

How to Prepare English-for-academic-purposes (EAP) Students for the Transfer Climate  
of the English-medium Post-secondary Academic Setting: EAP Instructors' Perspectives  
of the Transfer Climate and the Role of EAP Courses

by

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines (1) the nature of the transfer climate in an English for academic purposes (EAP) education setting specifically from the perspectives of EAP instructors. It also examines (2) what EAP instructors perceive can be done to prepare students for such a 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. Therefore, in the case of the EAP education context, the target context of instruction is the discipline courses to which students transition to or take concurrently with EAP courses. These discipline courses may be supportive or unsupportive towards students' transfer of EAP skills. The social constructivist approach was used as the theoretical foundation, which views that overall knowledge as dependent upon human practices, being manifested in and out of interaction between individuals and their world, and developed within a social context. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 22 EAP instructors. The interview transcripts were analyzed using a process that is two-fold: involving de-contextualizing and re-contextualizing. Firstly, with decontextualizing, a chunk of text is identified as a unit of analysis, when it is taken out of context from the transcript, it is still meaningful as a unit. Secondly, all the units can be re-contextualized when transferred from the interview transcript to a single category of units that contribute to a similar pattern towards the research question(s). The findings revealed that EAP instructors perceived both supportive and unsupportive aspects of different components of the EAP transfer climate [opportunities (lack of) in the course structure, support (lack of) for EAP transfer from discipline instructors or peers in the disciplines]. This study's findings also build on existing conceptualizations of transfer climate. The findings also

outline 8 steps that can be taken to prepare students for the transfer climate, 7 within EAP courses, and 1 within discipline courses. Both practical implications and implications for future research are outlined.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Although most would think that the journey of obtaining a Ph.D. is a test of your ability in a given field, it is more so a test of patience and perseverance. Therefore, this journey has demonstrated to me that the only way to find out my capabilities in this field is through struggle. In fact, in one of the courses I took for this degree, the professor mentioned that the way students can demonstrate that they are moving in the right direction in their research is through ‘showing signs of struggle’. Although I have now come to the end of this journey, I have experienced my fair share of struggles and uncertainties during this degree, but it has shaped me as an academic and has also shaped my character.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The chapter will introduce the topic “How to prepare English-for-academic-purposes (EAP) students for the transfer climate of the English-medium post-secondary academic setting: EAP instructors' perspectives of the transfer climate and the role of EAP courses” and the research questions of this current study. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate why this topic is worthy of being investigated. The following will be the sequence of this chapter. This chapter will start off with a personal account of how my experiences as a graduate student and researcher led me to pursuing this topic. This chapter will continue by contextualizing the topic and identifying the research gap in the literature that this current study addresses.

#### **What Personal Circumstances Led Me to This Topic?**

There are a number of aspects related to my experience that prompted this current inquiry. One aspect was my teaching experience as a graduate student that stimulated my interest in the context of EAP education. I, the researcher, was previously enrolled in a Teaching English to speakers of a second Language (TESOL) master’s program in the United States, and was given the opportunity to teach an EAP course to international students. EAP courses in this particular university, and most universities in the United States, are a requirement that international students have to meet within their first year of enrollment and can be high-stakes due to the importance of students retaining EAP skills for future discipline courses. The course that I was teaching was the first and most basic of three EAP courses required for international students depending on their English

placement test scores. It appeared that based on the curriculum design, and the way the writing program was run, a general academic English approach was taken, where students are taught general writing skills, communicative skills and study skills that they can apply to an array of disciplines, rather than being taught things for specific disciplines.

Adoption of this approach was the program's way of ensuring students are prepared for the academic skills they need for the disciplines. Nonetheless, given that the students enrolled in my course were majoring in a diversity of disciplines, I always had the concern of how the EAP course would benefit all the students for when they embark upon their disciplines. For instance, I was wondering whether what was already in place in the EAP curriculum would benefit students entering humanities disciplines as well as students who were entering STEM disciplines. That is, for example, would a student entering a physics course be able to transfer many EAP skills from the EAP course, or will there not be enough opportunities in the physics course for them to transfer. This was a concern that stimulated my interest in conducting research in the context of EAP education.

Also, my individual research interests that developed as a PhD student led me to focus on learning transfer. When I became set on the idea of conducting research related to the context of EAP, I read up on different research topics in this context. As I read up on learning transfer research, it became an area of interest for me. Learning transfer refers to the way in which learning in one context is applied to another context. A description of learning transfer as a construct will be elaborated on further in this chapter.

Upon further reading on the body of research on learning transfer, I also decided to focus my research on the target context of EAP transfer, more specifically, the discipline courses where transfer from an EAP course should be occurring. I became intrigued to pursue a topic related to the target context of EAP transfer as it seemed that its impact on learning transfer was not researched as much as the learning context. Among the existing pieces of research that stimulated this interest was Baldwin and Ford's (1988) review of studies done outside EAP education that drew attention to the importance of considering support and reinforcement in the target context. Investigating support for transfer in the target context seemed relevant and important to EAP education considering the learning outcome of EAP skills transferring to discipline courses.

Finally, another aspect that helped me narrow down the topic of my study was to investigate the target context of EAP transfer from EAP instructors' perspectives. As I became more accustomed to the learning transfer literature, I noticed that there were numerous studies that involved investigating the students' perceptions of their learning transfer and instructional approaches that seem to promote or impede it. To offer an example, studies such as Green (2015) used a questionnaire to examine students' perceptions of the kinds of teaching techniques they experienced in their EAP course and whether these techniques promoted transfer of EAP skills. However, I became increasingly interested in examining the perception of a *different* stakeholder, EAP instructors, towards learning transfer from EAP courses. Therefore, what drew me to the examination of this topic was the originality of seeking out a different perception, that of EAP instructors. This topic also drew my attention since it seemed worthwhile to

investigate whether EAP instructors actually think about the target context as a factor affecting EAP transfer, and what kind of instructional action they take towards this.

### **What are the Definitions of the Key Concepts?**

Before moving on to the rationale of this topic which is based on existing research, there are three concepts that need to be elaborated on further to provide a theoretical framework for this current study: EAP, learning transfer, and transfer climate.

#### ***EAP***

This section will introduce the context of EAP which is important for this current study. EAP is a field of research and instruction that deals with the English needed by those who use the language to perform academic tasks (Charles, 2012). For instance, this field deals with the English needed by undergraduates to write academic papers and conduct academic presentations in discipline courses. Another example is the English needed by graduate students who intend to publish in academic journals or present at conferences.

The field originally emerged out of the broader research area of English for specific purposes (ESP). ESP is an area of research and instruction for English for non-native speakers of English, and the aim is for the learner to use English in a certain context. ESP includes the branches of EAP, English for occupational purposes, English for vocational purposes, and English for medical purposes among others (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013). The branch of EAP has become a larger and more pertinent area due to global growth in the use of English for academic research and instruction. To demonstrate this global growth, Riazi, Ghanbar, and Fazel (2020) conducted an analysis of empirical research from the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*. To elaborate,

they outlined the percentage of empirical research coming out of different countries within the time period of 2002 to 2011 and 2012 to 2019. In comparing the two time periods there has been an increase in research contribution from a number of countries and this demonstrates a global growth in research. These countries which demonstrate an increase of the two time periods are Taiwan, Japan, Sweden, New Zealand, Turkey, Iran, and China among others. To illustrate the increase, Turkey for instance increased their research in this journal from 1 to 6 studies between the mentioned time periods.

When it comes to EAP courses specifically, they have a clear purpose, and this involves facilitating students' successful maneuvering through an academic program in their given discipline. To illustrate, EAP courses exist in order to provide students with the language and study skills that they need to cope in discipline courses such as chemistry. That is, if disciplines such as chemistry involve using presentation skills, or the writing of lab reports, EAP courses prepare students with the writing skills and study skills needed for them to manage such tasks.

Apart from aspects from my personal experience outlined above, there are reasons why I chose EAP as the context of this study. Given that there is a large population of students taking EAP courses and it is a relatively high-stakes context, this is a good reason to investigate this context. To explain, there is a large number of students taking EAP because it is typically a general requirement. For instance, in large-scale international universities in the US, such as Arizona State University, there are EAP courses that are required for students who do not obtain a high enough placement test score to waive them. In fact, when it comes to Arizona State University, these courses are a graduation requirement if students did not get the courses waived using a high

placement test score. Also, it is a relatively high-stakes context due to the expectation that students will transfer learning outcomes to discipline courses. That is, it is central to the goal of EAP courses that the skills learnt are applied where necessary in the discipline courses that students transition to, otherwise there can be a detrimental impact on students' performance in discipline courses. As Leki and Carson (1997) put it, the instructional goals in an EAP setting are “transcendent” (p. 39). This refers to how the goals of EAP courses would not be fully achieved if students do not transfer the knowledge and skills they have attained.

### ***Learning transfer***

This section will introduce the construct of learning transfer, an important construct for this study. Learning transfer is an important goal in EAP education. Among the most popular definitions of learning transfer is that it occurs ‘when learning in one context or with one set of materials impacts on performance in another context or with another set of materials’ (Perkins & Salomon 1992). One of the famous examples of transfer that Perkins and Salomon describe is learning to drive a car, and using that knowledge of driving a car to drive a lorry. This is an example of transfer because it demonstrates how knowledge of something can be reused or adapted with a different set of materials or in a slightly different context. Therefore, there is a transfer of the skill of driving from one vehicle to another. To illustrate an example of transfer in EAP education, it can occur if a student transfers the skill of annotation, which is taking notes in the margins of a textbook while reading, from an EAP course to reading in discipline textbooks. Learning transfer is indeed an important goal in EAP education and EAP instructors expect a certain set of learning outcomes to be transferred by students

depending on the kind of EAP course. For instance, for the most basic level EAP course at Arizona State University, among the expected learning outcomes include aiming for students to develop ideas, express ideas effectively, understand rhetorical processes and to analyze different audiences. These are examples of the kinds of learning outcomes that students are expected to transfer.

Due to learning transfer being such an important goal in EAP education, researchers have made many attempts to better understand this construct. Learning transfer has been an area of research for decades in fields such as psychology and education before making its way into the field of EAP education. That is, in educational psychology and education, there have been frameworks proposed to provide a clearer understanding of learning transfer. For instance, among the most popular frameworks, Perkins and Salomon (1992), proposed that there can be different kinds of learning transfer required from a learner depending on difference or similarity between the learning context and the target context. They used the metaphor of distance to illustrate the extent of difference/similarity between contexts. To illustrate, near transfer refers to transfer between contexts that are similar in some way, for instance, from an EAP course that involves writing case studies to a business course that involves writing case studies. On the other hand, far transfer refers to transfer that is between contexts that are different. Far transfer is more complex in that it requires reflection and metacognition from the learner more than near transfer. For instance, transitioning from a general EAP course that does not cater to a particular discipline, to a chemistry course that involves the writing of lab reports might require transfer with deep reflection and metacognition in order for students to communicate appropriately to the audience and purpose of the lab



report. This is because the contexts are significantly different from each other. To provide further understanding of far transfer, Perkins and Salomon also proposed that far transfer can be forward-reaching and backward-reaching. For instance, forward-reaching transfer can involve the students coming up with a principle in an EAP course that they can utilize in a future discipline course. For example, this can involve students becoming accustomed to the principle of ‘providing evidence for claims they make in writing’ in an EAP course, in anticipation of being able to use it later in a history course. On the other hand, with backward-reaching transfer, the learner abstracts important aspects of their current situation and reflects back to the past for relevant experiences and applicable knowledge. For instance, this could involve a student trying to complete APA referencing in a discipline course and reflecting back to an EAP course to recall relevant citation knowledge.

With such research efforts that span across numerous fields, it became understood that as a goal, learning transfer is difficult to achieve. To illustrate, in a review of learning transfer empirical research by Detterman (1993), they reached this conclusion by speculating on the way in which learning transfer as a construct had been conceptualized. To be precise, they mentioned that transfer in existing research often involved drawing learners’ attention to similarities between contexts in order to prompt them to transfer certain skills. Detterman argued that this should not count as authentic transfer due there being prompting involved. Therefore, due to the majority of research at the time involving transfer with prompting, Detterman came to the conclusion that authentic transfer without prompting is difficult to achieve. Despite Detterman’s review, for many practitioners, there has been the assumption that learning transfer is not difficult but on

the contrary, is a given, and that since students comprehend what has been taught to them, it is a given that they will transfer such knowledge to future learning situations appropriately. Nonetheless, it was learned by scholars such as Whitehead (1929), that what tends to happen is that once students retain knowledge from the learning context, it is possible that that knowledge becomes 'inert'. To illustrate this in an EAP context for instance, it is possible that students understand and retain knowledge from an EAP course, such as the skill of synthesizing ideas from sources. However, if the discipline course that they transition to may not have clear opportunities for students to synthesize in classroom tasks and assignments, these students' knowledge of synthesizing may not be transferred and instead become inert. This is referred to in the literature as the inert knowledge problem (Whitehead, 1929; Larsen-Freeman, 2013). Therefore, over time it became clear to researchers of learning transfer that, indeed learning transfer is not a given, and that there need to be ways in which learning transfer is promoted by practitioners.

Given that learning transfer has proven difficult to achieve, an array of research emerged on teaching-for-transfer (TFT). TFT refers to an area of research based on different approaches adopted to promote learning transfer (Barnett & Ceci, 2002; Bransford & Schwartz, 1999; Cheng, 2007; Currie, 1999; Depalma & Ringer, 2011; Haskell, 2001; James, 2006, 2008, 2012; Johns, 1988; Perkins & Salomon, 1992; Shrestha, 2017; Yayli, 2011). Within this area of research, is Perkins and Salomon's (1992) framework of techniques, *bridging* and *hugging*. Bridging is a technique that engages learners to transfer general knowledge and skills to contexts that may not have similar kinds of tasks and activities. The way in which learners engage in the transfer of

such knowledge is through abstraction, making such general knowledge and skills abstract in a way that they could be applied to differing contexts. To provide an example, discipline instructors can encourage students to use a basic argument structure that they learnt in their EAP course for paragraph writing of various kinds of papers, such as report writing, case study writing, or research paper writing for different disciplines. This illustrates abstraction because it requires the learner to transfer such an argument structure from one writing task to another writing task that can be different in terms of content or context. *Hugging*, on the other hand, is a technique that engages learners in activities that are similar to what they will perform in future contexts. For instance, instructors can encourage students in an EAP course to get into the habit of referencing when they write essays in EAP courses that are similar to the essays they will encounter in discipline courses. To mention another TFT technique, an early article by Johns (1988) advocates a technique that involves encouraging EAP students to go out to their discipline courses and investigate themselves what EAP skills seem to be applicable in what discipline courses. For instance, this technique could involve EAP instructors assigning students to compare the syllabi of different discipline courses to see what EAP skills and study skills they require.

### ***Transfer climate***

This section will introduce the construct of transfer climate, an important construct of this current study. To offer a definition, the construct of 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). When it comes to learning transfer, there is the context from which knowledge is

learned, and there is also the context where that knowledge is aimed to transfer, and this is referred to as the target context. For example, when it comes to learning APA formatting in EAP courses, the target context can be the particular disciplines that use this kind of formatting such as Business, Psychology, and Education.

Transfer climate has been researched extensively in the field of workplace training research. Workplace training research has identified the influence of a supportive transfer climate. To illustrate, in an early review by Baldwin and Ford (1988) of transfer research from a workplace training perspective, they pointed out the importance of consideration for transfer climate and how such a construct may have an impact on transfer occurring. Baldwin and Ford conducted a critique of existing learning transfer research and proposed a model of the transfer of training process, identifying support in the workplace among the factors to affect transfer of training. One of the main components of transfer climate that Baldwin and Ford (1988) identify as having an impact on transfer of training is supervisory support. This refers to different ways in which supervisors at a workplace can demonstrate support and opportunity for employees to apply training knowledge to the workplace. The impact of support from supervisors for employees' transfer of training has been confirmed in empirical studies. For instance, Foxon (2008) found there is a correlation between trainees perceiving support from supervisors for using training skills and learning transfer occurring. To add, Lim and Johnson (2002) pointed out that discussions with supervisors on using new learning, supervisor's involvement in training, and positive feedback from supervisors were forms of support most recognized by trainees as having a positive impact on their transfer of learning.

Moreover, there has also been workplace training research conducted on a second important component of the transfer climate, peer/colleague support, and its impact on transfer of training. For instance, a qualitative study conducted by Hawley and Barnard (2005) examined which peer support behaviors were most influential on transfer, and they found that networking with peers and sharing ideas about course content helped promote transfer 6 months after training.

A third important aspect of transfer climate is opportunity to transfer learning. Numerous studies have demonstrated that transfer of training becomes sparse when there are not enough opportunities for trainees to use new learning in their work setting (Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995; Gaudine & Saks, 2004; Lim & Morris, 2006). To illustrate, in a workplace training study, by Clarke, (2002) they examined what factors seemed to influence the transfer of training within a UK social services department. Fourteen trainees attended a two-day in-service training program within a UK social services department. Follow-up interviews were conducted 6 months later in order to gauge what training was implemented on the job, and what if any barriers impeded or factors that aided implementation of the training. Their findings suggested that limited opportunity to perform skills on the job was the highest impediment to successful training transfer. In fact, in a study by Lim and Johnson (2002), opportunity to use the trained skills was rated as the highest form of support for learners and the lack of opportunity to use training was rated as the biggest obstacle to transfer.

Given that transfer climate emerged from workplace training research, it is useful to understand the various components of transfer climate within a workplace context. The components that are outlined below illustrate the way in which aspects of a workplace's

transfer climate can impact whether an employee transfers what they learn from workplace training. There are different components to workplace transfer climates outlined by James (2010), that can involve an individual perceiving a support or lack of support from different components of a workplace. The components are as follows:

- ❖ Supervisors' expectation that skills from training will be applied to the workplace
- ❖ Supervisors' and colleagues demonstration of skills from training will be applied to the workplace
- ❖ Supervisors' and colleagues making connections between the workplace and training
- ❖ Supervisors' and colleagues demonstrating positive attitudes toward training.
- ❖ Potential rewards for learning outcomes such as promotions

In order to clarify how these components would align with the EAP context, I provide the following list that outlines what each point would look like in the EAP context:

- ❖ 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.

### **Rationale for This Topic Based on Existing Research**

To start off, research on learning transfer in EAP education has focused on a variety of factors. First, some studies have examined the impact of contextual similarity on learning transfer in EAP education (Beaufort, 1998; Dyke Ford, 2004; James, 2006, 2008, 2010b; Leki & Carson, 1994). Context similarity means that the learning context and the target context are similar in some way. For instance, these two contexts can be similar in that the tasks in both contexts are similar. For instance, there could be context similarity between an EAP course and a history course if both of those courses exposed students to essay writing. This contextual similarity (i.e., essay writing tasks in the EAP course and in the history course) can lead to transfer. To illustrate the impact of context similarity in a study by James (2008), the researcher assigned 42 participants a writing task outside their EAP course, and interviewed the participants about how they viewed the task. Findings showed that participants who viewed the task as similar to work in the EAP course were more likely to transfer what they learned from the EAP course. Secondly, some studies have examined the impact of encouraging abstraction on learning transfer in EAP education. Abstraction requires learners to use EAP knowledge by not directly applying it as it is to future contexts, but by making that knowledge abstract in a way that it can be transferred to a variety of contexts or situations. Among the studies that involve abstraction is Yayli (2011). In their study, they analyze a group of students' assignments,

annotations, and interviews from an EAP course that implemented genre-based instruction. Their study revealed that the students developed a genre awareness and this involves abstraction because they recontextualize their genre awareness based on a new writing task they encounter. Their findings revealed that in developing such a genre awareness, students transferred genre features they learnt from one type of genre to another. Thirdly, some studies have examined the impact of an instructional approach involving student research on learning transfer in EAP education (Johns, 1988; Currie, 1999). For instance, in Currie's (1999) study they implemented an instructional approach involving student research to promote EAP transfer. They assigned students to use 3 transferable skills in their discipline courses in order for them to investigate their applicability and transferability. The students benefited from the assignments and perceived the transferability of such general academic skills. Fourthly, there has been a study that examined transfer motivation in EAP education (James, 2012). This study was the first study based on motivation to transfer in an L2 teaching context. They examine students' transfer of second language learning from their EAP course to discipline courses, and what factors motivate or demotivate them to transfer. For instance, one of the factors that appeared to impact whether students were motivated to transfer was if they perceived opportunities available to transfer of their second language training.

When it comes to the factor of transfer climate in EAP education particularly, it has not been studied extensively. James (2010) is the only study thus far to explicitly examine the construct of transfer climate in the context of EAP. They adopted this construct to examine what challenges the transfer climate of discipline courses poses for students in transferring EAP skills. Using semi-structured interviews with a total of 52 EAP students,



they examined EAP students' perceptions of the challenges they face in discipline courses. Their findings revealed that students did perceive challenges from multiple aspects of the transfer climate including discipline instructors not making connections to EAP skills, a negative attitude towards EAP skills from discipline instructors and student peers in the disciplines. There have also been a few relevant research findings from studies that did not directly adopt the concept of transfer climate. For instance, Nelms and Dively (2007) conducted a focus group with a group of discipline instructors to examine what challenges they think EAP students face in trying to transfer EAP skills to their courses. So essentially, that particular research question in their study tackles the transfer climate, but from the perceptions of discipline instructors. The focus group findings reveal discipline instructors mentioning that some discipline courses do not have enough opportunities for EAP transfer due to limited academic writing assignments. Also, Zhu (2004) is another study that, although it did not focus explicitly on transfer climate, has findings that are relevant to transfer climate. Their study sought out discipline instructors' perceptions on the instruction of writing, and where the responsibility for writing instruction lies. Overall, the findings revealed that some discipline instructors perceived that writing instruction would most effectively be provided by writing/language instructors, while others recognized that there is a role for both them and language/writing instructors when it comes to academic writing instruction. These findings are relevant because they illustrate how some discipline instructors do not think they have a responsibility towards writing instruction, and this can result in a lack of support from discipline instructors for EAP transfer involving writing.

However, the factor of transfer climate in EAP education is worthy of further investigation. This is actually one of the implications that emerged from Green's (2015) study. To recall Green's (2015) study, they carried out a survey study with EAP students in a course where hugging and bridging techniques were incorporated. Their findings revealed that there was a correlation between students' learning transfer and their reports of perceiving the techniques of bridging and hugging. They argue that rather than focusing on instructional approaches towards promoting transfer in the learning context, there should also be attention put on the transfer climate and its impact on EAP transfer. There is existing research in education and workplace training research that justifies the importance of investigating the impact of transfer climate on learning transfer. To illustrate this, research in the field of education has stated that the nature of the target context is believed to play a critical role on learning transfer (Haskell, 2001, McKeough & Marini, 1995). For instance, one of the 11 principles of learning transfer that Haskell (2001) proposed was related to the way in which learning transfer can either be supported or inhibited depending on the group of individuals or the climate surrounding the learner (p. 46). Also, as demonstrated in workplace training studies, a supportive transfer climate in target contexts has been linked to learning transfer occurring (Clarke, 2002, Tracey & Tannenbaum, 1995; Xiao, 1996). For instance, Clarke's (2002) findings illustrate how a supportive transfer climate involving supervisor support and opportunities to use learnt skills contribute to learning transfer. Moreover, taking into account James' (2010) study, they justify the investigation of transfer climate in the EAP context since EAP education involves learning contexts (i.e., EAP courses) and transfer contexts (i.e., students' discipline courses), and they justify that these discipline courses can be complex and can

present many challenges for students. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate the transfer climate in an EAP education context as this can demonstrate the kinds of impact discipline courses can have on students' EAP transfer.

More specifically, it is worthwhile to investigate the transfer climate through EAP instructor perceptions. One reason it is worthwhile to seek out such data on the EAP instructor perceptions is because it would complement existing findings from studies that sought out students' and discipline instructors' perspectives (James, 2010; Nelms & Dively, 2007). With all these perspectives we can examine if the different perspectives align with each other on this issue. For instance, EAP instructors' perspectives may not align with EAP students' perspectives or with discipline instructors when it comes to the transfer climate. It is important to find out what EAP instructors think because that might have an impact on what they actually do in EAP courses, which in turn may have an impact on whether students are well prepared for transfer climates they may encounter. For instance, if students perceive unsupportive transfer climates and EAP instructors do not, it is possible that EAP instructors are not doing much to prepare students for this. Also, examining how EAP instructors perceive the transfer climate can contribute to broader curriculum development. For example, by investigating how EAP instructors view discipline courses, this might provide information that can be used by various stakeholders (EAP instructors, discipline course instructors, program developers and administrators) to create connections between courses and therefore strengthen a curriculum. Although EAP instructors may not have authority over discipline instructors with regard to this issue, they have expertise in language and writing instruction. Therefore, they can give an informed opinion on what discipline instructors can

contribute to EAP transfer. Gaining such insight can pave a new direction for curriculum and planning for EAP instruction in whether discipline courses have any involvement. This can complement research findings that touch upon discipline instructors' perceptions of their courses and whether they have a role towards promoting EAP transfer (Zhu, 2004; Jackson , 2005; Jackson, Meyer & Parkinson, 2006).

Along with examining EAP instructor perceptions of the transfer climate, it would also be worthwhile to examine what they think can be done to prepare students for different kinds of transfer climates. In considering the impact that transfer climates can have on learning transfer as demonstrated in existing research abovementioned, it is worth investigating what can be done and whether there is instructional action occurring to prepare students. To refer back to James' (2010), one of their implications for future research suggests EAP instructors could have a role in preparing students for different kinds of transfer climate they may come across in target contexts. As they mention, instructors can (a) raise 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). It would be worthwhile to seek out EAP instructors' perceptions on ways to prepare students for the transfer climate, as they may suggest concrete ways to accomplish (a) and (b) from James' implications. Such concrete suggestions from EAP instructors can contribute to a new body of literature for other EAP practitioners to refer to.

In response to this body of research, it would be worthwhile to explore the EAP instructors' perceptions of the transfer climate for EAP skills, and whether there are ways

they think would prepare students to deal with potentially unsupportive transfer climates.

Therefore, this current study will be guided by the research questions:

1. In what ways do EAP instructors think transfer climates in discipline courses are (un)supportive?

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

## **Conclusion**

This chapter offered a number of important aspects with regards to the topic of this study. This chapter presented the key reasons for taking on this research topic. Among these reasons is my personal experience as an EAP instructor and my emerging research interests in learning transfer as a graduate student that led me to this topic. Also, given that the factor of the transfer climate is under researched in the EAP context and that it is a factor of EAP instruction that has not been investigated through EAP instructors' perceptions, this motivated me to pursue this topic. Additionally, this chapter also defined some key concepts for this study including: EAP, learning transfer, and transfer climate. To briefly offer the structure of this dissertation, the next chapter, chapter 2, will outline a review of the relevant literature, the way in which it overlaps with the current study, and the way in which it has limitations that this study aims to address. Chapter 3 will outline the methodology and research design of this current study. Chapter 4 will present the findings of this current study supported by excerpts of data. Finally, chapter 5 will outline a discussion of the findings.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will review literature relevant to the research questions of this study. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate what is already known in the literature relevant to this inquiry. To explain the scope of this literature review, this chapter will review relevant literature in the field of EAP education, and also workplace training research where relevant. Moreover, limitations of the relevant literature will also be outlined in this chapter. This chapter will also offer predictions of the research question answers based on existing research. This chapter is divided into two sections, one for each of the study's research questions.

#### **Section 1: In What Ways do EAP Instructors Think Transfer Climates are (Un)supportive?**

To date, no research has directly investigated how EAP instructors think transfer climates can be (un)supportive; however, research has produced findings that are relevant to this research question. This includes research that investigated challenges EAP students can face as they transition into discipline courses. Moreover, this also includes workplace training research that reflects ways in which target contexts can have a supportive transfer climate. None of the research reviewed in this chapter investigated EAP instructors' perceptions. That is, the studies in EAP focused on students' perceptions instead, and a few on discipline instructors' perceptions. When it comes to the studies in workplace training, they are in a context where there are no EAP instructors. Also, although the workplace training studies and the EAP study conducted by James (2010)

explicitly adopted the transfer climate construct, the rest of the studies focused on constructs other than transfer climate. Nonetheless, the findings reviewed in this chapter are helpful in making predictions about what the answer to the research question might be.

The first relevant finding is that EAP students can perceive a lack of opportunity to transfer EAP skills. Referring to an EAP education study in the university context by Leki and Carson (1994), their findings illustrate students facing a lack of opportunity to transfer due to facing different written language use in EAP courses and the discipline courses. In this study, the students were asked to rate how well they think the EAP course prepares them for discipline courses based on the challenges they face. To illustrate, among the findings, students expressed frustration at the difference between the writing they are assigned to do in EAP courses and the writing they are assigned to do in discipline courses in terms of difficulty level. EAP students expressed the need to be prepared for more complex writing assignments in discipline courses that involve the incorporation of multiple sources (p. 92). This mismatch in level of writing between the two contexts caused them to perceive a lack of opportunity to transfer what they do know from EAP courses. Moreover, in a longitudinal case study conducted by Harlkau (1994), they identified differences between the context of an EAP classroom and the context of discipline classes which can cause the challenge of a lack of opportunity to transfer EAP knowledge. Harlkau's (1994) study is a 3 and half year ethnography of EAP students and their experiences in a high school in the United states. They followed 4 Chinese ethnic immigrant students as they made the transition from EAP to discipline classes. Among the differences that were identified between the EAP classes and the discipline classes are

the difference in patterns of spoken and written language use in classrooms. As indicated in their findings, while EAP students experienced spoken language use that was adjusted to their proficiency level, the spoken input that they received from discipline high school classroom teachers was not as helpful and accommodating. This is because disciplinary high school classroom teachers did not adjust their input to the level of second language learners by for instance decreasing the speed and simplifying their speech, or by increasing repetition and pausing, or making abstract concepts more concrete. To add, it was also challenging for the EAP students to understand discipline teacher talk that included the use of puns or sarcasm. Similarly, lack of opportunity is suggested in a more recent EAP education study by James' (2010). In their study, they examined the construct of transfer climate in the EAP context. After conducting semi-structured interviews with 52 students, their study revealed that some students did face an unsupportive transfer climate due to lack of opportunities. For instance, some of the findings indicate a lack of opportunity for students to transfer EAP skills due to a difference in discipline type, or difference in course activities, or in course level. Students expressed that due to the discipline course being a different discipline from the EAP course, or having activities with less writing involved or a lower level of writing involved, this caused a lack of opportunity to transfer EAP skills.

There are also relevant findings from another area of research, on workplace training. Even though the context is different (i.e., workplaces rather than schools), this research is relevant because it involves learners (i.e., trainees) who are expected to transfer learning from a learning context (i.e., training program) to a target context (i.e., the workplace). Furthermore, transfer has been a common topic in research on workplace



training. Given that there is a sparsity of second language and EAP education research on how supportive discipline courses can be towards EAP transfer, I refer to relevant findings from workplace training studies which explicitly address the transfer climate construct.

Workplace training research has similarly shown that individuals can perceive opportunities to transfer learning. Workplace training research has revealed that employees can perceive a supportive transfer climate if it is structured with opportunities for them to apply knowledge from training. For one, a study by Lim and Johnson (2002) demonstrated that the provision of opportunities can also be conceptualized as a form of support. Their study examined trainees' perceptions of the factors that influence transfer of training to the workplace. The context was a training program on performance improvement technologies. The authors conducted 10 individual case studies in order to explore each trainee's individual pattern of training transfer. Their study involved the use of interviews, questionnaires, and the analysis of documents to determine the extent of perceived transfer of training and to explore the impact of various factors on transfer. The interview findings indicated that the primary reason for transfer of training was as trainees stated, 'opportunity to use their new learning on the job'. There were different ways this could occur, including for this workplace to have program planning discussions and program development towards providing more transfer opportunities.

The second relevant finding is that EAP students may perceive a lack of transfer support from discipline instructors towards EAP transfer. For example, Leki's (2006) study reported on interview responses from EAP students on their experiences in transitioning to discipline courses. Among the challenges that student participants

mentioned were ways in which discipline instructors do not provide support. For instance, one of the students mentioned struggling with their relationship with certain discipline instructors who, as they described, refused to offer valuable information in the courses that he struggled with. This student stated that a world business instructor had not provided information about what would be on an upcoming quiz. To provide another example, another student, described how they struggled with their relationship with certain discipline instructors because the student perceived that such instructors simply classify them as incompetent English speaker and do not make an effort to listen and understand their language use. To mention another relevant study, Leki (2001) conducted a longitudinal study following EAP students through their experiences with group work in discipline courses. Apart from conducting interviews with these students, Leki (2001) also conducted observations of the group work. Their findings reveal lack of support to transfer EAP skills from discipline instructors. To illustrate, in the cases where there were groups predominantly led by English native-speaking students (NS) the discipline instructors did not take initiative to provide a more substantial role for the non-native speaking (NNS) students to transfer their knowledge to the group work (p. 60). To clarify, NNS students do not speak English as their native language. Another study in which this challenge of discipline instructors' lack of support was evident was James (2010). James' findings indicate some students perceive discipline instructors' lack of support towards EAP transfer in a number of ways. For instance, some students perceived carelessness from discipline instructors with regards to the quality of their English language use, for instance, by making grammatical mistakes when using English in class. This can demonstrate a lack of support to transfer EAP skills because discipline

instructors' making such grammatical mistakes can give students the impression that quality language use is not valued or encouraged by the discipline instructor. Also, there were some students who perceived discipline instructors referring to academic writing in a negative way by stating that writing quality is not important for their discipline course assignments. Such statements from discipline instructors can demonstrate a lack of support towards EAP transfer as it shows they do not value academic writing in their course.

A related finding is that non-native speakers of English can perceive difficulty in studying disciplines through the medium of English. This reflects a lack of support from discipline instructors because it suggests that discipline instructors have expectations that are too high. That is, discipline instructors who lack awareness of the language and proficiency level of EAP students entering their course may set expectations too high in terms of language production. To clarify what is meant by this challenge is that English is not the main language these students are accustomed to using to study disciplines like history, science, and math. So, if the students have to study those disciplines in English, they often struggle with language-related issues such as grammar and vocabulary. In a study conducted by Evans and Green (2007) one of the major challenges the majority of EAP students faced in entering discipline courses taught in English was related to vocabulary. They conducted a large-scale survey study that was conducted with a total of 5000 students in Hong Kong from numerous departments of an English-medium university. The findings indicate that participants faced challenges when studying disciplines, such as history, science, and math, through the medium of English. To illustrate, the majority of student participants who took the questionnaire reported that the

skills they found most challenging were: Speaking accurately (grammatically) (58%), Understanding specialist vocabulary (53%), and Expressing ideas in correct English (47%). To add, in a study conducted by Gaffas (2019) their findings indicated EAP students experiencing challenges with identifying the meaning of unfamiliar terms in discipline courses. They examined students' perceptions of the impact of EAP courses on their language development and usage in discipline courses in Saudi Arabia. They used a questionnaire, adopted from Evans and Green (2007), and supplemented that with interviews and focus group discussions. A total of 105 participants completed the questionnaire, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 students, and four focus group discussions were conducted with 20 participants. The results indicate that recognizing the meanings of unfamiliar terms in discipline courses was the students' greatest difficulty that resulted in poor performance in all four English skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Therefore, this study's findings are another indication that non-native speakers of English can perceive difficulty in studying disciplines through the medium of English.

Workplace training research has similarly shown that transfer support from an authority figure can lead to a supportive transfer climate. To illustrate, at a workplace, a supervisor figure would be an authority figure similar to a discipline instructor with regards to the transfer of EAP skills. This is because similar to the discipline instructor, the supervisor at a workplace is the figure that learners are accountable to for their performance in the target context. Therefore, due to the authority of the discipline instructor and the workplace supervisor, they can have an influence on what students' and trainees' transfer to the target context. Workplace training research has revealed that a

work environment can have a supportive transfer climate depending on if there is supervisory support for the transfer of training to the workplace. To illustrate, there have been studies such as Tracey and Tannenbaum (1995) which examined particularly the role of supervisory support in the work environment on the transfer of training. Their study followed 505 supermarket managers through a training program followed by them being on the job. The managers completed questionnaires based on the transfer climate before and after training. Based on the analysis that was conducted, what seemed to have the strongest impact on transfer behavior post-training in the workplace, was the social support system in the workplace promoted by supervisors. One example of social support is when supervisors conduct a reflective activity with newly trained managers by meeting to discuss how they can apply what they are learning in training on the job.

The third relevant finding is that EAP students may perceive that peers in discipline courses do not support transfer from an EAP course. In referring back to James' (2010) study, one of the aspects of the transfer climate indicated in their data is to do with the discipline course peers' lack of support due to their attitudes towards using EAP skills. For example, EAP students mentioned perceiving negative attitudes from peers in discipline courses towards EAP skills, complaining that writing is not enjoyable. To add, some of the EAP students reported perceiving that their peers in the discipline course appeared careless with their language use and so this does not encourage them to make use of their EAP and language skills. Moreover, there have been EAP education studies such as LoCastro's (1997) with findings that reflect the impact of this challenge of lack of peer support. To offer some detail, LoCastro's (1997) interventionist study examined the transfer of second language pragmatics, of politeness markers to be more

precise, from a university intensive English language institute speaking class. As part of the intervention, students were taught the speech acts of how to seek out opinions and how to offer suggestions. Pre-test and post-test recordings were conducted of the speaking class discussions and the reading class discussion after that. The findings of this study revealed that the learning transfer to the reading class discussion was limited partly due to their peers' lack of expectation for politeness in the group discussion (p. 94). Lack of expectation from peers, towards the use of speech acts for instance, is considered one aspect of what makes a transfer climate unsupportive. To add, the study conducted by Leki (2001) reported on challenges that non-native English speaking students faced caused by their peers in group work of certain disciplines courses. Their findings indicate that the student participants were not able to take advantage of opportunities in the group work to transfer their group work skills due to lack of support from their peers. Although the purpose of such assignments is for students to complete the work in a group, the peers decided that the work is split up and allocated to members individually. This indicates a lack of support because peers took away the opportunity for the students to transfer their group work skills. Moreover, their findings also indicated some students not being able to contribute enough to group work, in other words, transfer their knowledge to the group project, due to being considered as novices by their peers. Their peers gave themselves the role of the expert of the group and viewed the other group members as novices who cannot contribute as much as them (p. 60).

Workplace training research has similarly shown that transfer support from peers can lead to a supportive transfer climate. The peers of a training in a workplace are the equivalent of students' peers in a discipline course. There is similarity because some peers

in both contexts may have been learners who have gone through a learning context (whether that be a trainee program or an EAP course), and transition to a target context (whether that be a workplace or a discipline course) where they are expected to transfer what they previously learnt. Workplace training research revealed that a work environment can have a supportive transfer climate depending on if there is peer support to transfer from training. To offer an example, Martin's (2010) study examined the relationship between workplace transfer climate and peer support on the transfer of learning from a training program for managers of a manufacturing company. The procedure involved collecting supervisor ratings of trainee performance on several skill dimensions before and after training. Findings revealed that trainees in a division with a more supportive climate due to greater peer support showed greater improvement. Martin (2010) refers to peer support manifesting in a number of ways such as enhanced learning transfers through the feedback, encouragement, problem-solving assistance, and coaching assistance provided to trainees from their peers (p. 90). Additionally, in Gilpin-Jackson and Bushe's (2007) study, it was pointed out that support from peers is important in promoting transfer and may have a stronger impact on trainee transfer than supervisory support. To provide details, in their study, Gilpin-Jackson and Bushe's (2007) conducted interviews with 20 trainees who were taking part in a leadership development program. The intention of the program was to increase self-awareness, encourage personal growth, and provide skills for increasing organizational learning (p. 986). There were also interviews conducted with 20 peers observing this program. Informed observers were individuals who had worked long enough with the trainees, both before and after the training program, to be able to observe anything that changes in how they conduct their

work. This is a form of triangulation that allows for the research findings to be corroborated. In the interviews, trainees stressed the point that being around other trainees increased their motivation to transfer and also created a space for peer support, the development of mentoring relationships and the fostering of an open and safe environment to share the common language of the training program (p.994).

To summarize, based on the research findings reviewed in this section, it might be predicted that EAP instructors who are asked to evaluate their students' transfer climate might refer to the following:

1. Discipline course opportunities to transfer learning.
2. Support for transfer from discipline course instructors.
3. Support for transfer from discipline course peers.

However, none of the studies reviewed in this section focused on EAP instructors' perspectives. More specifically, some of these studies focused on the perspectives of EAP students rather than instructors (Leki and Carson, 1994; Harlkau, 1994; James, 2010; Evans & Green; 2007; Gaffas, 2019; Leki, 2006; LoCastro, 1997), and other studies focused on workplace training rather than EAP education (Lim & Johnson, 2002; Tracey & Tannenbaum, 1995; Gilpin-Jackson & Bushe, 2007; Martin, 2010). Therefore, the answer to this study's first research question is still uncertain.

## **Section 2: What do EAP Instructors Think can be Done to Prepare Students for an Unsupportive Transfer Climate?**

To date, no research has directly investigated what EAP instructors' perceptions are of what can be done to prepare students for the transfer climate; however, there are relevant findings in existing research. Among the relevant findings are steps that can be



taken within EAP courses to prepare students to transfer from EAP courses. Such findings are relevant to the inquiry of the second research question because they involve the initial step towards preparing students for the transfer climate, preparing students to transfer. Nonetheless, the missing elements to these existing studies is consideration of students having to transfer EAP knowledge in a potentially unsupportive transfer climate, as well as what EAP instructors think can be done about this. Apart from the possibility of steps being taken within EAP courses to prepare students for the transfer climate, given that the transfer climate in this context concerns discipline courses, EAP instructors may suggest steps being taken within disciplinary programs. After the section that reviews studies based on steps that can be taken within EAP courses, there will be a section reviewing studies relevant to steps that can be taken within discipline courses.

The first step for promoting EAP transfer that research has pointed to involves implementing the techniques of bridging and hugging in EAP courses. As mentioned in the previous chapter, bridging and hugging are techniques proposed by Perkins and Salomon (1992) to promote learning transfer. For instance, hugging would involve making the coursework resemble what students would encounter in discipline courses. On the other hand, the technique of bridging involves encouraging students to make learned knowledge abstract to apply it to different contexts, and this can be more challenging for the learner than applying knowledge between contexts that are similar. Therefore, it may require EAP instructor encouragement in the learning context. Fogarty, Perkins, and Barrell (1992) propose a model that builds on Perkins and Salomon's (1988) bridging and hugging framework but offers more detailed suggestions of how to use these teaching strategies. Their model consists of 3 components, the first component is that the

instructor finds skills and knowledge to teach that are transferable. The second component is to apply the bridging and hugging techniques. For hugging these techniques include modeling, the use of roleplay and simulation of the target context. In terms of the techniques that fall under bridging, they involve encouraging students towards metacognition and inferential reasoning. This would involve encouraging students to reflect on their thinking when completing an assigned task, and to help them find analogies for the things they learn. The third is identifying the context where such skills and knowledge can be transferred, and assessing that transfer. Also, with regard to relevant empirical research, Green (2015) carried out a survey study with EAP students in a course where hugging and bridging techniques were incorporated. From the survey findings, it was revealed that students perceived these techniques were incorporated into the course, and the findings also revealed there to be reports of learning transfer. Therefore, the findings revealed that there was a correlation between the learning transfer and perception of these techniques. To recall another empirical study, Yayli (2011) revealed the way in which EAP students become engaged in abstraction through genre awareness from an EAP course that implemented a genre- based approach. Yayli (2011) gathered data from the EAP students' annotations, and interviews data. The data revealed that EAP students had genre awareness and they recontextualized their genre awareness in new writing tasks. This is an indication of making their existing genre awareness abstract in order to use it in other writing tasks.

The second step for promoting EAP transfer that research has pointed to involves implementing an English for specific academic purposes (ESAP) approach. There has been a body of research arguing for the use of an ESAP approach for the instruction of

EAP courses (Hyland, 2002; Wardle, 2009; Flowerdew, 2016; Hill, Khoo, Hsieh, 2020). An ESAP approach is based on focusing on the academic English students need for specific disciplines or fields. As explained by Hill et. at. (2020), the underlying rationale behind these studies' emphasis on an ESAP approach to instruction is that specific skills will transfer more easily (p. 3). For instance, part of Hill et. al.'s (2020) findings illustrate this point. In this study, they examine the learning transfer of a group of engineering students in an ESAP course with the use of interviews and analysis of their writing assignments. The findings indicate learning transfer occurring from the learning in the ESAP course for the engineering students to an engineering course in the writing assignments of lab reports and log sheets. Four learning outcomes transferred to all assignments over a year. These were learning outcomes of qualifiers, technical descriptions, cohesion, and avoid common language errors.

The third step for promoting EAP transfer that research has pointed to involves implementing dynamic assessment. As operationalized by Shrestha (2017), dynamic assessment involves EAP instructors providing hints during assessment tasks to guide learners. (p. 45). This guidance involved in dynamic assessment can range from implicit hints to direct correct solutions. For instance, an implicit hint from the EAP instructor would involve clarifying a task, locating part of a text needing improvement, asking to consider a possible solution. On the other hand, an explicit hint would involve providing the correct solution. To illustrate, in the context of EAP, the assessment of students' academic writing can be conducted with dynamic assessment in student-teacher conferences with a process of negotiation and guidance on the part of the instructor in order to guide students to understanding. A recent TFT study by Shrestha (2017)

investigates the learning transfer of genre features and conceptual knowledge from an EAP course to business studies. They consider the potential of dynamic assessment in the EAP course. Their findings indicate that dynamic assessment contributed to learning transfer in that all the participants had a positive reaction to the approach and felt they achieved greatly. Participants mentioned that the guidance from instructors helped them to focus on what needed to be further developed in their writing. Such research contributing to EAP education makes mention of the importance of connection-making from the guidance of the EAP instructor to promote students' transfer of EAP skills.

The fourth step for promoting EAP transfer that research has pointed to involves implementing genre-based instruction within EAP courses. One of the earlier books published on implementing genre-based instruction for L2 teaching is Swales' (1990) 'Genre analysis: English in Academic and research settings'. They investigate genre-based instruction as an effective approach for second language teaching in the academic setting, such as universities. Their investigation involves developing a model that aids in better understanding academic writing. One of their main conclusions is that in order to know if this approach would be effective is if skills learnt about a specific genre, such as report writing for instance, are transferable to another genre of writing. Swales (1990) stresses the importance that instructional approaches promote learning transfer in order to be considered valid and successful. This topic was investigated empirically by Cheng (2007), who explored a student's learning transfer after their exposure to genre-based instruction in an EAP course. Cheng (2007) analyzed three introductions, annotations, and interview transcripts with a Chinese-speaking graduate student in electrical engineering in an English-medium university. Their findings indicate that the student was

able to transfer some previously learnt generic features from the EAP course into their own writing. Also, another relevant empirical study was conducted by Yayli (2011), which investigates the viability of using multi-genre portfolios in genre-based EAP writing instruction. Data was analyzed from a student's writing of three versions of a research article introduction, the students' annotations of those introductions, an interview related to this particular assignment, and a literacy narrative written by this student. Some of Yayli's (2011) findings were similar to that of Cheng (2007), that students were able to transfer their genre awareness to their own writing. Therefore, based on the findings of these studies, there appears to be evidence of learning transfer from the application of genre-based instruction.

The fifth step for promoting EAP transfer that research has pointed to involves implementing a writing in the disciplines (WID) approach within EAP courses. Leopold's (2011) case study based on an EAP course examines the viability of a WID approach involving the EAP course being linked to a policy-analysis course, which is a discipline course. What is meant by WID, is that there is collaboration between the instructor of an EAP course and the instructor of a discipline course in teaching students to write for this particular discipline. In this case study, the researcher considered students' learning outcomes and learning transfer to their discipline class as indicators of the effectiveness of the WID approach to writing instruction. During the last EAP class, students completed a survey that sought their perception of their learning outcomes and learning transfer from the EAP course to the policy course. Also, the researcher analyzed students' writing assignments from the policy course to assess their learning transfer. Their

findings describe positive learning outcomes from the EAP course and learning transfer occurring to the policy-analysis course.

The sixth step for promoting EAP transfer that research has pointed to involves implementing the framework of adaptive transfer to the instruction in EAP courses. Depalma and Ringer's (2011) framework of adaptive transfer argues that merely viewing learning transfer as the reuse of learnt EAP knowledge is a conceptualization that is too narrow. They argue that the conceptualization should include the adapting or reshaping of learnt knowledge depending on the demands of the future contexts students encounter. Adaptive transfer was proposed by Depalma and Ringer (2011), and they define it as the conscious or intuitive process of applying or reshaping learned writing knowledge in new and potentially unfamiliar writing situations. To illustrate, in a study conducted by Wilson and Soblo (2020), they examine the way in which multilingual students engage in adaptive transfer in an EAP course. They conducted a textual analysis of rough and final drafts of an assigned secondary source essay. They also conducted qualitative interviews with six of the students whose essays were collected. The interview questions were based on what emerged from the textual analysis. Among the findings were instances of adaptive transfer that occurred due to particular audiences to whom students chose to target in their essays. For instance, there was a student who adapted the rhetorical techniques taught in the EAP course in order to better cater to the audience he was targeting (p. 9).

The seventh step for promoting EAP transfer that research has pointed to involves allowing a longer period of time in order for EAP transfer to occur. In other words, EAP students may be in need of more practice, more exposure to EAP skills, and examples of

their use before being expected to successfully transfer such skills to discipline courses. One of the reasons why learning transfer research has indicated that learning transfer is difficult to achieve is because it typically has not been observed for a long enough period of time. Therefore, where learning transfer is observed to occur over a long period of time it demonstrates the way in which such transferred skills have become an ingrained habit for the learner. To illustrate, in Haskell's (2001) framework of principles of transfer, they point out the importance of giving learning transfer time to occur. One of their 11 principles states the importance of allowing significant learning transfer time to incubate (p. 46). Hill et. al. (2020) pointed out that a limitation of previous studies has been their short length, and so they followed the longitudinal approach of a few studies (James, 2006; James, 2010b; Zarei & Rahimi, 2014).

Besides findings that point to steps that can be taken within EAP courses to prepare students to transfer, there are also steps that can be taken in discipline courses to help students transfer learning into those courses. These relevant findings include different steps on how discipline courses/instructors can contribute in preparing students to transfer EAP skills. Some of these steps involve ways in which discipline courses can better cater to students' transfer of EAP skills by incorporating certain assignments and tasks involving EAP skills and genres. Other steps involve discipline instructors' reflection on a number of aspects related to their courses' support towards EAP skills, and their courses' role and responsibility towards EAP transfer. Such findings are relevant because they draw attention to discipline instructors/courses and the kind of role or influence they can have on students' transfer of EAP skills. However, similar to the studies reviewed in the previous section on steps taken within EAP courses, these studies

do not fully answer research question 2 because they address preparing or aiding students to transfer and not preparing students for the transfer climate. Also, none of the studies reviewed in this section address the EAP instructor perspective on this issue.

First, research has shown that one step discipline instructors can take is to provide explicit guidance. Students need such guidance in order to realize connections between the learning and target context and this can lead them to transfer EAP skills. One way researchers have demonstrated this is by providing students with explicit hints. There has been research in EAP education that has touched upon the use of explicit hints to promote the transfer of writing skills. To illustrate, this study conducted by Shepherd (2018) suggests that students may not see digital writing as related to academic writing until they are hinted to make connections. By means of interviews and a questionnaire, Shepherd (2018) examined learners' perceptions to see if they perceive connections between their existing repertoire of digital writing knowledge and writing in their EAP course. The interview data suggests that it is not difficult to get students to make those connections. That is, by asking, essentially hinting, the interviewees *how* those spaces of digital writing and academic writing may be connected, this prompted students to make connections.

Second, research has shown that one step discipline instructors can take is to provide opportunities in their course for students to apply EAP skills. What is meant by providing opportunities in discipline courses, is for there to be chances for students to apply their EAP knowledge through classroom tasks, or course assignments such as term papers or quizzes. In James' (2006) they identify factors that affect learning transfer, and one of the factors is opportunities to transfer learning. Their study examined whether transfer occurs



between an EAP course and discipline courses, and what factors seem to impact that transfer. For instance, an example from their findings illustrates the way a student in a chemical engineering course perceived an opportunity to transfer from their EAP course since this particular engineering course required more reading and writing than the other discipline courses they took. To add to this point above, a study by Jackson, Meyer, and Parkinson's (2006) investigates the kinds of reading and writing assigned in discipline courses which can provide opportunities for EAP transfer. The extent to which EAP skills are fostered could vary depending on the type of discipline course in question. Jackson et. al. (2006) conducted a survey study to investigate the reading and writing assigned to undergraduate science students. A total of 47 discipline instructors participated in a questionnaire, and they represented 14 disciplines, among which are: (Biochemistry, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Geography, Geology). The findings indicate that between three and four pieces of writing on average are expected of students per semester. When it comes to reading, the textbook is predominantly the source of reading. These findings demonstrate a number of opportunities for students to transfer EAP skills, such as reading skills for the textbook chapters assigned, and the three to four pieces of writing assigned to students per semester are also opportunities for EAP transfer.

Third, research has shown that another step involves a discipline course integrating writing genres and writing practices. Such incorporation of writing genres and practices can give students opportunities to transfer their EAP skills. The following studies in this paragraph have been used as examples of this step from a body of research based on integrating different kinds of writing in a range of discipline courses. For instance, when it comes to incorporation of note-taking in a discipline course, this has similarities to

reflection writing which may be a writing practice assigned in EAP courses. Also, in considering disciplinary genres such as lab reports, they have similarities in structure to prototypical research papers, which are typically assigned in EAP courses. To illustrate, Moskovitz and Kellog (2011) propose using a three-step approach to integrate scientific writing in lab courses. The steps of the approach are as follows: firstly, students practice in authentic forms of scientific writing. Moskovitz and Kellog (2011) mention that instructors can consider a range of scientific genres depending on the type and level of the lab course. They can simply assign a methods paper if students are designing an experiment, or instructors can assign introductions to more advanced lab students who are taking on original research. Second, writing tasks must be aligned with the situation of the students depending on their current level. Therefore, Moskovitz and Kellog (2011) mention that instructors can focus on only parts of a specific scientific genre to match the students' current situation in the lab in terms of what year they are in. And third, the authors suggest creating a communication scenario so that students have an authentic audience. This can involve students as apprentice scientists and instructors as scientific readers. Stanley and Lewandowski (2018) propose salient features of scientific note taking or scientific documentation which were suggested by physics researchers. As mentioned above, students can perceive such note taking as similar to annotation or reflective writing they practice in EAP courses. To elaborate on this study, Stanley and Lewandowski (2018) interview physics researchers and obtain suggestions of salient features of scientific documentation. The interviewees were with a total of 13 physics researchers. They then suggest how such features can be integrated in the lab course curriculum at their institution. Based on the interview data, the authors recommended the

following principles to guide effective documentation: (1) to convey context in one's entries, (2) to be aware of the audience of the entry, and (3) to take into consideration of how long the recorded information will be used (p. 52).

Fourth, research has shown that one step discipline instructors can take is to provide written feedback on assignments involving EAP skills such as writing. There have been studies that examine discipline instructors' perceptions on providing feedback for written assignments and the value they place on such feedback. To clarify what is meant by the value of feedback, such research examined what importance discipline instructors place on the feedback they provide for written assignments. Gaining discipline instructors' perceptions on how they value written feedback is relevant to the transfer climate component of discipline instructor support. For instance, Knight, Greenberger, and McNaughton (2021) conducted a survey study that examined what value and purpose discipline instructors place on written feedback on writing assignments. In their study, 271 instructors (from three colleges: business, education, humanities and social sciences) agreed to participate in an online survey. When it comes to their findings, nearly half of the instructors valued the use of written feedback on written assignments as a means of cultivating future improvements of the writing skills students used. This means cultivating and preparing students to transfer those same writing skills to future discipline courses and assignments. Also, when it comes to findings across disciplines, identifying specific errors seemed to be the importance of making comments in the margins specifically. Therefore, discipline instructors' written feedback can provide students with support and guidance for improving their writing for transfer to writing assignments of future discipline courses.

Fifth, research has shown that another step can involve discipline instructors' reflecting on ways their courses can have an unsupportive transfer climate towards EAP transfer. There are a number of aspects of the transfer climate that discipline instructors can reflect on and may perceive as unsupportive. These aspects include a lack of opportunities for transfer of EAP skills, a lack of support from discipline instructors or peers towards EAP transfer. Referring back to Nelms and Dively's (2007) study, their findings illustrate discipline instructors perceiving unsupportive aspects of the transfer climate of EAP transfer. By means of a focus group, they investigate the perception of discipline instructors towards students' transfer of EAP skills to discipline courses. Based on discipline instructors' reflection in the focus group discussion, findings indicate they were able to perceive some things about their courses that may cause lack of support for students to be able to transfer EAP skills. For one, some of the discipline instructors pointed out how some discipline courses may not have any writing assignments, and this can cause a lack of opportunity for the transfer of EAP skills. Secondly, discipline instructors also drew attention to discipline courses' prioritization of content instruction. That is, discipline instructors admit that they are pressured to cover the content-related requirements, and this can prevent them from offering students support through EAP guidance and exercises that they are in need of. Similarly, in a study conducted by Leki (2006), discipline instructors who were interviewed perceived some unsupportive aspects of the transfer climate based on the situation of former EAP students in their courses. Their study sought discipline instructors' perspectives on students' transition from EAP courses to the disciplines, particularly on any challenges they felt L2 students in their courses faced. For example, among the discipline instructor responses, a history

instructor confessed in the interview that there are instances during his lecture where he knew that L2 students could not follow his lecture but presumed that they could get the vital information needed from the textbook. The participant reflected on this as an example of a challenge that students may face in his course, more specifically, lack of support from a discipline instructor.

Sixth, research has shown that another step can involve discipline instructors' reflecting on what their role is towards EAP skills and EAP transfer. To illustrate, the way in which this step is relevant is that it draws attention to what part discipline instructors can have towards EAP transfer, and this point can be extended to their role and responsibility towards the transfer climate, since it is a factor that impacts whether or not EAP transfer occurs. For instance, there have been studies such as Zhu (2004) which investigate the perceptions of discipline instructors on the instruction of writing, and where the responsibility for writing instruction lies. Zhu (2004) conducted 10 qualitative interviews with business and engineering discipline instructors. Overall, the findings revealed that there were two different views among these discipline instructors. On one hand, there were those who perceived that academic writing consists of making use of general academic skills and writing instruction would most effectively be provided by writing/language instructors. On the other hand, there were others who recognized that academic writing can differ depending on the writing of various disciplines. These discipline instructors recognized that there is a role for both them and language writing instructors when it comes to academic writing instruction. Discipline instructors who believed they had a role mentioned a number of different aspects of writing instruction that they had a role in. For instance, one engineering professor mentioned that he

believed discipline instructors' role in academic writing is more important than that of language instructors because he thinks that discipline instructors should have a good understanding of the writing that students are expected to do when entering their field of profession. In contrast, there were other discipline instructors who believed they have a role towards writing instruction to a lower capacity by for instance pointing out issues in students' writing assignments when needed, but not actively taking initiative to explain writing expectations. Therefore, in reflecting on their role and responsibility towards EAP skills, discipline instructors may realize that they have a major role, and in turn they can develop their courses or their instructional approach to properly fulfill this role. This would in turn create a more supportive transfer climate for EAP transfer. Similarly, in their article, Spack (1988) argued that discipline instructors should have the role of teaching students how to write genres of particular disciplines. Their article reviewed studies of writing programs where students learnt how to write for different disciplines. They conclude that EAP instructors should focus on the instruction of general principles of writing while discipline instructors should be solely responsible for disciplinary writing.

To summarize, based on the research findings reviewed in this section, we might predict that EAP instructors who are asked what can be done to prepare students for unsupportive transfer climates might refer to the following seven steps that could be taken within an EAP course:

1. Implementing the techniques of bridging and hugging.
2. Implementing an English for specific academic purposes (ESAP) approach.
3. Implementing dynamic assessment.

4. Implementing a genre based instruction approach.
5. Implementing a WID approach.
6. Implementing the adaptive transfer framework.
7. Allowing a longer period for EAP transfer to occur.

Furthermore, the instructors might refer to the following six steps that could be taken in discipline courses:

1. Providing students with explicit guidance.
2. Providing students with opportunities to transfer EAP skills.
3. Integrating writing genres and writing practices.
4. Providing feedback to written assignments.
5. Reflecting on the ways their course contributes to transfer climate.
6. Reflecting on their own responsibility for promoting transfer into their course.

However, none of the studies reviewed in this section focused on EAP instructors' perspectives. More specifically, some of these studies focused on the perspectives of EAP students (Green, 2015; Swales, 1990; Yayli, 2011; Hill, Khoo, & Hsieh, 2020; Shrestha, 2017; Cheng, 2007; Leopold, 2011; Wilson & Soblo, 2020; James, 2006; James, 2010b; Zarei & Rahimi, 2014), and other studies focused on the perspectives of discipline instructors (Huang, 2018; Jackson, Meyer, & Parkinson, 2006; Knight, Greenberger, and McNaughton, 2021; Leki, 2006; Moskovitz and Kellog, 2011; Stanley and Lewandowski, 2018; Zhu, 2004). Moreover, the studies reviewed in this section focus on ways to prepare students to transfer EAP skills but do not have consideration that students may

have to transfer in potentially unsupportive transfer climates. Therefore, the answer to this study's second research question is still uncertain.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter concludes with a table below outlining predictions based on the relevant findings reviewed. The predictions are possible answers to this study's research questions. It is possible the findings of this study will reveal points similar to those outlined in the table and it is also possible that the findings will reveal points that are new. In other words, it is possible that the findings of this current study will align with the findings of existing research, or that the findings will contrast existing findings. It is also possible that the findings will expand on existing findings.



**Table 1**

*Predictions of Research Question 1 & 2 Answers*

Research Question	Possible Answers
In what ways do EAP instructors think transfer climates in discipline courses are (un)supportive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● EAP instructors think the transfer climate can be (un)supportive in terms of:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ opportunities to transfer learning;</li><li>○ support for transfer from discipline course instructors;</li><li>○ support for transfer from discipline course peers</li></ul></li></ul>
What do EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● EAP instructors think that they can:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Use hugging and bridging techniques;</li><li>○ Use an ESAP approach;</li><li>○ Use genre-based instruction;</li><li>○ Use dynamic assessment;</li><li>○ Use a WID approach;</li><li>○ Use the adaptive transfer framework;</li><li>○ Allow a longer period of time for EAP transfer</li></ul></li><li>● EAP instructors think that discipline instructors can:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Provide students with explicit guidance;</li><li>○ Provide students with opportunities to transfer EAP skills</li><li>○ Integrate writing genres and writing practices.</li><li>○ Provide feedback to written assignments.</li><li>○ Reflect on ways their courses can have an unsupportive transfer climate towards EAP transfer.</li><li>○ Reflect on what level of responsibility their discipline courses have towards EAP transfer.</li></ul></li></ul>

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methodology used to investigate the research questions of this current study. This chapter commences with details of the research design which consists of outlining details of the research setting, participants and their recruitment, developing the research instruments, the data collection procedure, and the measures taken to ensure quality of the chosen instruments. Finally, I provide details of the analytic procedures as well as steps taken to ensure the validity and reliability of data collection and analysis procedures.

#### **Research Design**

As a reminder, this study's research questions ask the following:

1. In what ways do EAP instructors think transfer climates in discipline courses are (un)supportive?
2. What do EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate?

This current study followed a qualitative methodology in order to address the research questions. The way in which I interpret qualitative research in this current study is through the lens of phenomenology. Phenomenology is the examination of phenomena from the perspective of those experiencing the observable fact of the real world in which researchers identify the 'essence of human experiences' concerning a phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2003). When it comes to the qualitative methodology for research,

the basic goal is to get to the bottom of what is going on in all aspects of social behavior (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015. p.50). Such investigation with qualitative research typically occurs within particular social environments such as schools or hospitals, which are treated as cultures of activity, and pose basic questions to do with rules of interaction or modes of organization. For instance, in the case of this study, it is qualitative research in the English as a foreign language university setting which poses questions about examining modes of organization to do with the transfer climate and whether it is supportive or unsupportive for the transfer of EAP skills. Within applied linguistics, qualitative research is more recently being applied to a diverse range of linguistic situations such as language and the law or language use in medical settings, or language instruction (Holliday, 2006). In the case of this current study, a qualitative methodology is being used to investigate EAP instructors' perceptions of the transfer climate. This qualitative methodology is also related to language instruction in that it examines whether the instructors think their courses prepare students for the transfer climate.

A qualitative methodology is suitable for these research questions for multiple reasons. Qualitative research is suitable to collect data in the form of spoken or written accounts. To illustrate, when it comes to this current study, the type of data collected are spoken accounts, seeing as the research questions probe the perceptions of EAP instructors. The desired result of qualitative research is to obtain a thick description which is an account of what has been found from the data that shows the full complexity and depth of what is going on in the context of concern (Paltridge & Phakiti, 2015, p. 51). In the case of this study, the desired result is a thick description of what goes on in the transfer climate of the EAP context. Given that spoken accounts was the data collection

of choice and that the research questions of this current study are open-ended in nature, they are suitable for aiming to obtain a thick description of data. Moreover, a qualitative methodology is suitable because the research questions require explanation from participants, since it is asking, from the EAP instructor perspective, for ways in which the transfer climate may seem supportive or unsupportive, and ways to prepare students for the transfer climate. For instance, rather than a closed-ended approach to the research questions of asking whether the transfer climate of discipline courses is (un)supportive in particular ways, there is space for explanations of multiple possibilities. To further elaborate on this point, the research questions are open-ended in a sense that they ask for responses from participants where they can provide explanations based on their own individual experiences. In other words, one participant may explain a way in which the transfer climate is supportive that is different from another participant. As Corbin & Strauss (2015) put it, a qualitative research methodology is suitable because it allows the researcher to explore the inner experiences of participants (p. 5). This is a relevant goal, exploring the inner experiences of participants, seeing as this study is an examination of EAP instructor perceptions. Additionally, 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). Therefore, this is another reason a qualitative methodology is suitable, since this current study inquires into the meaning EAP instructors ascribe to transfer climate in terms of its impact on the transfer from EAP courses. That is, EAP instructors may perceive the transfer climate as meaningful in terms of having a significant impact in EAP transfer.

Nonetheless, there can be challenges that come with implementing a qualitative methodology. Seeing as the research questions of this current study are open-ended in nature, they allow space for explanations of how individual EAP instructors interpret the transfer climate. Obtaining this kind of data can be a challenge to manage and to analyze due to multiple possibilities emerging from different EAP instructors. Therefore, qualitative data collection and analysis can prove to be challenging due to the inherent messiness of the data. Unlike quantitative data analysis, qualitative data analysis needs to be an iterative process in order for the researcher to get a grasp of themes within the messy nature of the data.

### **Research Setting**

This research setting of this study is the university EAP context in Kuwait. Before choosing the context of this study, I took multiple factors into account. First off, when it comes to the country where this study took place, Kuwait, I considered the best chances in terms of participant recruitment and data collection. As the researcher, I either had the option of recruiting EAP instructors at Arizona State University, where I am a doctoral candidate, or the option of recruiting EAP instructors from institutions I had affiliation with in Kuwait. Given that I had not worked with EAP instructors at Arizona State University, I decided to opt for the latter option. I am affiliated with one university in Kuwait, and have contacts in others. Moreover, in considering recent reviews of research relevant to this current inquiry, such as the research timeline on learning transfer research by James (2018), and the analysis of empirical research in second language writing by Riazi, Shi, and Haggerty (2018), there is clearly a sparsity of empirical research coming from the post-secondary education context in the Middle East. Therefore, choosing to

conduct data collection in Kuwait would address this sparsity. The data was collected from three institutions in order to guarantee a sufficient amount of participants and data. The first and second institutions are private, English-medium universities based on an American university model, and affiliated with universities in the United States. The third institution is a predominantly English-medium public university, and participants invited from this institution were from select colleges that have English-medium instruction, as opposed to Arabic-medium instruction.

The EAP courses offered at all the institutions involved in this study are similar overall. In these institutions, EAP courses mainly consist of composition training in the fundamentals of academic writing and research writing in English. The EAP courses at the institutions consist of 3 levels. For instance, at one of the private institutions, there are the courses English 100, 110, and 112. Depending on the students' scores in a placement test, they are placed in one of these courses. For instance, if they are placed in English 100, the most basic course, they are required to complete EAP courses of all levels. However, if they score relatively high, they place in English 110 and will have to complete English 112 afterwards too, and if they do very well in the placement test, they place in English 112 and will only be required to take that course. To elaborate, English 100 is the course of the lowest level for students who need to polish their reading and writing skills, and need to improve their use of grammar and vocabulary. Next, English 110 is at a slightly more advanced level. This course exposes students to research-based writing and a number of other writing genres. This course takes the students through the relationship between ideas, the structure of a paragraph, paraphrasing, summarizing, documenting evidence and referencing. Finally, with English 112, it is assumed that

students reached a level where they already have the basic writing skills and that they are able to write research papers.

### **Participants and Recruitment**

I invited EAP instructors from the three institutions above to be participants in this study. In terms of the recruitment process, I first used the contacts that I had and emailed heads of the English departments at one of the private universities and at the public university, requesting that I recruit from their department. After obtaining IRB approval from the Arizona State University institutional review board, I was granted access by the department heads to conduct my study and invite faculty to participate with the use of a recruitment email. Second, when I already recruited participants from the first two institutions, I then used a snowball sampling technique for further recruitment. To clarify, snowball sampling means that I asked participants from the first two institutions if they had colleagues at additional institutions who might be willing to participate. All participants from all institutions received a recruitment email from me and consented to take part with a response email.

There were a number of reasons why I chose the method of email for recruitment. In considering the targeted participants for this study, EAP instructors, email is the form of communication they most use for their profession. Also, given that this research seeks to recruit professional employees rather than students for instance, an institutional email would be more appropriate than recruitment through a social media post. Also, compared to a social media post, an email would allow the researcher to directly address the invitation to individuals.

The recruitment email was carefully formulated in order to ethically obtain as many participants as possible. For one, the recruitment email complied with the ASU IRB standards. For instance, in order to demonstrate the ethical standards of this study, I mention in the email that participation is completely voluntary and that participants can change their mind at any point during the interviews. The email also mentions that participants can identify what online platform they are most comfortable using for the interview. In order to respect the recipients' privacy, I mention that if they would like to participate but do not want to be audio-recorded during the online interview, I can write their responses on a note-pad instead. Also, the recruitment email was made clear and transparent. That is, I explain where the study is coming from by introducing myself, the researcher, and what institution I am affiliated with. Also, for the sake of clarity, I provide a layman description of my study. For instance, I described that the study involves examining whether EAP courses prepare students to use EAP skills in discipline courses. The technical terms of 'learning transfer' and 'transfer climate' were not used in the description. Moreover, I offered information of what the participation would consist of, taking part in a single interview that would take around 30 minutes.

With regards to the number of participants, I aimed to recruit a minimum of 20 participants. This was the aim in order to ensure the analysis of data would reach the point of stability in code definitions. When it comes to existing studies on deciding the sample sizes for qualitative research, they mention different factors that determine this. For instance, the sample size that Kuzel's (1992) recommends is based on the extent of sample heterogeneity and research objectives. They recommended six to eight interviews for a homogeneous sample and twelve to twenty data sources when looking for



disconfirming evidence or trying to achieve heterogeneity. The reason why it is important to know what sample size to use is to ensure that data saturation will be reached. As defined by Guest, Bruce, and Johnson (2006) data saturation is the point in data collection and analysis when new information produces little or no change to the codebook or to the interpretation (p. 65). In their study Guest et. al. (2006) attempted to provide a yardstick where data saturation is likely to occur. Guest et. al. (2006) use data from a study involving sixty in-depth interviews with women in two West African countries, and the authors systematically document the degree of data saturation over the course of thematic analysis. Based on their analysis, they state that data saturation had for the most part occurred by the time they had analyzed twelve interviews. They mention that at this point code definitions were also fairly stable after the second round of analysis. When it comes to this current study, after sending out emails to a total number of 36 EAP instructors, 22 of them agreed to participate. Therefore, with a total of 22 participants in this current interview study, it is safe to assume that saturation was reached. This is slightly above the minimum number of participants I aimed for. A total of 12 EAP instructors were invited from the first private university, and 7 of them participated. A total of 10 EAP instructors were invited from the public university, and 6 of them participated. A total of 14 EAP instructors were invited from the second private university, and 9 of them participated.

With regards to the demographic details, the participants varied in terms of their sex, teacher 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 in terms of length and the kinds of courses they

have taught. For instance, some participants have had around 20 years of teaching experience while others have had around 3 years of teaching experience. All the participants are qualified to teach EAP courses and have had teacher training for such courses. However, there were a total of 5 participants who were also trained in a particular discipline. Therefore, in terms of the participants' current teaching, all 22 participants currently teach EAP courses, and 5 out of these participants also teach disciplinary courses in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, traditional linguistics, and business.

### **Data Collection**

There were a number of factors that I considered before making a final decision on the data collection method. For one, an important factor that I considered was how I could best address the research questions and what methods would help me obtain the data I was seeking out. To elaborate, given that this study seeks out EAP instructor's perceptions, survey methods would be more appropriate than observation, or an analysis of course material. For instance, survey methods include questionnaires or interviews. In a summary of twenty recent empirical studies based on second language teacher beliefs on a wide range of issues, the majority of these studies used interviews as the data collection method (Paltridge & Phatiki, 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 of such kinds of investigations involving instructors' perceptions.

Moreover, another factor I considered is taking into account existing studies that are relevant, and the methods they implemented. These existing studies were either

related to transfer climate in EAP or involve the perceptions of instructors regarding EAP courses. Given that James (2010) is the only study thus far to apply the construct of transfer climate to the EAP context I considered their data collection approach. I also considered studies conducted by Jackson, Meyer, and Parkinson (2006), Zhu, (2004) Nelms and Dively (2007) which sought out the perceptions of discipline instructors regarding aspects of EAP courses. Drawing from these studies, their methods have mainly ranged between questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. The table below will illustrate a summary of existing studies relevant to this current inquiry, the methods they used, and the benefits and setbacks of those methods. Beneath the table, these methods will be discussed in more detail.

**Table 2***Benefits and Setback of Methods in Relevant Empirical Studies*

Methods	Studies	Benefits	Benefits
Focus group	Nelms & Dively (2007)	Participants can draw each other's responses  Such a method can make the process less intimidating for participants when they are in a groups	Challenging to keep track of what each participant says.  Face-threatening to participants due to others being present  Challenging to transcribe due to overlaps in conversation  This method could compromise the anonymity of participants since they are in a group.
Questionnaire	Jackson, Meyer, and Parkinson (2006)	Fast and efficient to conduct  Convenient for participants.	Can limit what participants can say  Can 'lead' participants to give particular responses  No chance for clarification
Individual Interview	James (2010), Zhu (2004)	Researcher can control the topic of the interview and the questions, while also giving flexibility with interviewee responses	Can be less controlled than questionnaires if it is an inductive interview.

With regards to focus groups, they may have benefits but they also have setbacks. In drawing from the existing study above mentioned (Nelms & Dively, 2007), the method of a focus group may be fruitful in that participants can draw from each other's responses. Hearing each other's responses may allow participants to recall something relevant from their own experiences. On the other hand, a setback is that it may be challenging to keep track of what each individual participant perceives. To add, focus groups may also be detrimental since being in a group setting may be face-threatening and cause participants to talk about what occurs in their courses differently. Not to mention that given that there are multiple participants together in the focus group, it is possible that they may compromise each other's anonymity. Also another setback to using this method is it may be challenging to orchestrate such a discussion without there being too much interruptions and overlaps in speech. This, of course, can be challenging to transcribe as well. To elaborate, it is also important to note that such overlap and interruptions may add meaning to the data and may require more precise conversation analysis, and not only the analysis of the content of speech.

With regard to the two survey methods used in these existing studies (James, 2010; Jackson, 2005; Zhu, 2004), I had considered using questionnaires at some point during the planning of the research design. Firstly, I did consider conducting questionnaires, due to the benefit of them being fast and efficient to conduct and being convenient for participants. However, with closed questionnaires, the researcher runs the risk of limiting what participants can say and potentially even leading them to respond with particular answers confined by the interview questions. This causes an issue because such a method may not lead to authentic qualitative data, but regurgitated data instead.

Therefore, I then considered doing an open-ended questionnaire. An open-ended questionnaire incorporates questions that allow participants to respond with their own individual responses. For instance, such a questionnaire is not solely made up of closed-ended questions such as multiple choice questions. Such open-ended questions in a questionnaire would provide more detailed qualitative data than the typical instruments used such as likert scales. Nonetheless, there is a likelihood that participants misinterpret questions due to lack of a chance for clarification.

Besides considering methods that were used in the existing research mentioned above, I also considered using classroom observations. The reason for this was to particularly address the second research question. The second research question asks what EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for the transfer climate. In some ways, the method of observations would give insight on what EAP instructors do in their class and whether it does help prepare students. Although observations seemed like a fitting choice for this study, it is not as fitting as interviews. That is, with observations, I would be able to see what instructional approaches the participants may use, but I would not be able to know the motivation behind that use. Dornyei (2007) pointed out that it can be very difficult to pick up on what the instructor perceives and the motivation behind their instructional choices from conducting observations. To elaborate, with an observation, the researcher can only go by what they observe, and seeing as participant motivations can only be tapped into from participant input (in verbal or written form), observations would not be the suitable method to examine this. For this current study, knowing what the participants' motivations are is crucial, since it specifically investigates

the perceptions of instructors with regard to the transfer climate and how to prepare students for it, and the only way to investigate that is by directly asking participants.

Therefore, when I weighed out the options for the data collection method, interviews proved to be the most suitable option for this study. Compared to questionnaires and observations, interviews seem to have the right balance between flexibility and control. In other words, with the interview, I can control the topic of focus unlike an observation, but the interview can still be designed with instruments more flexible than a questionnaire. To illustrate, if the interview is about unsupportive transfer climate of a science course towards EAP skills, the interviewer may focus on this as the topic, but there is flexibility for participants to answer however they like, for example to discuss any aspects of the science course that they think are relevant. Such flexibility of instruments allows participants to respond based on their individual experiences, meaning their responses will be unique and provide abundant data.

To be more precise, open-ended interviews proved to be the most suitable method for this current study. As stated by Denzin (1970), there are multiple reasons why qualitative researchers prefer the open-ended interview as opposed to the structured interview. For instance, Denzin (1970) mentions that the open-ended interview allows participants to use their own 'unique ways of defining the world'. (p. 125). They also make the point that the open-ended interview assumes that researchers do not need to conform to a fixed sequence of questions for all participants. Moreover, such an interview that is more flexible allows participants to raise important and relevant issues that are not necessarily mentioned in the existing questions.

Nonetheless, even when I had decided on interviews being the data collection method for this study, I also took the disadvantages of this method into consideration. Interviews do not have as much anonymity as questionnaires, and although I was going to conduct the interviews online, I was concerned that some participants may not want to be audio-recorded. For instance, some participants may feel that their voice being audio recorded would be a violation of their privacy, and may also fear that their voice would be recognized. Therefore, within my research design, I had initially included the option of participants either having an online interview via zoom, or an online email interview, where there would be no concern for audio-recording. To clarify, an email interview would basically consist of a thread of email correspondences between the interviewer and interviewee about the interview questions. However, email interviews eventually proved to be unsuitable since they do not give a chance for questions to be clarified smoothly and instantly, and if the researcher would like to ask follow-up questions there may be a chance participants do not email back. Also, when it comes to email interviews, there is the risk of participant responses being on record on the email correspondences and therefore compromising participant anonymity. Therefore, I narrowed down the data collection process to be online interviews using video conferencing platforms such as zoom and not email, and I gave participants the option of me noting down their responses in case they did not want to be audio recorded.

### **Developing the interview instrument**

To develop the interview, I followed a number of steps. The first step was designing the interview instruments, and there were a few aspects to consider.



For one, I had to consider how to operationalize the construct of transfer climate in order to ask about it in the interview. Taking into account James' (2010) study, and the number of transfer climate components they asked their participants about, I considered whether that was necessary for this current study. James (2010) conducted deductive interviews with 14 questions to examine the perception of EAP students on all such transfer climate components. There were 7 different components with regards to discipline instructors (e.g., "Do discipline instructors provide feedback on students' English writing skills?"), 5 different components with regards to peers (e.g., "Are classmates in your discipline courses (i.e., not EAP107) concerned about English writing skills?"), and 2 different components with regards to potential outcomes from EAP transfer (e.g., "Do you think using skills that you learn and practice in EAP107 can help you to get higher grades in other courses?"). However, for this current study, I used an operationalization of transfer climate that is more holistic than James' (2010), with 3 broad components of transfer climate as opposed to 14. The three components are: support/lack of support from - opportunities to transfer EAP learning - transfer support from discipline instructors - transfer support from discipline peers. In comparing this current study's operationalization to that of James (2010), they overlap when it comes to the general categories of instructor and peer support. However, James (2010) has a third general category regarding learners' outcomes based on the impact of the transfer climate. The third component of this current study is broader, regarding the kinds of opportunities available in the target context for learning transfer. In this current study, a holistic approach was taken for the interview with the use of open-ended inductive questions. For example, for the first inductive question it elicits participants' perceptions of the transfer

climate, allowing them to answer based on whatever transfer climate components come to mind. After that, the 3-component operationalization was used to follow-up the inductive question with deductive questions on specific components of the transfer climate, in case participants did not already mention them themselves. The interview instrument was designed to examine what components of the transfer climate come to the minds of the participants from their experience as EAP instructors.

The second step was piloting the interview instruments that I initially designed. In formulating interview instruments, the importance of piloting became more evident. I needed to trial how participants were likely to respond and interpret the interview questions. More specifically, I needed to test out whether terms such as ‘learning transfer’ were too technical for participants to comprehend. It was also insightful to find out how much time participants may spend on each question, and how long interviews may last overall so that I would be able to rephrase questions in order to prioritize some questions over others. For instance, if there were questions that were intended to merely be warm-up questions that do not go towards the analysis, it was best that they did not take much of the interview time.

To conduct the piloting of the instruments, I interviewed two EAP instructors from two different institutions in Kuwait. Both of the EAP instructors selected were of a similar description to the actual participants intended for the study. They both had many years of experience teaching EAP courses. One of them was an EAP instructor at the public university involved and the other was an EAP instructor at the first private university involved. One of the participants was a Kuwaiti non-native speaker of English, and the second participant was a non-native speaker of English originally from Poland.

Considering that both the participants are English language instructors with at least a Master's degree from Western institutions, their English language proficiency is strong.

During the piloting, I wanted to give participants as many options as possible for responding to the interview questions. Therefore, I gave them the option between conducting the interview in English or Arabic. During one of the piloted interviews, the EAP instructor who happened to be a native speaker of Arabic was surprised by this question. They advised that I do not ask other EAP instructors about language preference as it would presume that they are not capable enough as English users. Given that this instructor taught at one of the institutions I was planning to recruit from, piloting the questions with them gave me insight on what the actual participants may prefer. Therefore, I decided to conduct the interviews in English.

Although I initially had a structure to the interview, after piloting the interview, this structure slightly changed. Initially speaking, I had three warm up questions, but they were narrowed down to one question because it was found during the piloting that they were taking too much of the interview time. After the warm-up question, I had two main sets of inductive questions eliciting EAP instructors' perceptions of the transfer climate, and how they think students can be prepared for it. Those questions were inductive in a sense that they were open-ended so that participants' responses would determine the direction of analysis as opposed to a predetermined framework. For instance, an inductive question would be something like "In what ways do you think discipline courses accommodate for the use of EAP skills?". However, what I discovered after piloting was that I needed to include deductive questions in part 2 after the main inductive question in case there were components of transfer climate that participants did not mention. To

illustrate, a deductive question would be something like “Are discipline courses accommodating in terms of providing coursework opportunities for use of EAP skills?”. This is a deductive question because it focuses on the specific component of opportunities. This way, the open-ended question comes first which does not dictate a particular response, followed by a deductive question in case there are more specific transfer climate components the researcher wants to ask about.

The interview contained three main parts. Figure 1 below this paragraph contains the interview instruments *after* they were piloted. This refers to the final version of the interview that was used for actual data collection. Firstly, in the first part, after the participants are greeted by me, I ask them a warm up question on what they think is the purpose of EAP courses. The warm up question was put in place to help the participant engage in conversation before the main questions. This is because starting with the main questions immediately may be too abrupt for participants, especially considering that the interview is not a natural environment. The warm up questions also give participants a chance to be familiarized with the topic of the interview. The second part of the interview involves eliciting the ways in which participants perceive the transfer climate, whether that be supportive or unsupportive. Initially, an inductive question of this nature was asked (i.e. “How, if at all, do you think discipline courses accommodate for the use of skills from EAP courses?”), allowing participants to mention whatever possible transfer climate components come to mind. After that, I asked three deductive sub-questions (i.e. With regards to the structure of the course and its assignments/curriculum; With regards to discipline instructors’ demonstrating expectations towards EAP skills in their course; With regards to students in discipline courses demonstrating use of EAP skills) in case

there were certain components of the transfer climate that participants did not mention.

The third and final part of the interview examines what EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for the unsupportive transfer climates they may have mentioned in the previous question. To add, the final question of this part of the interview asks what participants would include to prepare students further for the transfer climate. 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.

## **Figure 1**

### *Final Version of the Interview*

#### **Part 1: Warm-up**

- Greeting
- In your view, what do you think is the purpose of EAP courses within the university setting?

#### **Part 2**

- How, if at all, do you think discipline courses accommodate the use of skills from EAP courses?
  - With regards to the structure of the course and its assignments/curriculum
  - With regards to discipline instructors' demonstrating expectations towards EAP skills in their course
  - With regards to students in discipline courses demonstrating use of EAP skills

#### **Part 3**

- Is there anything about your course that you think helps to prepare students for situations and issues we just talked about?
- Based on our discussion above, (on whether discipline courses seem accommodating to EAP skills), what (if anything) else would you like to include

in your course to prepare students, but you haven't been able to? Why haven't you been able to do that?

- Do you have anything more to say about the general topic of the interview, or about any of the answers you gave?

### **Interviewing Procedure**

Once I finalized the interview instruments and obtained IRB approval I started interviewing arrangements. I obtained IRB approval at the end of January 2022 and then immediately started sending out recruitment emails. First off, I started with the recruitment of the institutions which provided me with approval through the heads of department of the first private university involved, and the public university involved. Once I received additional contacts through snowball sampling, I was able to recruit participants from the second private institution involved. The recruitment took place early in the semester of each institution, therefore, it was easier to get responses from EAP instructors than if it was later in the semester. Next, I arranged an online interview with each participant who had responded and consented to take part. I gave participants the opportunity to pick the online platform they were most familiar with. For instance there are some institutions that subscribe to MS team as opposed to zoom. However, all the participants agreed to use a zoom link that I provided. At the beginning of each interview I greeted the participants and asked whether they consented to be audio-recorded. It turned out that all the participants agreed and so I enabled the audio-recording feature on zoom. There were a total of 22 participants who ended up taking part in the study, and the interviews took 30 minutes on average. To be precise, the minimum amount of time taken

for an interview was 14 minutes and 30 seconds and the maximum amount of time taken for the interview was just over 40 minutes. As far as the entire data collection process, it took approximately 4 weeks to complete.

### **Analytic Procedure**

The first step in my analysis was transcribing the recordings of the interviews. Since I was after the content that participants say rather than the manner in which they say it, a broad transcription of the interviews was sufficient. What is meant by a broad transcription is that the main thing that has to be clear about what is being said is the content. That is, when it comes to conversational aspects such as hesitations, pauses, overlaps, these were not transcribed and therefore not part of the analysis. Given that the interview took place online via the online conferencing platform Zoom, with the participants' consent, I enabled the audio-recording and transcription function in the platform. The platform's transcription was accurate overall, because when I listened to the recordings for the first time, I followed through the transcriptions to check for any errors in the transcript. The errors that I noticed were few and were not enough to prevent me from analyzing the content of the interview. I corrected any inaccuracies that were found during the first round of coding while listening to the audio recordings.

There were a number of measures that I took as a researcher to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants involved. As explained by Paltridge and Phakiti (2015) about such ethical considerations, anonymity in survey research is crucial because it encourages participants to be truthful in expressing their thoughts and attitudes (p. 42). In order to ensure that participants remain completely anonymous, each participant name was replaced with a code and it was used to store the audio files and



transcript documents of each interview. To be precise, the codes that were used were completely arbitrary and did not have any relation to the participants' names, positions or institutions. As far as the measures taken to ensure confidentiality, I had to make sure all files related to this research were stored safely. Both the audio-recordings and the transcripts were stored in my password-protected ASU Google Drive and in an encrypted folder on a password-protected computer.

Secondly, to carry out the analysis, I had to choose a qualitative data analysis software. The use of a software can make the coding process more manageable than manual analysis as it can provide a platform for managing a large amount of data. Ultimately, I decided to use the online analysis software, Nvivo. Before choosing the software, Nvivo, I explored the other software options. For instance, I tried a free analysis software called Taguette. However, the reason why I decided to resort to Nvivo is simply because it was more sophisticated. For instance, Nvivo as opposed to Taguette allowed me to organize my codes into a hierarchy, rather than having them all in one level.

Thirdly, the next consideration in the analysis process, I segmented the data into units of analysis. This involved segmenting the data into units of analysis that are meaningful within the context that they were found and even in isolation (Tesch, 2013). To elaborate, this means that, in taking a unit out of its context, it suggests something meaningful in relation to the study's research question. In terms of what makes up a unit in my process of analysis, it consists of one turn for the interviewer, one turn for the interviewee in response to the researcher, and one or more possible turns each after that which may be relevant to the topic of this first turn. Figure 2 below provides an example of a unit of analysis from this study's data. The way in which it makes up a unit of

analysis is that it focuses on the same topic throughout, and the topic emerges from a question posed by the interviewee and develops from there. The reason why the unit of analysis can be this long is because this study involves analyzing for the content being said in the turns as opposed to something minute such as conversational aspects of the turns taken.

## Figure 2

### *Example of a Unit of Analysis*

Researcher: You know the things you mentioned that are in place in the EAP courses?. Do you think they are in place with the assumption that in the discipline courses, they will not be reviewed?

Participant: In theory yes, but in practice no. Because the writing courses do not provide fully what is needed for the discipline courses, because discipline courses function with the assumption that students come with a certain level (proficiency level). Nor do all the courses require the same level, some require more than others. So this is a missing link, I admit. It does not come from the design of those courses. It comes from a discrepancy in our expectations (both EAP instructors and discipline instructors).

Researcher: So this actually brings me to like the final question that I have you already kind of touched on this, like on things you think would change or would be included, so the question is asking based on our discussion, particularly with consideration to how accommodating or not accommodating discipline courses are, meaning they may not have time, resources, so based on that consideration what else would you include to the writing courses?

Participant: I think the reformation needs something more substantial, so we have to have pre-classes to those classes (EAP courses). We have. We need the language Center (intensive English institute) to help in fundamental reconstruction of grammar sentence structure syntax, these things, and then, when they move into writing courses, they need to be. lengthy they need to be a little bit

difficult they need to be serious about the writing about the composition and maybe we need to elevate our own expectations, because when the level goes down our expectations go down and we tend to expect less so, you teach less him, you know even unconsciously you teach, not necessarily less, but softer. And so maybe we need to push expectations up, we need to be. way more strict about writing.

Fourth in this analysis process, I coded the units into categories. In reference to Tesch (2013), they describe this process of coding as two-fold. They refer to the process as de-contextualizing and re-contextualizing. Firstly, with decontextualizing, a chunk of text is identified as a unit of analysis, when it is taken out of context from the transcript, it is still meaningful as a unit in and of itself. Secondly, all the units can be re-contextualized when transferred from the interview transcript to a single 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(s). This means that such common units form a pattern in the analysis. For example, if there are multiple instances from different interviews of EAP instructors mentioning discipline instructors' lack of effort to accommodate for EAP skills, they can all be 're-contextualized' into a category labeled 'lack of accommodation for EAP skills'. With multiple rounds of coding, that is assigning units into categories, I developed an organizational system of categories that I refined overtime (Merriam, 2009; Tesch, 2013). The organizational system of categories consists of the categories in an organizational hierarchy that demonstrates the relationship between the categories. For

instance, units that seemed to indicate an unsupportive transfer climate can be further split into other categories that indicate the transfer climate as unsupportive in multiple ways: lack of opportunities in the courses' structure, lack of guidance from discipline instructors. I refined the system over time, with units being re-coded and categories being shifted after multiple rounds of coding. As recommended, analysis was an iterative process (Merriam, 2009).

Fifth, there were a number of steps taken to ensure the coding of categories was efficient. For one, I had to be selective in terms of what data to focus on. Therefore, one of the decisions of reduction that I made was to not include responses to the warm up questions in my analysis. This was because the main purpose of the warm-up questions was to make the participants more comfortable during the interview, and they were not directly relevant to the research questions. To add, I kept a diary to keep track of the process of analysis, as well as making use of the memos/annotations feature in the Nvivo software. This is what is referred to as an “ongoing interpretive activity” as a way to better understand the data (Nakkula & Ravitch, 1998, p. 48). For instance, the annotation feature in the software was used to make comments of analysis within individual interview transcripts. Also, due to data analysis being an iterative process, I was able to detect patterns between the different interview transcripts, and those were points when I made use of note-taking.

## Validity and Reliability

Finally, I took steps to ensure the quality of my data collection and analysis procedures. I took into account the numerous ways of evaluating research and gaining validity and reliability. To clarify what is meant by reliability, in qualitative research, reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions (Hammaersley, 1992, p. 97). Also, to clarify what is meant by validity, in qualitative research is the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers (Hammersley, 1992, p. 57). Creswell (1998) identified eight different ways to gain validity and reliability. Among these different ways are using peer review or debriefing and clarifying researcher bias among others. I attempted to gain validity and reliability in two main ways: clarifying researcher bias and using peer review or debriefing.

One of the steps that I took to ensure the quality of my data analysis procedures was that I was able to perpetuate self-awareness towards my potential biases as a researcher and a practitioner. This refers to one of Creswell's (1998) ways to ensure validity and reliability, *clarifying researcher bias*. As a field, Applied Linguistics is increasingly recognizing over time that qualitative research is inherently subjective, and that the ideas and preconceived notions of the researcher can have a role in shaping the data and the analysis of the data (Paltridge & Phakiti, p.49). For instance, if a study is seeking out the perceptions of EAP instructors about something related to teaching their courses, similar to this study, if the researcher of the study is also an EAP instructor, it is almost inevitable that the researcher's experiences will have some influence on the

interpretation of data. In referring to Corbin and Strauss' (1996) 'Basics of Qualitative Research', one of the conditions that they state give the best chances of yielding quality research is the researcher's self-awareness. To elaborate, they emphasize that it is important that the researcher has awareness of biases and assumptions that exist from their personal experience. For example, this can help yield quality research because researchers having such self-awareness can help them realize the influence that they have upon the research (Corbin & Strauss, 1996, p. 348). Therefore, the way in which I was able to stay in tune with my individual biases and to perpetuate self-awareness throughout the research process was with keeping a research journal and making annotations in the research software I was using, Nvivo. In reviewing the things I note in the diary or the annotations I was able to reflect back on any comments that appear to be an influence of my experience. For instance, the annotations made in the Nvivo software were based on observations I had on particular units of analysis in interview transcripts, while the diary notes were made for broader patterns that I noticed across units of analysis. As a researcher, I had been an EAP student at one point and also an EAP instructor at another point. Therefore, I have my own preconceived notions of what an EAP course entails, as well as my own perception of what the transition is like from EAP courses to discipline courses.

Another step that I took to ensure the quality of my data analysis procedures was asking a professor in linguistics who had taught EAP courses for many years to contribute by reviewing and debriefing. This refers to Creswell's (1998) using peer review or debriefing. Reviewing and debriefing involves a second qualified individual to review the data that has been analyzed. This can be done through intercoder-reliability

checking. That is, a second coder codes a portion of the data, and then convenes with the researcher to review similarities and differences between their coding, and the percentage of similarity. The higher this percentage is, the higher the inter-coder reliability. As Miles and Huberman (1994) explain, the time dedicated to inter-coder reliability, or what they call it, double-coding, brings the coders to a common vision of what the codes signify and which blocks of data best fit which code (p. 63). The professor, who agreed to be the second coder, coded 20% of the total units of analysis from the interview data in an attempt to seek inter-coder reliability. There are a total of 22 transcripts and each transcript has approximately 8-10 units of analysis. Therefore, 20% of the units of analysis are at least 40 units. I briefed the second coder with the hierarchy of categories that I had developed, explaining how to categorize based on participants' responses to the interview questions. After that the second coder individually coded 20% of the total units of analysis which I assigned to him from 5 transcripts I selected at random. To add, I had provided the second coder with a document with 20% of the units pasted, a document with the interview questions in their order, and a document with tables of the categories based on each interview question. A formula provided by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used to calculate the percentage of reliability. Their formula is:  $\text{reliability} = \frac{\text{number of agreements}}{\text{total number of agreements plus disagreements}}$ . After the second coder's first round of coding, he convened with me, and we compared our coding of the same units of analysis. After that first round, it appeared that there were some differences in the coding of the same units. The formula above was used and the inter-coder reliability came to 86%. Therefore, when the second coder convened with the researcher, the researcher sought out what the second coder's interpretation of the data was. After there



was agreement between them about what the categories represented, the second coder was asked to do another round of coding with a different portion of data which also came out to 20% of units. After the second coder's second round of coding, the inter-coder reliability came to 92.7%. Also, one month later, I 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%.

Yet another step was taken to ensure the quality of data collection. Although piloting of the interview instruments was part of developing the interview instruments, this step was also put in place for validity purposes. For one, it is important to note that one of the reasons why piloting of interview instruments is so important is not only to trial the types of interview instruments based on participants' reactions, but it is also important in order to trial the length of the interview. For instance, scholars such as Dornyei (2009) have drawn attention to the potential issue of participant fatigue in cases where a questionnaire or interview is too long. On one hand, having more items or instruments in an interview or questionnaire may increase the reliability of the instruments. However, on the other hand, it is a balance when it comes to the number of items or instruments, since having too much may lead to fatigue and lower participants' concentration which would in turn compromise the validity and reliability of the data. For instance, Dornyei (2009) suggests that no survey or questionnaire should take longer than 30 minutes to complete. Taking such factors into consideration, when piloting the interview instruments, I did keep interview length in mind, as well as the amount of time participants seemed to spend on each question. This latter point was important because I wanted to make sure that the most pertinent interview instruments were given enough

time and attention in the interview. Moreover, another factor that could have an impact on the validity of the study, is potential biases the participants may have in responding to interview instruments. Therefore, this was another factor that prompted piloting on the interview questions. For example, certain participants may be affected by ‘prestige bias’, and respond to an interview instrument in a way that they think improves their image or standing as EAP instructors. To offer another example, some participants may be affected by ‘acquiescence bias’, which involves them responding to instruments based on what they assume the interviewer wants them to say. Therefore, such biases, it was not only about the type of instruments used, but also the way in which I delivered them as the interviewer. I ensured as much as possible to not deliver the questions in a coercive manner.

### **Epistemological stance and researcher positionality**

After outlining the research design and analytic procedure, it is important to explain the epistemological stance of this current study. Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, justification, and the rationality of beliefs that guides our understanding of the world as well as our research (Crotty, 1998; Schwandt, 2000; Wiersma & Jurs, 2005). Therefore, an epistemological stance would be the stance that guides my understanding of the focus of this study. Also, the way that Paltridge and Phakiti (2015) put it is that, at an epistemology level, a researcher asks “what is our relationship to the thing we are trying to know? For instance, do we need to be objective or subjective in order to know it?” (p. 16). The epistemological stance of this current study is constructivist. Crotty (1998) defined constructivism as “the view that all knowledge, and

therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world, and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p. 42). Moreover, constructivism is driven by meaning and it acknowledges that meanings are “varied and multiple” (Bradt, Burns & Creswell, 2013, p. 126). To clarify, what is meant by this is that meaning is subjective rather than objective. A constructivist perspective is suitable for this study seeing the inquiry here is on the perspectives of EAP instructors, more specifically their perspectives of the transfer climate of EAP skills and whether their courses or discipline courses prepare for such a transfer climate. In other words, if this study was not seeking out instructor perceptions but objectively seeking out the most effective ways to prepare EAP students for transfer climate, this constructivist paradigm may no longer be suitable. Therefore, the stance held in this study motivated the choice of using open-ended interviews that gave the opportunity to listen to participants' individual experiences as EAP instructors and to hear the meaning that they construct as well as negotiate.

Given that this study aligns with constructivism, the researcher must position themselves in their research with regard to their individual experience, and so I will outline my positionality as the researcher. The paradigm of constructivism requires researchers to account for the historical and cultural norms as well as the context that shapes experiences, and position themselves in the research based on their own backgrounds (Creswell, 2007). There are two aspects of my personal experience that relate to this current inquiry and that I can use to position myself in this research. For one, at some point in my studies as a student, I was required to take EAP courses, and so I

have experienced EAP transfer in a university context first hand. To offer an example, as an undergraduate, after taking the EAP course required of me, I took general requirement courses such as psychology during the following course. As was expected by the psychology professor, I transferred EAP skills such as in-text citation, paragraphing, and providing evidence to the essay assignments. Also, during my MA studies, in becoming a writing teaching assistant, (TA), I made my students aware that EAP skills are expected to be used in many different mainstream academic courses. However, in embarking upon this topic for my dissertation which relates to how accommodating discipline courses are towards EAP transfer, I recalled from my personal experience that not all discipline courses that I took as an undergraduate student were as accommodating to EAP skills as the psychology course for instance. Therefore, the reality that university students may face discipline courses with an unsupportive transfer climate is a possibility that I can draw from my own experience.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter described the qualitative methodology chosen for this study and the reasons behind it. This chapter also outlined the reasons behind the choice of interviews as the data collection method. A table is provided comparing the method of interviews to other methods and it accompanied with an explanation of why interviews are to most suitable to answer the research questions. Among the reasons why interviews were the chosen method is due to their balance of flexibility for participant responses and control for the interviewee to navigate the discussion. Also, this chapter described the piloting process of the interview and the changes that were made to the interview instrument afterwards. Factors such as the potential duration of the interview and the way the

questions should be delivered impacted the revisions made to the instrument. This chapter also outlines the recruitment procedure which used email and the kind of information provided in the recruitment email. The ethical and logistical considerations were explained when it comes to the interview procedure including the decision to use the platform 'zoom', and communicating to participants their ethical rights during the interview. This chapter also outlines what steps of the analytic procedure. The type of transcription, coding, and steps to ensure research quality were also outlined in this chapter. The following chapter will cover the findings which reveal the themes of this study.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

#### **Introduction**

This chapter will present the findings of this study which, as a reminder, is guided by the research questions:

1. In what ways do EAP instructors think transfer climates in discipline courses are (un)supportive?
2. What do EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate?

Each of the following sections will be dedicated to the findings of each of the research questions separately: Section 1 for research question 1, and section two for research question 2.

Categories of the different participant responses addressing the research questions will be outlined in each section. To give a brief introduction for the first research question, there will be categories outlined on ways EAP instructors perceive the transfer climate as supportive and ways they perceive the transfer climate as unsupportive. These categories include responses where participants appear to have an idea of the transfer climate situation (supportive/unsupportive) in discipline courses. There is also a category that includes participant responses that mention they are not sure, or they do not have knowledge of the transfer climate, or the situation in general in discipline courses. So, this includes responses that mentioned ‘I don’t know’ about the transfer climate of discipline courses. Next to give a brief introduction for the second research question,

there will be categories outlined on EAP instructors' perceptions of what they think can be done to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate.

One of the challenging aspects of the data analysis was the fact that while most of the participants were EAP instructors only, some of the participants were EAP instructors and discipline instructors. When analyzing the data, I kept all of these participants together in order to come up with lists of categories to answer each research question. However, I then separated the participants into two groups (i.e., those who were EAP instructors only, and those who were EAP instructors and discipline instructors) to see if there were any important differences between these groups in terms of the lists of categories. In this chapter, after the lists of categories for each research question, I present information on how the categories relate to these two groups.

## **Findings**

### ***Section 1: In what ways do EAP instructors think transfer climates in discipline courses are (un)supportive?***

The following are categories of participant responses that address the first research question by describing: Supportive aspects of the transfer climate and unsupportive aspects of the transfer climate. The categories are numbered, and some categories have subcategories, indicated by letters. This sequence keeps related categories together (i.e., all the categories about opportunities are together, all the categories about discipline instructor are together, and all the categories about peers are together), and this allows readers to compare related categories. The category labels are as follows:

1. Transfer opportunities in discipline courses
  - a. Existence of opportunities

- b. Limited opportunities
2. Discipline instructors' expectations in discipline courses
  - a. Discipline instructors' realistic expectations of transfer
  - b. Discipline instructors' adjusted expectations of transfer
  - c. Discipline instructors' unrealistic expectations of transfer
3. Discipline instructors' guidance for using EAP skills
4. Discipline instructors' encouragement to use EAP skills
5. Discipline course peers' influence
6. Lack of knowledge about the transfer climate

However, findings also showed that in some cases participants did not know how the transfer climate of discipline courses may be (un)supportive. Instances such as these will be outlined under the category: EAP instructors do not know how the transfer climate of discipline courses may be (un)supportive.

The first category is *Transfer opportunities in discipline courses*. 'Opportunities' here refers to work in the discipline course that allows for students to transfer their EAP skills. Work that the participants mentioned included graded work (i.e., assignments, homework, exams, quizzes, presentations) and ungraded classroom activities (i.e., working in groups). Skills that the participants mentioned included general skills (i.e., reading, writing, study skills) and more specific skills (i.e., annotating, paraphrasing).

This category was divided into two subcategories, the first of which is *Existence of opportunities*. This subcategory includes participants' statements that there are opportunities for students to transfer EAP skills to discipline courses. The following



excerpt from one of the interviews illustrates this subcategory. The participant lists ways in which discipline courses' writing assignments require students to transfer EAP skills.

Researcher: how, if at all, do you think the discipline courses accommodate for the use of skills from the academic writing courses? I can clarify like discipline courses means like the major courses that.

Participant: yeah yeah, well *most if not all discipline courses require different kinds of writing that employ a variety of strategies for different audiences so students may be required to write let's say long essays, or short answers to exam questions. As responses that is. Students, may be asked to write let's say lab reports, you know if they're studying science project proposal or report on the results of experiment, as what you would do in psycho-linguistics. A student may be called upon to write, let's say if business, a report, if they were studying business* [emphasis added] and these are only some of the many types of writing a student may be engaged in throughout their academic journey. And so assigned writing in all courses helps students keep the writing skills sharp and say and faculty in all disciplines have found that assigning writing in their classes helps students learn the material better and improve their thinking about ideas in the courses. (Transcript from interview with participant 11).

On the other hand, the subcategory *Limited opportunities* includes participants' statements that there is more focus on skills such as answering multiple choice questions as opposed to there being opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning with EAP skills such as academic writing. The following excerpt from one of the interviews

illustrates this category. The excerpt is of a participants' response explaining that there seems to be limited opportunities to transfer EAP skills to discipline courses due to the types of assignments and types of exam questions that do not require to use the EAP skill of writing, as much as the use of skills such as taking multiple choice quizzes.

Participant: *In the other disciplines, they are focusing more and more and more, and the there's more and more emphasis on multiple choice exams. Because I would have thought that writing is really where they need to show their, you know their, ability to produce and show their understanding of what they've learned in marketing economics, or whatever it is, throughout the semester [emphasis added].* Uh, multiple choice has, exams have their purpose, you know the exams have their purpose. But that purpose is not really connected to their ability to produce text, by its very nature. So there seems to be a bit of a dichotomy. Is this what you want, or is this what you want, if this is what you want, then really you should be asking them different types of questions in the exams. (Transcript from interview with participant 17).

The second category is *Discipline instructors' expectations in discipline courses*. This category includes participants' statements that discipline instructors expect, either explicitly or implicitly, students to transfer EAP skills to the discipline course, and whether it is an expectation that takes the students' ability levels into consideration. This category has three subcategories.

The subcategory *Discipline instructors' realistic expectations of transfer* includes participants' statements that discipline instructors expect students to transfer EAP skills, and that these expectations are a good fit with the students' level of ability (i.e., the

expectations are not too high and not too low). The following excerpt from one of the interviews illustrates this category. The participant in this excerpt below confirms to the researcher that discipline instructors do have an expectation from students to use EAP. They justify that the expectation is realistic given that students are qualified to perform these expectations based on their placement. They explain that students will have either scored well in the English placement test and entered directly to discipline courses, or will have received the academic English training they need for discipline courses through the intensive English institute.

Researcher: Like do you think the discipline instructors themselves are making it clear that they have these expectations that we expect you to have these skills and use them? Do you think it's just like a silent expectation that they expect this without me mentioning it? Or even reviewing it or giving examples of what they want?

Participant: yeah do you mean to say that do the instructors give clear cut instructions on how to how to accomplish a particular writing or how to how to go ahead with that, yes, I think they do, but yeah they do expect that the students should know at this point when they enter directly, you know. We have two kinds of admissions in our programs one is through an intensive English program if the students get a certain score and, hopefully, in the placement. And those students who are good in the placement test and get direct entry, *so those who are in direct entry, we expect them to know academic writing, and they should be able to write all those things* [emphasis added]. But, and this is, it is because of that, I think that question that you asked the instructors have certain expectations from students so

*whether it is direct entry students or the students who are coming from them so English Program, they have these expectations from them that they should be able to accomplish those assignments I should be able to complete those assignments effortlessly [emphasis added]. (Transcript from interview with participant 10).*

The second subcategory *Discipline instructors' adjusted expectations of transfer* includes participants' statements that despite discipline instructors having expectations, the discipline instructors adjust the expectations based on the students' level of ability in terms of language and writing proficiency. Participants describe this as a form of support for students. The following excerpt from one of the interviews illustrates this category. This participant is an EAP instructor and an instructor of sociolinguistics. In drawing from their experience as a discipline instructor, they express that discipline instructors' expectations of EAP transfer are adjusted based on if the student is new or not. The participant explains that expectations are adjusted, meaning their expectations are not as high, particularly for first-year students.

Researcher: do you think discipline instructors like offer explicit expectations in terms of like the academic skills?

Participant: They do, because it's very important because I mean at the end there's an expectation up to you, but I have to be frank, *I mean if I'm going to be teaching first year students, (as a discipline instructor) my expectations are not going to be as let's say high from the students, so I will be let's say I'll give them a bit more information in terms of what I need and what is required, and I will also, my expectations won't be that high when I'm actually reading the papers right, because these are new newcomers freshmen that are not used to the university or*

*academic writing*. [emphasis added] At the end of the day, high school is very different, it depends on the high school that you went to whether it's like a you know, a it's an English medium school or if it's a let's say government or public school very different, so I think the expectation is much lower when they're newcomers. (Transcript from interview with participant 13).

The third and final subcategory, *Discipline course instructors' unrealistic expectations of transfer*, indicates participants' mention that although there are existing expectations from discipline instructors that students transfer EAP skills to their course, such expectations are unrealistic in terms of being too high a standard. Participants describe this as a challenge for students. The following excerpt from one of the interviews illustrates this category. When the participant below was asked about discipline instructors' expectations, they responded that they think discipline instructor expectations towards EAP transfer are unrealistic due to their lack of awareness of the students' language and writing background.

Researcher: Like do you think discipline instructors demonstrate expectations towards skills from the courses that you teach?

Participant: I can tell you, generally, what their expectations are their expectations are rather high. I think a lot of discipline instructors, they don't fully understand, I said to you earlier on, the exit level of our students, *so I think a lot of instructors within the disciplines when they receive students from our courses, their expectations are unrealistic, yeah they're there in terms of, in terms of the language production, I would say* [emphasis added]. (Transcript from interview with participant 3).

The third category is *Discipline course instructors' guidance for using EAP skills*. This category includes participants' statements that discipline instructors offer guidance on ways to use EAP skills in their course. Such guidance can entail going through instructions on how to write a particular paper or conduct a particular presentation, or offering writing templates as examples. This guidance can be provided during class time, office hours or email. Also, such guidance can be verbal or written. The following excerpt from an interview illustrate this category. The EAP instructor in this interview explains that discipline instructors tend to offer writing templates, review how to write research papers, and answer questions as a way to guide students through the way to complete their assignment.

Participant: Well there are courses that require students to take part in projects, they need to carry out experiments of some sort and write up their findings in the formal form of a mini dissertation, and you know, for a dissertation, you need to have an abstract, the introduction, the literature review, and you know the materials you use for the findings and the conclusion and the discussion. Most of the students unfortunately don't have prior knowledge of what they need to know in order to write a research paper. So *instructors tend to give them a template for instruction. During the class they tend to review these things, talking about plagiarism, talking about how to cite sources properly using MLA or APA and answer any questions* [emphasis added]. (Transcript from interview with participant 11).

The fourth category is *Discipline course instructors' encouragement to use EAP skills*. This category includes participants' statements that discipline instructors encourage students to make use of EAP skills. The encouragement can be placing emphasis on the importance of EAP skills and pushing students to use them. A discipline instructor may show this encouragement by verbally placing emphasis on the importance of EAP skills. The following excerpt from an interview is the only data in this category. The participant in this interview also happens to be a discipline instructor. The participant mentions that discipline instructors do encourage students to use EAP skills such as referencing. This encouragement is by stressing to students the importance of referencing.

Researcher: do you think the instructors in the discipline courses make it clear enough that "I have this expectation from you that you need to use these you know skills that we just talked about whether it's presentation skills, short answer writing, essay writing whatever skills they get from the EAP courses?"

Participant: here in the department, we are you know, encouraging students to use the APA style, then you know you know, there are different formats and styles, for you know referencing sources, there are the MLA and here in the department, *we are all being as instructors to you know urge and encourage students to use the APA style so then APA is used every every time when they do a search for information* [emphasis added]. So of course, these counts, even when I asked them to write a mini research or a paper an essay (in their discipline linguistics course) they have to you know write down the resources, using the APA style and how they do the quotation and referencing in paraphrasing the in-text citation is

important, especially in you know assignments in exams sentence structure paragraph is very important. (Transcript from interview with participant 7).

The fifth category is *Student peers' influence*. This category includes a participant's statements that students can influence each other in terms of how they perceive EAP and transferring EAP skills to discipline courses. Such an influence can be based on the way peers perform with EAP skills. The following excerpt from an interview is the only data in this category. The participant in the interview describes how students may be influenced negatively from peers of a higher level than them. The participant describes how students who are not privately educated may feel they are not treated fairly by discipline instructors due to the impact of privately educated students in discipline courses, and this can cause them to feel negativity towards EAP skills.

Researcher: Like in terms of the environment within the discipline courses, do you think like among, the peers among the students, they have like a positive or negative attitude towards the skills that they gained from the writing courses?

Participant: yeah um. it's kind of mixed, I would say the reaction, and I mean this isn't based on any kind of, this is just based on feedback from my students, you know. And when I meet my students, I generally get, you know, the students, that I do meet I generally get positive feedback from them, they say that the skills, we have given them have been helpful, but I don't I don't get that same positive feedback from the instructors working within the disciplines. And I think that goes back to just I think instructors working in the disciplines they kind of forget that the students are foreign language students because that's what students in



Kuwait, are there they're studying English as a foreign language so. And the other, *the other problem, I think, is that the students that are coming out of the academic writing courses, as I said, are foreign language students but when they move into the disciplines, I won't say they're competing, but they're find themselves in the same class as students, that have had a private English education. So, in essence, those students are almost native speakers, so I think the students coming out of academic writing courses are kind of unfairly judged in terms of their academic writing skills, because kind of the benchmark is these native speakers. And I think that leads to a lot of negativity [emphasis added].* (Transcript added from interview with participant 3).

Apart from the five categories above, there is also the category *Lack of knowledge about the transfer climate*. There were a total of 6 participants who did not know how to describe the transfer climate of discipline courses due to a lack of knowledge of whether it was supportive or not. This category includes participants stating 'I do not know' or that 'I am unsure' in terms of what goes on in the discipline courses. Participants state they do not know for sure whether assignments in discipline courses accommodate the use of EAP skills, however they mention what they know is done in their own EAP courses to align with discipline courses' needs. Participants also state they do not know whether discipline instructors and student peers demonstrate support or positivity towards EAP skills. The following excerpt demonstrates one of the participant responses that falls under this category. The participant mentions that it is difficult to answer the researcher's question on whether the transfer climate is supportive or not. The participant continues by explaining that as EAP instructors, they lack knowledge on the kinds of things assigned

in the discipline and to what extent such assignments integrate EAP skills. The participant mentions that in order for EAP instructors to get an idea of the kinds of things assigned in the disciplines, they simply search via the internet.

Researcher: So, is there anything you would like to say about their courses (discipline courses), like in terms of how their courses are structured with regards to writing academic writing skills or, for example whether or not those discipline instructors actually demonstrate any kind of expectation, like, “I expect you to reference, or you know, like search for academic sources, format you're writing in a certain way”. Do you think any of that is present?

Participant: *So I think it is difficult to answer because, we usually create our content by taking from when we find in the internet or other courses outside. Usually there are ones from the US or the UK, so these materials are used for students who are using them in this disciplines. But again, there's nothing concrete that we have from the discipline itself, so you don't even have models of thinking from other disciplines [emphasis added], depending on the backgrounds, we asked each other, we have so most of us are familiar with literature and translation, so I think yeah we really bring a diversity of content related to this fields. When it's come to, for example, marketing, maybe different kind of business for example, I think we're lacking good examples or models (Transcript added from interview with participant 8).*

The table below illustrates the research question 1 responses of participants who are (a) *EAP instructors only* compared to the responses of participants who are (b) *EAP &*

*discipline instructors*. What is most important in this table is that all of the categories associated with group (b) are also associated with group a. In other words, the group (b) participants did not generate any unique categories. This is important because the research question asked about the perceptions of EAP instructors. If group (b) participants had generated unique categories, those categories might have been associated with the participants' roles as discipline instructors, not as EAP instructors, in which case those categories would have been less relevant to the research question. Since all of the categories associated with group (b) participants are also associated with group (a) participants, it is safe to assume that all these categories reflect the perceptions of EAP instructors.

**Table 3**

*Comparison of Group (a) and Group (b) Responses for Research Question 1*

Ways in which EAP instructors think transfer climates in discipline courses are (un)supportive	Number of participants who are EAP instructors only	Number of participants who are EAP instructors & Discipline instructors
Existence of opportunities in discipline courses	7	4
Discipline instructors' expectations in discipline courses	13	3
Discipline instructors' guidance for using EAP skills	5	3
Discipline course instructors' encouragement to use EAP skills	1	1
Discipline course peers' influence	1	0

### ***Summary of research question 1 findings***

After outlining data excerpts of each category/subcategory of the first research question above, Table 4 below provides a summary of the findings for the first research question. The table indicates the number of participants who mentioned something that falls under each category. All participants under each category are different individuals, however there were some participants who mentioned more than one aspect of the transfer climate as supportive. For instance, there were two participants who mentioned 'Discipline instructors' expectations in discipline courses' in a supportive way, as well as 'Discipline instructors' guidance for using EAP skills'. Also, of the participants who mentioned that 'Discipline instructors have unrealistic expectations' 2 of them also mentioned a supportive aspect of the transfer climate, more specifically, 'Existence of opportunities in discipline courses'. The table illustrates the aspects of the transfer climate that were mentioned the most by participants as being supportive were 'Existence of opportunities in discipline courses' (mentioned by 11 participants) and 'Discipline course instructors' expectations' (mentioned by 13 participants). After those categories, the categories 'Discipline course instructors' guidance' and 'Discipline course instructors' encouragement' were not mentioned as much, the former mentioned by 8 participants, and the latter by 2 participants. Also, there was only one participant response that fell under the category 'Discipline course peers' influence'. In terms of aspects of the transfer climate that participants perceived as unsupportive, a lower number of participants perceived this (a total of 6). There were 2 participants who reported a lack of opportunities in discipline courses for students to transfer EAP skills. Also, there were a total of 4 participants who reported discipline instructors' unsupportive expectations

towards EAP transfer. Also one of the participants who reported on discipline instructors' unsupportive expectations towards EAP transfer also reported on an unsupportive influence from discipline course peers.

**Table 4**

*Summary of Research Question 1 Findings*

Ways in which EAP instructors think transfer climates in discipline courses are (un)supportive	Number of participants who mentioned this as being	
	... supportive	... unsupportive
Transfer opportunities in discipline courses	11	2
Discipline instructors' expectations in discipline courses	13	4
Discipline instructors' guidance for using EAP skills	5	0
Discipline instructors' encouragement to use EAP skills	1	0
Discipline course peers' influence	0	1

**Section 2: What do EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate?**

This following section will outline categories of participant responses that address the second research question: What do EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate?

The following categories address the second research question. Below, this section provides definitions of each category and outlines how many participants mentioned that such steps are currently being done in their EAP courses, and also how many participants mention such things need to be given more attention. The term ‘steps’ refers to what the participants mentioned can be done to prepare students for the transfer climate. To list the categories:

1. Focusing on general academic English skills and subskills
2. Focusing on academic English genres
3. Giving instructions with explicit connections to discipline courses

4. Focusing on discipline-specific English
5. Conducting needs analysis
6. Providing students with digital tools for EAP
7. Putting more emphasis on student responsibility for their own learning and preparing for the disciplines
8. Having more initiative from discipline courses

The first category is Focusing on general academic English skills and subskills. This category includes participants' statements of general academic English skills that they practice with students. They considered such general skills as transferable skills that will be of use for coursework in discipline courses. On one hand, some of these responses from participants provide a broad description of general academic skills, such as mentioning 'academic writing', 'reading', and 'critical thinking', 'practice of universal research skills. On the other hand, other participant responses provide a description that is narrower by specifying certain subskills. For instance, rather than just stating the skill of reading, there was mention of the subskills of skimming and scanning. Also, rather than just mentioning the skill of writing, some participants mentioned subskills such as referencing, developing an argument, or providing evidence.

The following two excerpts illustrate this category. The two excerpts were chosen in order to represent both skills and subskills. The first excerpt below is one of the instances where the participants mentioned there being abundant practice of the skill of reading in place in the EAP course and that it would be of use to students' transition to the disciplines.

Participant: Yes, there will be something in my courses that will help us, you see, on the basic level, the students do not pass the courses unless they know how. Or, let's talk about English 101, or English 102 level. The ones that I taught, English 100, although it is the first level or the academic writing courses, *the students read a lot. I assign my students to read a lot of articles* [emphasis added] and different level, sometimes, sometimes something easy, two pages, five pages, three pages etc. In this level for example students are exposed to a huge amount of, you know, the English language academically. (Transcript from interview with participant 9).

In the next excerpt, a participant mentioned a subskill of reading, 'reading to write'. The participant mentions that 'reading to write' can be included to help prepare students for the transfer climate. This participant is specifically suggesting readings assigned in order for students to write about what they read.

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

The first category is Focusing on academic English genres. This category includes participants' statements 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. Participants' explicit mention of genre labels were indicators of this category. Some participant responses mention genres as broad as 'research paper', or genres of writing such as 'compare and contrast', or 'cause and



effect', which they deem as transferrable to contexts of many discipline courses. While other responses mention more specific genres such as 'lab report writing' that would be of use in science course contexts. There will be two excerpts presented for this category in order to reflect responses with generic descriptions of writing genres and also responses with more specific descriptions of writing genres. The following expert illustrates that in response to the researcher's question, the participant responds with a generic description of writing genres. The participant responds that the EAP course does prepare students with practice of 'compare and contrast' essays, and that from this practice, they assume students will pick up on this kind of writing when they transition to discipline courses.

Researcher: And do you think your course prepares students for even the potential environment that students may face in discipline courses where there isn't really much guidance or explicit expectation, that for instance, there is a particular standard for writing or presentations for instance?

Participant: So now the courses I teach and the way I teach them do cater for that. I teach students, you know *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, you I remember 'compare and contrast'* [emphasis added], how do we start *that kind of essay* [emphasis added], what are the connecting words that link ideas together, how do we join the first paragraph to the second paragraph. 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).

In the next excerpt below, in their response, the participant lists a number of discipline specific genres to illustrate that the majority of disciplines that students will come across will require some kind of writing. They mention lab reports for students in the science disciplines, and also reports for students in business disciplines.

Participant: well most if not all discipline courses require different kinds of writing that employ a variety of different strategies for different audiences, so students may be required to write let's say long essays or short answers to exam questions.

Students may be asked to write lets say *lab reports* [emphasis added], you know, if you're studying science, *project proposals* or *reports on results of experiments* [emphasis added], as what you would do in psycholinguistics. Students may be called to write, let's say if business. (Transcript from interview with participant 11).

The third category is 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 connection 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, particularly fundamental academic writing principles. The following excerpt from one of the interviews illustrates this category. The participant explains in response to my

question that she stresses the importance to students that they will need the writing skills they learn in the EAP course for the disciplines in a number of ways.

Researcher: In terms of the discipline courses, do you think they accommodate or provide opportunities for students to use skills from your courses?

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, 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).

The fourth category is Focusing on Discipline-specific English. Data under this category includes participants' statements of practice in discipline-specific English and how they think it aids students in their transition to the disciplines. Indicators of data under this category include participants expressing concern to incorporate practice of discipline specific English, and their mention of their attempts to incorporate content to the EAP course that is relevant to the disciplines. Such incorporation can come in three ways. It can be as simple as participants' mention of including discipline specific text for students to read and be exposed to disciplinary jargon. Also, this incorporation can also involve EAP instructors conducting research in order to be able to include practice of discipline-specific English that is feasible. Additionally, this incorporation can also

involve a 'writing in the disciplines (WID) approach'. WID is an initiative in composition studies concerned with the writing within the disciplines, not just within EAP. But in EAP, this approach involves EAP instructors collaborating with an instructor of the disciplines in order to include for students to practice discipline-specific writing in the EAP course. From this collaboration, the EAP instructor is informed of the kinds of writing involved in a particular discipline, and similarly, the discipline instructor is informed of the requirements of general academic writing. There are three excerpts shown below that fall under this category, because they illustrate the three different ways in which EAP instructors incorporate discipline-specific English content, as mentioned above.

Firstly, the following excerpt from one of the interviews illustrates the first form mentioned above. 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, of course, not all general, because, because I am not teaching them for one year or five years , 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).

Secondly, the next excerpt illustrates the second form above. The EAP instructor in this interview explains doing research to incorporate Discipline-specific English to their course. To be precise, the instructor mentions doing this research by following up with former EAP students on what they currently do in discipline courses.

Participant: I also maintain a relationship with students that are in several disciplines, and so I can check in and say, '*what are you guys actually doing*' [emphasis added]. So that's why I can say Ok, this is the vocabulary that we're assigned to work on, so I'll do that vocabulary. So I think that's why students who have come through my courses, I feel maybe are a little bit more confident when they go into their courses. (Transcript from interview with participant 4).

Thirdly, the next excerpt illustrates the third form above. In the excerpt below another EAP instructor mentioned having experience teaching a joint writing in the disciplines WID course between EAP and the discipline of sociology. The participant explained that this course involved collaboration between programs. To elaborate, they further explained that as the EAP instructor they were responsible for assessing aspects of students' writing, and they were given the textbook for the sociology course. The sociology instructor taught and assessed for the content.

Researcher: So the next question asks how if at all do you think discipline courses accommodate for the use of skills from these academic writing courses that you teach?

Participant: *And I've actually taught writing across the curriculum classes. It was freshman comp two and sociology. We worked together on it. It was very good [emphasis added].. It was very fruitful [emphasis added]..* It was when Dr. STH (the sociology instructor) was in the department, but he had to leave to go to a different university. Anyway we did writing across the curriculum for several semesters. (Transcript from interview with participant 19).

Researcher: That's really interesting I didn't know about that

Participant: *What happened was, he would teach the content for the papers, and I had a copy of his sociology book. I marked for the writing part, organization, structure, grammar. But not just grammar, most people think it's just grammar and mechanics, but writing is so much more. He (the sociology instructor) marked on the content [emphasis added]..* (Transcript from interview with participant 19).

The fifth category is Conducting needs analysis. Data under this category include participants' statements of collecting information from discipline courses on what kind of writing and EAP-related needs there are in discipline courses. An indicator of this category include the mention of the term 'needs analysis'. Another indicator of this category is the EAP instructor emphasizing the importance of carrying out a formal, systematic needs analysis of the genres and language needs of the disciplines, rather than assuming with is needed. 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. For instance, she poses an example that there needs to be a more systematic investigation of what kinds of genres students are faced with when they enter the disciplines. The participant also goes on to mention that needs

analysis is needed in their program so that the EAP course is truly designed for the needs of students in an EFL context in Kuwait, and not a western context.

Participant: there needs to be an awful lot more, and you know, an awful lot *more needs analysis* as well you know you have, at the moment, you know, in the 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. Okay, so when that's going back to what I said earlier, 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 not it's not good enough for me to say yeah I think summary is is relevant, I think narrative is no, no, there should be a proper needs analysis conducted. You know, there should be, as I said, you which goes back to the very first thing that I said to you is very poor communication between the teachers that are actually teaching academic writing. And the actual teachers that are teaching within the disciplines so that that needs to be more systematic and yeah much more comprehensive than it is now. *content* [emphasis added]. Transcript from interview with participant 3).

Researcher: yeah, I think it can be said about a lot of organizations actually.

Participant: yeah so. Like we're all teaching the same genres over and over and over again without actually. Knowing yeah, it was I without actually knowing I mean you know, because a lot of the teachers. You know, again, a lot of the teachers will say I can mention at AUK right a lot of the teachers within AUK that

are working within the English program are, not all, but they're coming from a certain background Okay, they they've either, you know, been educated in the states or they've been educated in Europe, and you know, they're writing these curriculums as if they're back in the states or if they're back in Europe, yeah without actually you know customizing them for will see the students, that we have here in Kuwait or for the courses, you know I mean, you know, who's to say that you know the disciplines are exactly the same across all colleges they're not, you know, *so that, that needs to be accessed more you know, specifically what students need for those discipline disciplinary courses* [emphasis added].

Transcript from interview with participant 3).

The sixth category is 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. Indicators of this category is participants' mention of the label 'tools' or 'digital tools', and what aspects of academic writing they can be useful, such as for referencing, or for synthesizing. 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, you know word processing tools. You know, tools digital tools that help them with grammar, you know, tools that help them to you know, synthesize research all that kind of stuff so there's you know you're, you're doing your PhD thesis, you know all the digital tools that are available to help somebody like you. But I think there's a complete absence of this within the within academic writing I think academic writing, the teaching of academic writing and i've taught in a couple of organizations in Kuwait is a little bit old fashioned in terms of fashion, you know, 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).*

Researcher: Right.

Participant: You know when i'm when i'm submitting writing it and nobody judges me for doing this, and nobody nobody thinks any less of me or, but when a non-native student does, that is, you know, their called you know a cheater or all you know that type of. (Transcript from interview with participant 3).

The seventh category is Putting more emphasis on student responsibility for their own learning and preparing for the disciplines. Responses that fall under this category state that, other than the responsibility that an EAP program has for preparing students for discipline courses, students also need to have some level of responsibility to become prepared for the disciplines. To elaborate, some participants suggested requiring students to learn independently so that EAP students can learn to familiarize themselves with the EAP skills, genres, and terminology they need for the disciplines. The excerpt below

from a participants' interview reflects this category. In responding to what they would include in the course to prepare students, the participant made the point that students should also have some responsibility for their advancement in EAP skills through independent reading and writing. They also suggested that such independent learning could be a chance for students to socialize themselves into the disciplines through reading and writing.

Researcher: So this is like the final question. So based on our discussion on whether discipline courses seem accommodating to EAP skills. Based on that discussion, what, if anything, would you like to include in your course or your courses to prepare students, but you haven't been able to?

Participant: One hand, yes, on one hand, I can tell all or I will draw back to my first to my previous answers. *You know, 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. You know, courses, they are different. The language is brief. The terms are different, etc. So it's a serious it is your responsibility as a learner or as a student to to to to accommodate yourself with all these details* [emphasis added]. Now, on the other hand, if I have enough time and the course as is generated differently, I would say that I may have extra reading classes for my students. Now I'm saying extra because we have a lot to do. Something extra to include would be something called *independent learning*. Students can go home and do the reading. I would like to ask my students to read 5-7 pages but c'mon not all learners are interested in that. And you know you may ask all students about their major. I think this

could be a good idea. You may ask or 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. You know this is a brilliant idea, I think this is a very practical idea to be honest. (Transcript from interview with participant 1).

The eighth category is Having more initiative in discipline courses. Data under this category include participants' mention that the initiative of discipline instructors/courses could also help prepare students for the transfer climate. What is meant by initiative taken by instructors/courses of the disciplines is that rather than them simply having expectations that students will automatically transfer what they were exposed to in EAP courses, that they also make efforts to actively accommodate for that transfer.

Participants mentioned such accommodation can be accomplished in three different ways. One way mentioned by a participant involves discipline instructors making the effort to understand the proficiency level of students entering to discipline courses. Second, a way mentioned by another participant involves there being sufficient communication between instructors of the disciplines and instructors of EAP programs in order to create a smooth transition for students in terms of EAP transfer. Third, another way mentioned by a third participant is discipline instructors' involvement in developing a course that connects skills from all courses that students may take.

The following excerpt illustrates the first way discipline instructors can accomplish the accommodation. In this excerpt a participant suggests that discipline instructors can better understand the proficiency level of students entering their courses. This involves discipline instructors visiting to observe EAP courses to understand students' levels, and

also involve the discipline instructors who come into the EAP course to teach a unit from their discipline course.

Participant: I'd also like to have, *if I could come in and have an instructor from one of the discipline courses 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 cross level communication as part of the preparation for matriculation I think that would benefit everyone* [emphasis added], but it's very much just the dream I can't imagine. (Transcript from interview with participant 4).

This second excerpt illustrates the second way discipline instructors can accomplish the accommodation. In this excerpt a participant suggests the need for communication between discipline instructors/programs and EAP instructors/programs through meetings with regard to the kind of EAP skills and the kind of writing genres expected of students in certain disciplines. The excerpt below illustrates, a participant suggestion that the initiative needed from discipline instructors is to meet up and communicate with the EAP program what kind of assignments they require from students and what kind of EAP skills they involve, and to have some sort of tracking or reporting of students' progress in transitioning to the disciplines and that these reports get sent to EAP programs.

Researcher: What, if anything else would you include in your course to prepare students? Specifically, preparing students for the discipline courses that may or may not seem accommodating to skills from your course. So like what I mean by

that is you know, some of them may be obviously accommodating like maybe sociology or literature, for example, but maybe courses like computer science will not be. So is there anything that maybe you would want to include to, you know, prepare students in this way?

Participant: If there is a chance, I don't I don't I don't I don't know if this is possible, but if there is a chance for *instructors who teach different uh different disciplines disciplines to sit with language instructors and have a conversation about of what do we expect what what where do you think you're students are lacking, and if there is some sort of reports or tracking of students who are taking our courses and going to the, you know, discipline courses, and have some feedback or reports about how they're doing and what you're lacking. I don't think currently we have this sort of data, but I think if we have this data, it's going to be a good place to start everyone* [emphasis added]. (Transcript from interview with participant 8).

Researcher: Do you think it's unrealistic? Doing what you mentioned?

Participant: Well, we haven't tried it it's that has never been done, at least if we have just examples of assignments that students are faced with, that would be something that we can you know we if we get this we can judge if this is something doable or not, but we don't we don't really have the attempts of presence. Maybe the meetings with instructors might be difficult and maybe instructors will not have time for this. Maybe it's not going to be useful, but in terms of the materials, I think it's going to be always helpful and, of course. i'm

not saying that we're going to use the same materials and presented to our foundation students but we're going to adapt these materials, but at least the context things. We as instructors that we might not have experienced about if we can take it from someone who has experience we can help with that and also that goes along with the vocabulary and grammar so for different kind of discipline there's specific kind of grammar they use will use. Their specific kind of vocabulary. (Transcript from interview with participant 8).

Finally, this third excerpt illustrates the third way discipline instructors can accomplish the accommodation. This third suggestion involves developing a course that can be required for all students that helps show connections between skills from courses that students take, such as their major courses, their general requirements, and their electives. Therefore, initiative from discipline instructors is needed in order for a course such as this to be developed.

Researcher: Based on our discussion, particularly like how discipline courses may not be very accommodating, and like the instructor making explicit connections, or the structure of the course not having explicit connections to your course, So based on that discussion, is there anything else that you would include to you course to prepare students for those kinds of situations? And if you think there is nothing to include, that is also ok to mention.

Participant: No. There is always room for improvement in anything that you do, even when you teach the same course twice. There is always room for improvement in the same course, although, I'm talking to you from personal experience. When I design my course, or when I design my assessment, I have

these things in mind, how these are going to benefit the students when they take their engineering courses for instance, or their business course, or media course or whatever. There is always room for improvement. *I think more coordination between the departments would definitely lead to like a better syncing in of theories and better use of skills that we want students to have. For example, my daughter is a student at Western Ontario University, and she is a student in the engineering program, and of course she has to take English writing courses. She told me that they have something called E-connect. E-connect is a course that connects all the skills that they learn from all the courses like engineering. She has to take philosophy, she has to take something about logic, languages, sciences, math, of course, in addition to writing courses. So in this course, the E-connect course, the objective is to connect between all the skills that they study, or try to accomplish from these courses. And it actually helps them crystallize their personality as an engineer for example. I think if we apply this idea, it would be great [emphasis added], but of course it needs planning, a lot of logistic support and a lot of administrative support as well. (Transcript from interview with participant 2).*

The table below illustrates the research question 2 responses of participants who are (a) EAP instructors only compared to the responses of participants who are (b) EAP & Discipline instructors. What is most important in this table is that all of the categories associated with group (b) are also associated with group a. In other words, the group (b) participants did not generate any unique categories. This is important because this second research question asked about the perceptions of EAP instructors, similar to the first

research question. If group (b) participants had generated unique categories, those categories might have been associated with the participants' roles as discipline instructors, not as EAP instructors, in which case those categories would have been less relevant to the research question. Since all of the categories associated with group (b) participants are also associated with group (a) participants, it is safe to assume that all these categories reflect the perceptions of EAP instructors.



**Table 5***Comparison of Group (a) and Group (b) Responses for Research Question 2*

What do EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate?	Number of participants who mentioned this Participants who are EAP instructors only	Participants who are EAP instructors and discipline instructors
Focus on general academic English skills and subskills	11	5
Focusing on academic English genres	5	1
Making explicit connections to discipline courses	2	2
Focusing on discipline-specific English	3	3
Conducting needs analysis	3	0
Provide students with digital tools for EAP	1	0
Put more emphasis on student responsibility for their own learning and preparing for the disciplines	2	0
Having more initiative in discipline courses.	3	0

***Summary of research question 2 findings***

After outlining data excerpts of each category of the second research question above, this table below provides a summary of the findings for the second research question. The table indicates the number of participants who mentioned something that falls under each category. To elaborate, the column on the right outlines the total number of participants who mentioned something with relation to each of the categories. 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 6**

*Summary of Research question 2 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

**Conclusion**

This chapter presented the findings of both the first and second research questions guiding this study. First, to summarize the findings for the first research question, ‘In what ways do EAP instructors think transfer climates in discipline courses are (un)supportive?’, the findings are divided into the following categories and subcategories.

1. Transfer opportunities in discipline courses
  - a. Existence of opportunities
  - b. Limited opportunities
2. Discipline instructors’ expectations in discipline courses

- a. Discipline instructors' realistic expectations of transfer
  - b. Discipline instructors' adjusted expectations of transfer
  - c. Discipline course instructors' unrealistic expectations of transfer
3. Discipline instructors' guidance for using EAP skills
  4. Discipline instructors' encouragement to use EAP skills
  5. Student peers' influence

The subcategories of 'existence of opportunities' and 'discipline instructors' expectations of transfer' were the subcategories with the most responses from participants that reflect a supportive component of the transfer climate. The subcategory 'Discipline course instructors' unrealistic expectations of transfer' was the subcategory with the most responses from participants that reflects an unsupportive component of the transfer climate. In terms of the category student peers' influence, it had the least responses, a single response, and it reflects an unsupportive transfer climate. Apart from the responses that fall under the categories above, there were a total of 6 participants who stated that they did not know what ways the transfer climate of discipline courses is (un)supportive.

Second, to summarize the findings for the second research question, 'What do EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate?', the findings are divided into categories that reflect what EAP instructors think can be done to prepare students for the transfer climate. The categories 1-7 illustrates responses on what can be done to prepare students within EAP courses, and the eighth category illustrates what can be done to prepare students within discipline courses. To list the categories:

1. Focusing on general academic English skills and subskills
2. Focusing on academic English genres

3. Giving instructions with explicit connections to discipline courses
4. Focusing on discipline-specific English
5. Conducting needs analysis
6. Providing students with digital tools for EAP
7. Putting more emphasis on student responsibility for their own learning and preparing for the disciplines
8. Having more initiative from discipline courses

The step that was mentioned the most by participants to prepare students was the EAP courses' focus on general academic English skills and subskills. The step that was mentioned the least, by one participant, to prepare students was 'providing students with digital tools for EAP'.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

#### **Introduction**

This discussion chapter will be divided based on the two research questions that guide this current study. This chapter will discuss the findings of this current study and how they connect to relevant empirical research and theory. Next, this chapter will provide a conclusion which includes practical implications, limitations of this current study, and implications for future research. The subsection Practical implications outlines what can be concluded from the findings of this study with regards to instruction and planning towards EAP courses and EAP teacher training. Next, the subsection Research limitations outlines the ways in which this study's research methodology may fall short. Finally, the third subsection implications for future research outlines ways in which further research can emerge from this current study.

#### **Research Question 1 Discussion**

Firstly, these findings for the first research question show that the EAP transfer climate component concerning 'opportunities to transfer' in earlier studies is relevant from a new perspective: the EAP instructors. To refer back to the literature review, there have been a number of EAP education studies that point to the transfer climate component concerning opportunities to transfer prior EAP knowledge. For instance, the studies conducted by Leki and Carson (1994) and Harlkau (1994) illustrate students experiencing a challenge in discipline courses due to a lack of opportunities to transfer prior EAP knowledge. Both of their research designs involve collecting data through students' perceptions. Leki and Carson (1994) conducted a survey where students rated

how well they think the EAP course prepares them for discipline courses based on the challenges they faced. When it comes to Harklau (1994), they followed 4 Chinese ethnic immigrant students as they made the transition from EAP to discipline classes. Findings from Leki and Carson (1994) and Harlkau (1994) indicate students perceiving a challenge in discipline courses due to a lack of opportunity from a difference in written (Leki & Carson, 1994) and spoken (Harklau, 1994) language use compared to EAP courses. To recall one of the examples from Leki and Carson's (1994) findings, students expressed frustration at the difference between the writing they are assigned to do in EAP courses and the writing they are assigned to do in discipline courses in terms of difficulty level. This caused a lack of opportunity to transfer what they are capable of writing in EAP courses. Similarly, in this current study, some of the EAP instructors' reports indicate an unsupportive transfer climate due to limited opportunities in discipline courses. One of the participants mentioned there being a focus on multiple choice questions in discipline courses which allows less opportunities for writing.

Secondly, these findings for the first research question show that the EAP transfer climate component concerning 'discipline instructor support' in earlier studies is also relevant from EAP instructors' perspective. As mentioned in the literature review, there have been EAP education studies that point to the transfer climate component concerning support from discipline instructors to transfer prior EAP knowledge (Leki, 2006; Leki; 2001; Evans & Green, 2007; Gaffas, 2019). For instance, Leki (2006), conducted an interview study with EAP students on their experiences in transitioning to discipline courses. As the findings illustrate, among the challenges that student participants mentioned were ways in which discipline instructors do not provide support. For

instance, a participant mentioned that they struggled with lack of support from a world business instructor who did not provide information about what would be on an upcoming quiz. Similarly, in this current study, EAP instructors reported lack of support from discipline instructors based on the kinds of expectations discipline instructors have towards EAP transfer. One of the data subcategories represents responses from EAP instructors expressing that discipline instructors' expectations of EAP transfer are too high, and this sets an unrealistic goal for the EAP students entering their courses.

Thirdly, these findings for the first research question show that the EAP transfer climate component concerning 'peer support in the disciplines' in earlier studies is also relevant from EAP instructors' perspective. As mentioned in the literature review, there have been EAP education studies that point to the transfer climate component concerning support to transfer prior EAP knowledge from student peers in the disciplines (Leki; 2001; LoCastro, 1997). For example, Leki (2001) conducted a longitudinal study following non-native English-speaking students (NNES) through their experiences with group work in discipline courses. Apart from conducting interviews with these students, they also conducted observations of the group work. They reported on challenges that non-native English speaking students faced caused by their peers in group work of certain disciplines courses. Their findings indicate that the student participants were not able to transfer their learning and to showcase their ability in such group work due to lack of support from their peers. The peers would allocate tasks for group members rather than completing the task in a group. Similarly, in this current study, an EAP instructor reported a way in which student peers in the disciplines may have an unsupportive impact towards students' EAP transfer. This EAP instructor mentioned how student peers who

obviously have a higher language and writing proficiency may have an unsupportive impact in discouraging students of a lower level to them.

Given that the EAP transfer climate components in earlier studies are relevant from EAP instructors' perspectives, this study's findings reinforce the impact of these components. The findings of this current study's research question 1 demonstrate the relevance of the components of 'opportunities to transfer', 'discipline instructor support', and 'peer support in the disciplines'. Therefore, these findings reinforce that these are components of the EAP transfer climate and that they could have an impact on students' EAP transfer to discipline courses.

The findings for the first research question also extend previous views of the components of EAP transfer climate. One of the ways these findings extend previous views of the components of EAP transfer climate is by offering more concrete examples of each of these components. In referring back to the literature review, it appears that James (2010) is the only EAP education study thus far to examine all components of the transfer climate. Their findings outline concrete examples on how different components of the transfer climate apply to the EAP education context. For instance, they offer examples of how EAP students perceive a lack of support from discipline courses when there is a lack of opportunities for them to use the same writing skills they learnt in EAP courses. There were also examples mentioned of EAP students perceiving a lack of support from discipline instructors' lack of expectations towards strong language skills. However, findings of this current study's first research question offer additional concrete examples from the perspective of the EAP instructor. For instance, when it comes to discipline instructors' expectations towards EAP transfer, this current study offers



concrete examples of different kinds of expectations. Compared to James' (2010) findings which outline lack of support from discipline instructors lack of expectation towards EAP transfer, the findings of this current study outline:

- *Discipline instructors' realistic expectations of transfer*
- *Discipline instructors' adjusted expectations of transfer*
- *Discipline instructors' unrealistic expectations of transfer*

The findings for the first research question also extend previous views of the components of EAP transfer climate by offering concrete examples of a supportive transfer climate. Findings of EAP education studies do not reflect concrete examples of support in transfer climates as much as concrete examples of lack of support in transfer climates. As the previous paragraphs above outlined, there has been a body of EAP education research with findings outlining the challenges students faced in transitioning from EAP courses to discipline courses. Many of these challenges are related to the students experiencing a lack of support to transfer EAP skills from the components regarding lack of opportunities, lack of support from discipline instructors, or peers in the disciplines. When it comes to concrete examples of support in transfer climates, this has been better represented in workplace training research. To refer back to the literature review, there have been workplace training studies with findings outlining a supportive transfer climate from the component of opportunities to transfer prior knowledge, support to transfer from supervisors, and peers. For instance, Lim and Johnson (2002) pointed out that discussions with supervisors on using new learning, supervisor's involvement in training, and positive feedback from supervisors were forms of support most recognized by trainees as having a positive impact on their transfer of learning. However, given that

this current study is in the EAP education context, it offers concrete examples of support for that particular context. This current study's findings illustrate support from existence of opportunities for EAP transfer in discipline coursework, discipline instructors' expectations of EAP transfer, discipline instructors' guidance on how EAP students can use EAP skills, and their encouragement for EAP students to use EAP skills.

The category *Lack of knowledge about the transfer climate* indicates that it is possible for EAP instructors not to have enough information about the EAP transfer climate in discipline courses. Although the 6 participant responses under this category do not indicate that the majority of participants 'do know know' or 'do not have knowledge', they reveal that EAP instructors could be made more aware of what goes on in discipline courses. That is, EAP instructors could be made more aware of whether there are enough chances of students to transfer their learnt EAP skills to discipline courses. Being asked about the EAP transfer climate allowed EAP instructors to reflect on the lack of communication between their programs and disciplinary programs with regard to EAP skills.

## **Research Question 2 Discussion**

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. As mentioned in the literature review, there have been studies conducted based on different ways EAP instructors can promote EAP learning transfer (Green, 2015; Cheng, 2007; Yayli, 2011; Shepherd, 2018; Hill, Khoo, Hsieh, 2020; Leopold, 2018; Currie, 1999; Johns, 1988). The way this study extends on scholarly work on learning transfer in EAP education is by

drawing attention to the factor of transfer climate and whether it can have a supportive or unsupportive effect on learning transfer. Existing research has focused on instructional approaches and their effect on EAP transfer. For instance, there has been research addressing how instructional approaches involving contextual similarity or abstraction can affect EAP transfer. However, this current study focuses on a different factor, transfer climate and what kind of effect (supportive or unsupportive) it can have on EAP transfer.

For one, most of the steps that this study's participants stated can be taken in EAP courses align with findings in existing TFT research. The step *Focusing on general academic English skills and subskills* aligns with existing TFT scholarly work (Perkins & Salomon, 1992; Green, 2015). In the EAP context, bridging would involve encouraging students to make general academic English knowledge abstract in that they can apply it to various target contexts. To recall an example from the literature review, a general academic English skill such as annotation while reading can be made abstract in that students can apply it in a psychology course or a chemistry course. In this study, EAP instructors' step of focusing on general academic English skills and subskills aligns with bridging which encourages students to be equipped with general EAP skills to use them independently when needed. The reason why this step aligns is because general academic English skills and subskills require abstraction from students when they transfer such skills to different contexts, much like bridging. Abstraction refers to making a skill such as referencing applicable to a subsequent context different from the previous context where referencing was used. Therefore, participants' mention of this step to prepare students may reinforce the effectiveness of the technique of bridging, however, not only for preparing students to transfer, but also with consideration to the transfer climate.

Second, the step *Focusing on academic English genres* aligns with existing TFT scholarly work (Swales, 1990; Cheng; 2007; Yayli, 2011). This suggestion that has emerged from EAP instructors in this study aligns with scholarly work that advocates implementation of genre-based instruction in EAP courses. Swlaes (1990) as well as empirical studies such as Cheng (2007) and Yayli (2011) argue that a genre-based approach is effective for EAP instruction as it can promote transfer of that genre knowledge to future writing contexts. Moreover, this suggestion that has emerged from EAP instructors in this study also somewhat aligns with the techniques of bridging and hugging. For instance, under this category, there were some participants who mentioned that teaching broad genres of writing such as ‘compare and contrast’ or ‘cause and effect’ is an effective way that EAP courses prepare students for the transfer climate. Such a suggestion would align with using the technique of bridging, which would require students to make their knowledge of ‘compare and contrast’ writing abstract in that it is applicable to writing in different discipline courses. On the other hand, under this same category, there were also participants who mentioned that teaching genres specific to certain disciplines is an effective way that EAP courses prepare students for the transfer climate. Such a suggestion would align with using the technique of hugging, which would require EAP instructors to expose students to genres that are used in discipline courses that the students will transition to. Therefore, participants’ mention of this step may reinforce the effectiveness of bridging and hugging techniques and genre based instruction. Such findings draw attention to whether bridging and hugging techniques and genre based instruction may be used to not only prepare students to transfer but also for the transfer climate. For instance, given that bridging and genre-based instruction involve

abstraction, students may be able to independently make EAP knowledge abstract even in discipline courses with unsupportive transfer climates. As for hugging, due to this technique promoting transfer that is automatic and unconscious which is stimulated by similarity to the discipline course, students may not need support in order to transfer to discipline courses.

Third, the step *Giving instructions with explicit connections to discipline courses* aligns with existing TFT research. This step that has emerged from EAP instructor responses in this study aligns with the suggestions made in TFT research such as Shepherd (2018). This study suggests that in order to promote transfer, particularly transfer which occurs between different contexts such as EAP courses and discipline courses, students are in need of someone to make the connection explicit to them. It so happens that this is what the participants' responses mentioned under this category. Participants mentioned that as EAP instructors, they alert students with instructions to implement particular EAP skills to discipline courses as they explain they are relevant. For instance, one of the participants mentioned stressing to their students that they will need the writing principles they learnt in the EAP course for different writing tasks in discipline courses, whether it be for writing papers, answering essay questions, and will also make use of presentation skills taught in the EAP course. Participants' mention of this step may reinforce the effectiveness of giving instructions with explicit connections to discipline courses to prepare students for EAP transfer. Such findings draw attention to whether giving instructions in this way may be used to not only prepare students to transfer but also for the transfer climate. For instance, EAP instructors may be able to use

these kinds of explicit instructions to mention to students how they may have to transfer EAP knowledge in discipline courses that do not explicitly expect EAP skills.

Fourth, the findings of the category *Focusing on discipline-specific English* also aligns with existing TFT research. This step that has emerged from EAP instructor responses in this study also aligns with the technique of hugging. To elaborate, focusing on discipline-specific English in EAP courses would involve exposing students to English that is similar to what they will encounter in discipline courses. Due to the similarity, this step aligns with the technique of hugging. Also among the responses from EAP instructors that fall under this category is mention of implementing a WID approach in EAP courses as a way to prepare students for the transfer climate. Mention of a WID approach falls under this category because it has an emphasis on the discipline and is therefore a discipline-specific approach. This response aligns with research conducted on the effectiveness of 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. To recall, in Leopold's (2011) study, they collected perceptions of EAP students in a course where they implemented a WID approach. More specifically, these students' perceptions were collected using a questionnaire 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 (2001) findings describe positive learning outcomes from EAP courses with a WID approach and learning transfer occurring.

Fifth, the step of *Putting more emphasis on student responsibility for their own learning and preparing for the disciplines* aligns with existing TFT research. In referring back to Currie's (1999) action-based study, the student participants mentioned positive outcomes with the 'student-ethnography' approach taken by their EAP instructor. To elaborate, 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. In Currie's (1999) study, they adopted this approach and assigned students three ways in which they can find out what EAP skills are considered important in the disciplines. For instance, one of the ways is interviewing their discipline instructors to seek out their views of academic writing. Similarly, in this current study, the category 'Put more emphasis on student responsibility for their own learning and preparing for the disciplines' describes participant responses that express that it is not only instructors' responsibility for EAP transfer, but students must also be responsible by independently taking initiative and finding out how they can be prepared for the disciplines.

Participants' mention of this step may reinforce the effectiveness of such an approach of students researching the EAP skills considered important for discipline courses. This may allow them to be prepared for discipline instructors who do not explicitly state their EAP expectations.

However, there are some steps to be taken in EAP courses from categories of the second research question that do not align with existing TFT research. First, the step of *Conducting needs analysis* does not directly align with existing TFT research. Although there do exist studies that have pursued needs analysis to improve the instruction of EAP courses (Gaffas, 2019; Zhu, 2004, Alhadiah, 2021; Jackson, 2005; Jackson, Meyer,

Parkinson, 2006; Gholaminejad, 2022; Mak, 2012), they were not conducted with consideration to the transfer climate, and students being prepared for the transfer climate. For instance, Gaffas (2019) sought the perceptions of EAP students in how well they thought EAP courses prepared them with the academic English language abilities they needed for discipline courses. However, there was no consideration or mention of the transfer climate of discipline courses, and whether students are prepared to face this in their transition to the disciplines. Given that this step does not align with existing research, perhaps needs analysis of discipline courses can be conducted in future research with consideration to potentially unsupportive transfer climates that students may encounter.

Second, the step of *Providing students with digital tools for EAP* does not directly align with existing TFT research. However, there has been a study conducted by Alexander, Depalma and Ringer (2016) that may be the closest research to the suggestion made in this category. The concern of Alexander et. al.'s (2016) is how students are able to transfer their writing and literacy knowledge between different media, for instance from a regular literacy task to a digital literacy task and vice-versa. To address this concern they propose a multidimensional approach that helps student writers develop meta-awareness about how they could reuse and reshape prior writing knowledge for writing in various media. The suggestion that falls under the category 'Provide students with digital tools for EAP' mentions that in order for students to be able to cope in discipline courses, EAP courses need to do a better job of exposing students to digital tools that aid research, referencing, citation, synthesizing. This was a suggestion that was made only by a single participant, nonetheless, it would be insightful to explore whether



the incorporation of digital tools to EAP instruction would have any impact on the promotion of learning transfer and on preparing students for unsupportive transfer climates.

Next, when it comes to the step to be taken in discipline courses, it does not align with existing TFT research. A response that falls under the category *Having more initiative in discipline courses* does not align with predictions that have emerged from relevant research. In this category, one of the EAP instructors suggested that discipline instructors could help by better understanding the students who enter their courses and their language background by observing EAP courses. In referring back to the predictions made based on the relevant research reviewed in this dissertation, some of them involve EAP instructors potentially mentioning the integration of EAP related content as a way that discipline courses can help prepare students for the transfer climate. There were also some predictions that EAP instructors would suggest discipline instructors reflecting on ways their courses can provide an unsupportive transfer climate for EAP transfer, as well as reflecting on what role their discipline courses have towards EAP transfer. However, this particular response mentions discipline instructors contributing by observing EAP courses to become more aware of EAP students' backgrounds and the kind of language and writing proficiency they have. The third response that falls under the category *'having more initiative in discipline courses'* also does not align with predictions that have emerged from relevant research. In this response, one of the EAP instructors suggested that a course is developed that is required for all students which helps show connections between skills from courses that students take. There would be involvement from discipline instructors to develop such a course. Similar to the previous response that

falls under this category, this response does not align with the predictions from relevant research. It would be insightful to explore what discipline instructors can contribute to prepare students for the transfer climate. Such contribution can either be integration of the use of EAP skills in discipline courses, or an administrative contribution of improving communication between programs.

## **Conclusion**

This section of the chapter will conclude this current study with the three subsections: *Practical implications, Research limitations, and Directions for future research.*

### ***Practical implications***

This subsection will outline the practical implications that have emerged from the findings. For one, a practical implication of research question 1 is, given that the findings show that EAP instructors are aware of transfer climate variation; they should take instructional action towards this. As the research question 1 findings indicate, the EAP instructors seemed to perceive transfer climate variation; that is both supportive and unsupportive components related to opportunities to transfer, support from discipline instructors, and support from peers. Therefore, given that they have this awareness that the transfer climate can be unsupportive, this may call for EAP instructors to prepare students to face this. EAP instructors can perhaps give students scenarios of what they will potentially face in different discipline courses. For instance, in certain business studies courses, they may be assigned to write case studies. EAP instructors can briefly

familiarize students with the case study genre, and encourage them to research this genre since their Business studies instructor may not brief them on their expectations of this.

Second, another implication of research question 1 is that EAP instructors can be further educated on aspects of the transfer climate, and how all aspects could impact students' decision to transfer EAP skills in discipline courses. In reflecting on the findings of the first research question, there is mention of some aspects of the transfer climate more than others. For instance, the majority of participants perceived 'existence of opportunities' for students to transfer EAP skills through assignments and coursework and expectations of discipline instructors towards EAP transfer in their courses. However, when it comes to the aspect of the transfer climate involving student peers' attitudes and how that influences the transfer climate, this was barely mentioned by participants. For instance, it could be the case that participants did not perceive the aspect of student peer's influence as much as other factors. Or it could be the case that participants did not view this particular aspect as important and impactful as the aspect of opportunities in the course structure or the expectations of discipline instructors towards EAP transfer. Therefore, this is an implication for teacher training of EAP instructors. EAP instructors, both during their training, and upon entering EAP programs can be made informed of the transfer climate, its different components and their potential impact of learning transfer. For instance, teacher training can involve exposing teacher trainees to findings from workplace training studies that involve each of the transfer climate components. Such EAP teacher training can also expose students to examples that have emerged from this study's findings. The findings of the first research question offer concrete examples of

aspects of a supportive transfer climate that can give practitioners insight on what kind of support to aim for in the target context, that is discipline courses.

Third, an implication emerging from the findings of the second research question is that there appear to be a variety of practical steps that can be taken to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate. In considering the categories that have emerged for the second research question, EAP instructors mentioned eight steps that can be utilized in EAP instruction and disciplinary instruction to prepare students for the transfer climate. Depending on future EAP programs, some of these steps may already be implemented, while others may have to be integrated. For instance, some of the steps may be more widespread among EAP programs such as ‘Focusing on general academic English skills and subskills’, which was mentioned by more than half of the EAP instructors in this study. While others such as ‘Focusing on discipline-specific English’, which was mentioned by six EAP instructors, may not be as widespread in EAP program. This can also depend on if future EAP programs are based on a specific discipline, such as EAP for engineers. If EAP courses are based on a specific discipline, this would already align with ‘Focusing on discipline-specific English. Despite some of the steps already being implemented in EAP programs, EAP instructors/programs may have to be more mindful about using these steps towards preparing for the transfer climate and not merely for learning transfer. For instance, the findings of the second research question outline steps that some participants mentioned such as ‘Focusing on academic English genres’. However, the way these EAP instructors currently implement them may not have consideration to the transfer climate, and therefore, this would need to be accounted for more explicitly in the instruction of the course.

Fourth, another implication that has emerged from the findings of the second research question is that 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. These were the 7 steps of the eight steps in the research question 2 findings. 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 transfer and the transfer climate within the learning context as opposed to the target context. Such findings point to the possibility that EAP instructors may not be that aware of the impact of discipline courses as target contexts on EAP transfer.

### ***Research limitations***

Overall, this section outlines two limitations in terms of the research design of this current study. One aspect of this study that can be considered a limitation is the extent to which the interview instruments were open-ended. In developing the interview instruments, it was a studied decision to make the interview open-ended in nature overall. For instance, rather than controlling what aspects of the transfer climate the participants talk about, it was decided that the interview would be mostly open-ended so that participants talk about the aspect of the transfer climate that naturally comes to mind.

However, the interview could be made more precise by specifying what particular discipline courses participants will refer to with regards to their transfer climate. In other words, if it is specified which discipline courses the participants talk about, their perceptions of the transfer climate may vary. For instance, participants' perceptions of the transfer climate in a physics course may differ to that of a history course, depending on how accommodating the course is to EAP skills. With such information from participants on the transfer climate of particular disciplines, the findings can have more depth, since readers would be able to compare if the transfer climate is more supportive in some disciplines compared to others.

Another limitation to this research is related to the challenge of facing the inherent messiness of qualitative research analysis. Although it may be a challenge to face the messiness that comes with qualitative interview data, it is important not to impose a particular interpretation based on existing research and to interpret the data for what it is. In other words, although I already had a pre-existing understanding on what the components of the transfer climate are, that does not have to entirely control the analysis of this study. Therefore, this is an important consideration that can be taken in future qualitative research.

Apart from limitations of the research design, there have also been limitations detected in the findings of this current study. Depending on future EAP contexts, not all of the steps that emerged in the research question two findings may apply. If future EAP programs were targeted towards a specific discipline like chemistry, as opposed to being for general academic English courses, the findings may differ from what was found in this current study. For instance, discipline courses like chemistry may not have a

supportive transfer climate with regard to the component of ‘opportunities to transfer’. It is possible that chemistry coursework would not involve very much use of EAP skills. Also, if a future EAP program was in an institution where EAP instructors had limited access to disciplinary programs, the findings may differ to what was found in this current study in that EAP instructors would not have a good idea of what the transfer climate is like in discipline courses. This would also lead to limited findings for the second research question, as such EAP instructors would not know how to prepare students for the transfer climate.

### ***Implications for future research***

To conclude this dissertation, this final section will describe implications for future research. Based on the findings of the first research question, it offered insight on ways to build on the construct of transfer climate in EAP, and this can be an avenue for further consideration. Apart from this current study, as well as James' (2010) study, there have not been any studies based on the transfer climate in the EAP education context. Apart from empirical research on the transfer climate in this context, it would also be worthwhile to dedicate research to the conceptualization of EAP transfer climate. On one hand, James' (2010) study made the intersection between transfer climate and EAP, and on the other hand, this current study's first research question also provided insight on the construct of transfer climate from the perceptions of EAP instructors, rather than students. Therefore, the transfer climate construct can be further clarified and developed. This can be done with the use of such data from this current study and James (2010). Given that this current study offers insight on the transfer climate construct from the EAP instructor perspective, there are certain dimensions of the transfer climate that this

perspective captured that the student perspective from James' (2010) study did not. For instance, EAP instructors in this current study captured different kinds of discipline instructor expectations towards EAP transfer. They also perceived lack of support from peers differently to that of EAP students from James (2010). Therefore, consideration of multiple perceptions can add depth and complexity to the construct of transfer climate in the EAP context.

In terms of other implications for future research, it would be insightful to conduct research similar to this study but that includes other stakeholders. If comparing the findings of the first research question to the findings of James (2010), there is a difference in perceptions of the transfer climate from the different groups of stakeholders. For instance, only one EAP instructors in this study reported unsupportive aspects related to student peers while in James' (2010) study, there were more reports from EAP students on this component of the transfer climate. This may partly be because James (2010) used 5 deductive questions related to peers. However, it may also be because of the perspectives of the different stakeholders, EAP students. Given that EAP students may have a more immediate proximity to their peers, they may have a different perspective of this component of transfer climate compared to EAP instructors. Therefore, it would be insightful to conduct a similar study that is open-ended in nature but that examines the perceptions of other stakeholders, such as EAP students and discipline instructors, to see what aspects of the transfer climate they see as the most important and impactful. For instance, while EAP instructors may have more consideration towards the existence of opportunities to transfer through assignments in discipline courses, the students themselves may have more consideration towards the attitudes of their peers or the



impact in their discipline course grades. Although such a study may have a similar research design to this current study, it would not have the same focus given that the participants would not be EAP instructors. If the chosen stakeholders would be EAP students, such a study would be similar to James (2010) however, the research design could be more open-ended like this current study. Therefore, rather than constricting participants to respond about 14 specific components of the transfer climate, it would be insightful to examine what components the participants themselves voluntarily focus on. If the chosen stakeholders would be discipline instructors, such a study would overlap with existing studies that seek out discipline instructors' perspectives. Nonetheless, a future study could make the transfer climate the focus of the study, allowing more than one of the transfer climate components to be explored from this perspective.

Also other implications for future research can involve investigating the techniques of bridging and hugging. Seeing as some of the findings of the second research question align with the instructional techniques of bridging and hugging, an implication for future research is that it would be worthwhile for instructors to use these techniques to prepare students for an unsupportive transfer climate. As previously mentioned, in the learning transfer literature, bridging and hugging are techniques that have been proposed to promote transfer at two different levels. To elaborate, in the EAP context, the technique of hugging would involve EAP courses mimicking assignments and coursework from discipline courses in order for students to detect similarity in their transition. On the other hand, the technique of bridging would involve preparing students with general EAP skills that they would be able to make abstract and apply to a variety of discipline courses. Therefore, in considering the additional factor of transfer climate in

discipline courses, EAP instructors can investigate whether such techniques could prepare students to transfer in discipline courses where the transfer climate is not supportive. For instance, EAP instructors can consider implementing the technique of bridging to prepare students with general skills that would allow them to independently cope in discipline courses, in case the transfer climate is unsupportive. EAP instructors can also consider implementing the technique hugging to prepare students with similar jargon, reading and writing on similar genres as discipline courses in case the transfer climate is unsupportive.

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