive that there are opportunities in discipline courses for students to transfer EAP skills, predominantly within assignments involving reading and writing. Also, it seems that participants are aware of there being an existing expectation from discipline instructors for students to write effectively where required in discipline course assignments. These two components of opportunities in assignments and expectations from discipline instructors describe supportive aspects of a transfer climate. Nonetheless, the majority of these participants do not seem to make this point of connection explicit to students in their EAP classes. A number of participants in their interviews mentioned there being inter-departmental meetings with other disciplines such as Humanities and Marketing with regards to improving the writing standard of students. Mentioning such things in the interview indicates that participants are aware of there being an expectation from discipline instructors that students should write effectively in discipline courses.

As indicated in the findings, another way some participants mentioned preparing students for the transfer climate was by focusing on 'discipline specific English'. Among these 6 participants was an EAP instructor who mentioned exposing students to articles containing jargon specific to certain disciplines. Such an approach addresses an issue pointed out by Gaffas (2019) of students perceiving that EAP courses do not effectively prepare them to identify the meaning of unfamiliar or specialized jargon. Also, among the responses under this interview category, a participant mentioned implementing a writing in the disciplines (WID) approach in EAP courses as a way to prepare students for the transfer climate. This response

aligns with research conducted on the effectiveness of using a WID approach for EAP courses. Similar to the findings of the case study by Leopold (2011), an EAP instructor in this current study mentioned the fruitfulness of implementing a WID approach in collaboration with a sociology instructor. Leopold's (2011) study used a questionnaire to gather perceptions of EAP students, probing their thoughts on their learning outcomes and learning transfer from the EAP course to a disciplinary policy course. Similar to the response of an EAP instructor in this current study, Leopold's (2011) findings describe positive learning outcomes from EAP courses with a WID approach and learning transfer occurring. Nonetheless, as this participant explains in their interview, a WID approach requires additional planning other than the required delivery of the EAP curriculum. This participant mentioned how they had to make connections with a disciplinary instructor in order to facilitate this approach to a discipline-specific writing assignment.

A few participants mentioned there being a need for further preparation for the transfer climate outside of EAP instruction. There was a total of 2 participants during the interviews whose responses fell under this category 'Put more emphasis on student responsibility for their own learning and preparing for the disciplines'. Although the focus of the interview was to probe what participants think the role of their EAP courses is towards EAP transfer and the transfer climate, these two participants drew attention to student responsibility. In referring to TFT literature, EAP courses could implement an instructional approach similar to Currie (1999) in order to encourage student responsibility towards their preparation for the disciplines and any transfer climates they may encounter. In Currie's (1999) action-based study, the student participants mentioned positive outcomes with the 'student-ethnography' approach taken by their EAP instructor. This approach involves encouraging students to go out independently and find out what EAP skills are used and considered important in the different discipline courses they take. For instance, one of the ways assigned for students to find out what EAP skills are needed in the disciplines is interviewing their discipline instructors to seek out their views of academic writing. This may allow them to be prepared for discipline instructors who do not explicitly state their EAP expectations in class. To add, in another category, 'Having more initiative in discipline courses', 3 participants mentioned ways discipline instructors and their courses could have a role in improving the transfer climate for students to transfer EAP skills to the disciplines. Two of the participants mentioned discipline instructors needing to familiarize themselves with the language level of students, either by observing EAP courses or through having inter-disciplinary meetings. Therefore, there are a few participants who seem to recognize the impact of the transfer climate on EAP transfer.

Conclusion

When it comes to implications for future EAP instruction, including knowledge of the transfer climate in EAP teacher training and professional development can have an impact. With more knowledge on this issue, EAP instructors may not only 'teach as usual', that is, teach towards achieving target learning outcomes as most participants did in this study, but also actively get students used to having a 'transfer way of thinking'. They may see the point in preparing students to face this, and perhaps even involving discipline instructors in creating a transfer climate that is more supportive towards EAP transfer. As indicated by Jeon's (2022a) findings, when EAP instructors are made aware of what it takes for students to attempt EAP transfer to

other courses though teacher education such as an 'L2 transfer course', it is more likely that instructors will do more than simply target their course learning outcomes. As the findings indicate in their case study, the EAP instructor, Jane, took the transfer course and it helped her identify source-based writing as a transfer activity where students need to read sources and then transfer them into writing. However, it is also noteworthy to point out that Jane was a graduate student and instructor with a specific research interest in learning transfer, and the L2 transfer course supplemented that interest. Not all EAP instructors have a research interest in learning transfer, therefore, having an L2 transfer course or a transfer component in teacher training can be beneficial for EAP instructors to better understand the impact of the transfer climate.

It is possible that in order for students to be able to retain EAP knowledge for long-term transfer more would be required from EAP instructors than simply mentioning connections to discipline courses in their class. Although Jane explicitly mentioned to students EAP-disciplinary connections, this may not be enough for students to be able to transfer EAP knowledge over a long period of time (Hirvela, 2014). In comparison, in this current study's findings, one EAP instructor mentioned implementing a writing-in-the disciplines (WID) approach in collaborating with a sociology course. Such an approach would involve students to actively engage in writing they will later encounter and this may have a stronger effect on long-term EAP transfer. Moreover, such engagement in transfer can help students know what to expect in future transfer climates, particularly discipline courses where the instructor may not provide connections to students.

When it comes to the methodology of this current study, it involved conducting interviews to gather the perceptions of EAP instructors on preparing students for the transfer climate. Subsequently, observation data was collected to triangulate the findings from the interviews and to inquire on what actually happens in participants' EAP classes. To address a limitation of this study, future research focusing on EAP instructors and preparing for the transfer climate can aim for less reliance on self-reported data by trying to obtain more observation data. Future research could also involve stimulated recall in order to gauge from the instructors what their intentions were behind instructional decisions they make during observed classes, and whether the motivation behind those decisions was to do with the transfer climate. Moreover, future research looking into preparing students for the transfer climate can examine preparing students for transfer climates of specific disciplines rather than viewing the transfer climate as for all discipline courses.

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Maryam Almuhanna

Appendix 1

Sample Index of Instructional Episodes (Participant 1, Observation Session 2)

Episode	Time	Description of instructional activities within each episode
1	9:30-9:36	Gives an overview of the lesson and focus on compare/contrast
2	9:40-9:48	Demonstrates different structures of compare/contrast essay
3	9:48-9:50	Elicits examples of how to structure an essay topic
4	9:50-10:00	Reviews components of an introduction
5	10:00-10:06	Gives examples of introduction components
6	10:06-10:20	Instructors students to apply lecture to revising diagnostic writing paragraphs
7	10:20-10:30	Provides students feedback to their revision

Sample Index of Instructional Episodes (Participant 3, Observation Session 2)

Episode	Time	Description of instructional activities within each episode
1	1:00-1:04	Gives an overview of the lesson
2	1:05-1:10	Provides an example of a successful conclusion paragraph
3	1:10-1:12	Mentions that this course prepares them for the next EAP course
4	1:12-1:13	Mentions that this course prepares them for business courses
5	1:14-1:20	Shows thesis statement within introduction paragraph
6	1:21-1:27	Compares thesis statement positioning in introduction & conclusion
7	1:28-1:48	Discusses other examples of conclusion paragraphs

Sample Index of Instructional Episodes (Participant 3, Observation Session 2)