Theses and Dissertations

5-2013

Reading and Religion: Reconciling Diverse Reading Patterns and the First Year Composition Classroom

Evelyn Baldwin
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

READING AND RELIGION: RECONCILING DIVERSE READING PATTERNS AND THE
FIRST YEAR COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

READING AND RELIGION: RECONCILING DIVERSE READING PATTERNS AND THE
FIRST YEAR COMPOSITION CLASSROOM

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in English

By

Evelyn H. Baldwin
John Brown University
Bachelor of Science Education in English, 2006
University of Arkansas
Master of Arts in English, 2008

May 2013
University of Arkansas

ABSTRACT

While tolerance is the supposed standard of the first-year composition classroom, the writing patterns and argumentation skills of self-identified Christian students often frustrate teachers and create classroom dissonance and interpersonal divergence. This work looks at what apologetic and devotional texts these students are reading before they enter the classroom and then analyzes these works to see how well their content aligns with Composition I reading and writing requirements. To do this, the study takes information from two very distinct groups: religious leaders of young adults and Composition I instructors. The study begins by surveying religious workers to identify the top text that their youth are reading. Next, it details a focus group interview of Composition I instructors to first identify the specific goals they have for students and then turn the goals into a quantifiable rubric. Finally, the work brings both parts together as the top texts are scored according to the rubric to see if the works these young adults are reading align with the skills promoted by teachers of college writing. It concludes by offering recommendations on meeting areas of need and a sample instructional model to supplement portions where the texts may be lacking.

This dissertation is approved for recommendation

to the Graduate Council.

Dissertation Director:

_____

Dr. David Jolliffe

Dissertation Committee:

_____

Dr. Patrick Slattery

_____

Dr. Chris Goering

_____

Dr. Elizabeth Vander Lei *(ex officio)*

DISSERTATION DUPLICATION RELEASE

I hereby authorize the University of Arkansas Libraries to duplicate this dissertation when needed for research and/or scholarship.

Agreed   _____
                            Evelyn H. Baldwin

Refused   _____
                            Evelyn H. Baldwin

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks are due to the community at the University of Arkansas for making it possible to complete this dissertation, particularly Dr. David Jolliffe and his dedication on behalf of his graduate students, Dr. Patrick Slattery, Dr. Chris Goering, and the front desk at the English Department for making life run smoothly.

Thanks are also due to my parents who put as much into this dissertation as I did, and sometimes more.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to Joe, who stuck around during the writing of it, proving that there's no better man to be found.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review

Introduction

In nearly every work published on Christian students in the first-year composition classroom, there is description of a great cultural clash. Although Christian students are not different from their peers in terms of gender, race, or birth, they may think and act in very different ways and hold different things to be the most sacred: "[C]onsider the [Christian] students who push through the trenches of secular universities […] They, too, struggle with looming deadlines and waning caffeine supplies, but they head into classrooms where to discuss Jesus Christ is to broach an unfathomable and politically incorrect subject, where to do so is to suffer reproach and isolation at the hands of their instructors and peers" (Stephens, 2012, n.p.). To be an intensely practicing Christian in the college realm is to attempt to live in a world that where one must fight temptations considered impure, must carry out work considered righteous, and must somehow complete college tasks without compromising one's beliefs.

Though the body of research on the topic of the Christian student in the first-year composition classroom is small, both it and practitioner lore indicate high levels of frustration between teachers and Christian students. Teachers become extremely irritated as Christian students turn in papers that base arguments solely on the Bible or taking the moral high ground, while the teenagers have been warned that liberal colleges are going to attempt to turn them from their beliefs (Pope, 2004). The result is teacher-student relationships where teachers view students as incapable of critical thought and students view teachers as cold-hearted and unwilling to be open to religious points of view. If any kind of learning in the classroom can occur between two very culturally diverse groups, students need reassurance that this liberal arts education is going to

train them to be critical thinkers and writers without losing their beliefs, and teachers need students to be open to these critical methods and be willing to write using academic conventions.

My interest in this quagmire came simply from discussions I have had with fellow writers and the occasional paper that has crossed my desk. The frustration that my colleagues have expressed is often extreme. Over time, I began to wonder why it was that these students wrote in this manner, as the act of joining a religion clearly does not change one's writing style. Moss's (1994) study of churches suggested to me that perhaps the writing came from something that was happening as part of the larger religious act. Initially, I wanted to explore a large portion of the religious experience; however, the constraints of a single study are limited. I settled on just the act of reading when one of my students brought me a devotional book that she was reading and told me that I "just had to read it because it was really life changing." Her description of the book suggested that the reading was so powerful it might influence her writing act as well. Accordingly, I decided to study the reading acts of religious teenagers immediately prior to their entering the first-year composition classroom.

The Study

The study was conducted in three parts: a survey, a focus group, and a textual analysis. In the survey, over one hundred churches in the area were assessed to determine what texts were being read by their youth. Youth pastors were asked both open- and closed- ended questions to indicate the types of books that they recommended to their students and the ones that they discouraged them from reading. With the results, I selected five texts that were representative of the top texts in the survey, using books taken from both an open question of frequently-mentioned books and authors and a closed question of recommended books. These texts were used in the textual analysis.

The purpose of the focus group was to determine what knowledge and skills first-year composition teachers emphasized in their classrooms. The group used an open interview-style format to discuss a number of jumping-off topics that allowed the teachers to explain what they felt were the most important issues for students to understand, skills to conquer, and information to memorize. The information of the focus group became the rating material for the textual analysis.

In the textual analysis, the information gained from the focus group became a multi-point rubric that emphasized the most important elements of the interview. The rubric was then used to score the top five texts that came out of the survey. Were these books promoting the thinking and reasoning skills that composition teachers look for in the first-year writing classroom? From the results of the scoring, it was possible to see how well the books aligned with instructor goals along the rubric's six categories.

What the scoring showed was that there was a split: in some categories, the books aligned with instructor goals quite well, and in others, they failed. In terms of audience, the texts knew to whom they were speaking and did an excellent job of identifying those readers and tailoring content for audience. They extended that to helping the audience with how to read the work, giving clues as to the main thrust of the text, what the reader should focus on or be prepared for, and what major events will happen in the text.

In other categories, however, the texts sank. The critiquing section (the section addressing argumentation and reasoning) had extremely complicated results. Overall, the raters scored its subpoints the lowest among all of the sections. They also had the only consistent points of disagreement on this section that they had on any of the six sections on the entire rubric. Among all the sections on all the books, there were only two instances of disagreement

outside of the critique section, while there were repeated instances within it. This, when viewed in the light of the already low scores, indicated that the argumentation in these texts was so poor that it was confusing and difficult to rate, especially given the consistency the raters had with other sections and in training. These two concepts together suggest that the most effective way for teachers to connect with students who have read these texts is to play upon students' experience understanding audience while preparing for problems in argumentation. Fortunately, an emphasis on argumentative methods is already at the heart of many first-year composition classrooms. While this general instruction may not be enough to fully apprentice Christian readers into academic writing, it is an important movement towards success.

An Overview of the Dissertation

The remainder of this chapter outlines the literature that exists in the field. It is largely experiential essays, writings of teachers and administrators and their experience working with Christian students in the first-year composition classroom. There is some expression of frustration, a great deal of exploration of self, and much of coming to terms with what can be changed and what cannot be changed in a system where religion is very much a part of personhood. Because the texts are structured in this way, the chapter is broken into three main questions – one focused on the students, one on the teachers, and one on the solutions – rather than trying to address individual experiences from many sources. These questions cut across all articles and bring up ideas addressed in nearly all works.

Chapter 2: "Louise Rosenblatt and the Christian Reader" is a study of reader-response theory and its appropriateness for Christian young adult readers. The chapter addresses the main tenets of Rosenblatt's theories, examining how those appeal to the style of reading favored by this type of reader. Rosenblatt's connections to Pierce and Dewey are explored, and the chapter

ends with a Rosenblattian analysis of a brief devotion from an anthology written for first-year college students.

The next three chapters address the study itself. Chapter 3: "The Survey" begins with a bridge into the study, explaining how each chapter operates in concert with the others and what the reader should expect while working through the text. It then explains how the survey was constructed, to whom it was sent out, and the results of the sending. It closes with a description of the five books that were selected from those results. Chapter 4: "The Focus Group" describes what occurred in the meeting with the instructors who detailed the requirements they have for their first-year composition classes. The chapter includes the prompt questions sent to the instructors beforehand and the ones used to guide the survey. An early description of the comments is given, then the chapter organizes the comments into the major sections that will later form the sections of the rubric. Chapter 5: "Rubric and Results" begins by explaining the six sections of the rubric and how they are broken down into subsections of composition-specific elements. It continues by going through the five texts identified by the survey for study and ranks them against the rubric. The ratings and the raters' rationales are then detailed, and the chapter ends with an analysis of the results.

The final chapters address the information found in the study. Chapter 6: "Recommendations" is broken down into two sections, one for acknowledging the benefits of the texts Christian young adults are reading and one for addressing the areas of need that these students still have. Chapter 7: "A New Kind of Critic: A Model of Criticism for All Students" presents a model for rhetorical criticism designed to help students experiencing any kind of marginalization address texts in an open and honest way. The model looks at texts in three categories – context, text, and outcome – and then explains why those are crucial categories for

6

these particular students. It then performs a rhetorical analysis of an article using this new kind of model. Chapter 8: "Conclusion" closes the study with some final thoughts on the students and their relationships with their peers

Literature Review: Christian Students in the Composition Classroom

Of all the attention paid in publication to the Composition I student, Christians have earned little of it. This may be because they aremarginalizedby many instructors, something unfortunate yet true in the modern classroom; it may be because theirclassroominteractions are so frustrating that professors cannot write about them; or it may be that teachers find that Christianity is too foreign a concept to address in print. In writing on fundamentalist beliefs, Perkins (2001) describes a break between Christian student and teacher, a breakthat makes it difficult for a self-reflective scholar struggling to come to terms with their differing opinions. This schism, increasingly wide for the instructor based on how he or she views the "radical" nature of the student's beliefs, makes it difficult to write an article with integrity: "Teachers respond negatively to students who do not tolerate viewpoints or modes of living different from their own, and they do not know how to teach critical thinking and argumentation to students whose approach to textual authority runs so counter to mainstream cultural literacies" (Perkins, 2001, p.586). If this is true for the general population of educators, then to attempt to write an article would be to write a rant, to "respond negatively" to a difficult situation, and to make public that one does "not know how to teach critical thinking and argumentation" when students present diversity challenges.

However, there *are* texts in the field. And, indeed, some are rants and negative responses with almost palpable frustration where the student and instructor simply could not agree on a point. But most are not. Many start with a sense of frustration, it is true. In fact, Downs

(2005)opens his with a paper comment to a student: "Congratulations! You've just written the most indoctrinated, close-minded, uncritical, simplistically reasoned paper I've ever read!" (p.39). Yet Downs's and the majority of these texts, despite being few in number, move past initial expressions of frustration to points of greater leaning beyond – learning by both educator and student.

The major publications in the field fall into two general categories: experiential narratives and theoretical analyses. The experiential narratives are explanations of what happened in a specific situation with specific students, often followed by or infused with personal exploration or revelation and,occasionally, theory. These texts usually refer to other texts in the field, tying to any similarities that they have experienced or any key elements of theory that will help explain the phenomenon that is occurring to what they have seen. Experiential narratives often involve working with student texts and determining how to improve them. In some cases, they begin with instructor reflections over texts and open a dialogue with students that result in student revision (Smart, 2005; Anderson, 1989; Perkins, 2001; Downs, 2005) or simply review texts personally (Leathers Dively, 1997). In others, they discuss class design (Veach, 2009), in still others, they have a back-and-forth discussion narrative between instructors (Montesano &Roen, 2005). The theoretical analyses, though involved in content, are straightforward in nature;they simply look at the field in terms of governing principles (Rand, 2001; Hansen, 2005). Those, of course, vary from source to source. Of those addressed here, one needs particular mention. Rand's (2001) "Enacting the Faith: Evangelical Discourse and the Discipline of Composition Studies" is cited in the majority of texts discussing Christian students in the secular writing classroom. For many students, Rand argues, identity is situated in the spiritual life, and thus meaning-making in the classroom is filtered through the religious self. Rand addresses four

concepts alongside Christian identity: Christian identity and our theoretical assumptions, our profession, our classrooms, and the rhetoric of resistance. In the end, Rand calls for both personal reflection on the part of instructors and an awareness that Christian students operate outside the mainstream and can produce a richer form of writing if such depth is appealed to.

Given the nature of the available sources, I have divided the ideas of the literature review into a three questions, based on a triad of student, teacher, and solution. Several articles present a teacher exploring a student paper then moving into the application of a solution, or they address one of more portions of that scheme. Instead of trying to address each article individually, because of the extreme overlap between them, this allows for the grouping of ideas and the presentation of a holistic picture of what we know about this student in this classroom at this time in Composition history. The questions: First, who are the Christian students in the Composition I classroom and what difficulties surround their presence there? Second, how do teachers personally address these issues, face frustrations, or overcome obstacles in their own lives that are brought about in the intersection of the religious and the secular? Third, what solutions have been/can be implemented and with what results?Together, these questions unite the main concepts presented in the sources that make up the body of faith-studies in Composition and create a framework from which to understand the most important information in these texts.

Question 1: Who are the Christian students in the Composition I classroom and what difficulties surround their presence there?

At the very core of the student presence in the classroom is the concept of personal identity, the idea of "who am I?" Identity formation comes from a variety of the elements that go into forming one's existence, but the most significant part may be the spiritual. Rand (2001) argues that "religious belief often matters to our students and that spiritual identity may be the

primary kind of selfhood more than a few of them draw upon in making meaning of their lives and the world around them" (p.350). This has becomes problematic in the late 20th and early 21st century when marginalization of these students has occurred. Rand continues to point out that "antagonism towards religious faith is the only form of 'bigotry' not banned from the classroom" (p.351). In a society that cringes even at the word "bigotry," such actions are possible because, Perkins (2001) points out, Christianity crosses genders, races, and socioeconomic groups meaning that no one people group can isolate themselves as being especially attacked. This, however, does nothing for the student who finds him or herself bearing the brunt of a teacher's dislike: "Countless conversations with students and colleagues over the past few years have convinced me that, although the post-modern academy publically denounces unreflective marginalization of student voices, their voices are frequently marginalized in the Composition classroom when issues of religion or spirituality arise" (Leathers Dively, 1997, p.56). However, the teacher attempting to define the student is not necessarily attempting to define the student out of dislike. Many teachers face the Christian student with trepidation or confusion. Smart (2005) talks about picking up a student paper and having her "stomach tight[en] and her feet shift uneasily under the chair," (p.11), while Downs (2005) gets so frustrated that he responds to his students as, in his own words, a "jerk" (p.39). Finding a point where students understand how their faith backgrounds belong in the classrooms and teachers meeting them at that point with a knowledge of their spiritual identities is a difficult task.

Part of this identity is the use of language. Anderson's (1989) essay is one of the defining in the field on this topic. Anderson brings up Barth's idea of embarrassment. The act of faith is embarrassing to all who do not share the faith; thus the rhetoric of faith makes no sense to those who not share it. The result? Writing that "operate[s] in the midst of two thousand years of

cliché" (n.p.)Anderson goes so far as to criticize the "simplicity and superficiality" of one of his student's work, while also calling it "mild" and "sweet"(n.p.), something for which Rand (2001) resoundingly criticizes him. However, what Anderson does do is ultimately determine that students do not know that language is not what comes from us, but what forms us. Fitzgerald (2005) also suggests that our literacy practices of religious textual acquisition can influence language regurgitation. Extensive reading of Biblical texts is a strong indicator that such texts will reappear in form, shaping the way student writing appears.

Student reactions to teacher presence run a wide spectrum, but most sources discuss having a frustrating beginning with students followed by some kind of revelation – not always positive in terms of relationship-building, but at least always enlightening. On the part of the students, there is often a frustration that bringing their religious lives and experiences to the writing assignment is not allowed, as teachers feel that such experiences are non-academic and inappropriate for college composition. Hansen (2005) points out,

> With our own commitment to academic freedom, we recognize that students should be able to voice the religious reasons for their positions. We feel conflicted because we want to be tolerant, yet we recognize that, as arguments, some students' papers will miss their audiences. For their part, students may feel that we are demeaning their faith when we attempt to show them why and where their arguments are ineffective. They may think they have to choose between saying what they believe and getting a good grade. (p.24)

There is an inherent tension here, as students want to express what they believe, and teachers want to indicate that the use of religious rhetoric is not generally acceptable. The tension comes as students believe that teachers are censoring the fact that they are religious, not that their use of religious language isn't credible in an argumentative setting (Montesano &Roen, 2005) or appropriate for a university, ultimately silencing them (Vander Lei & Fitzgerald, 2007). Furthermore, some sources pointed out that students' calling up of the religious language brought the negative aspects of religious culture to the argument. Smart (2005) argues that some

Christian language "polarizes readers who have experienced [Biblical] references as threatening incantations, words invoked to bolster the stereotypical, ostracizing, and 'monstrous' charges that too often misrepresent an nullify the ethos and identity of [an]other" (p.18 – *second brackets hers*). Thus there are students seeking to be respected in their faith and have it accepted as the essence of how they create their arguments, while teachers find it not only academically problematic but at times at odds with what is generally acceptable in the classroom.

Question 2: How do teachers personally address the issues brought surrounding the Christian student in the classroom, face frustrations, or overcome obstacles in their own lives that are brought about in the intersection of the religious and the secular?

While teachers operate as educators, working towards helping students become critical thinkers who are fluent in the language of academia, they are not automatons. Teachers have their own backgrounds and personal faith journeys. When they interact with students of Christian faith, they bring with them a lifetime of learning and experiences that have established them either in a set personal belief or in a place of searching. Furthermore, they have most likely have had significant interactions with the Christian religion, as it is one of the major world religions and has reached a large portion of the world's population. This suggests that they come to interactions with Christian students with preset notions about the beliefs those students carry. This is a hurdle that they themselves must be careful not to let influence their treatment of students and student work. In her essay "*Frankenstein or Jesus Christ*: When the Voice of Faith Creates a Monster for the Composition Teacher," Smart (2005) walks the reader through her grading of a student essay that draws parallels between the Biblical Jesus and the monster made by Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein. Smart's initial reaction to the student's text was a sense ofaversion, borne from the attacks the church leveled on her when she revealed her

homosexuality to her family and fellow believers. She inherently pulled back from the arguments

in the text, as they reminded her of the "echoes from [her] fundamentalist past" (p.12). However,

as Smart looks deeper into the past, she also is able to see more clearly the way the student's

faith shapes his text. Her faith experience, she decides, must be brought to play, to help him

fulfill his writing assignment. Smart focuses herstudent's faith as expressed in his writing into

this charge for herself, yet it applies to all teachers:

> The charge that I face regarding my student's evangelical discourse seems clear:
> Somehow I both need and want to help him claim [his] place and "the right to have [his]
> part matter," without disallowing his profession of faith. […] I want to give him the
> opportunity to rehearse the kind of scholarly strategies that will allow him to think more
> critically within the scheme of his rhetorical purposes as he seeks to integrate faith and
> learning in his writing assignment. Within a larger educational context, I hope that my
> student will begin to cultivate fruitful strategies that will recommend him to, rather than
> alienate him from, an eclectic audience of academic mentors and peers. (p.20)

Smart's ability to look into her own past allowed her to understand her student's faith discourse

and help him understand the language of academia and speak in it as a native.

However, teachers will not always have faith language as one's own. From 2006 to 2008,

Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish religions all dropped in numbers, while in surveyed populations

that year the category of who indicated they had no religion increased ("Religious Preference

Over Time," 2008). As this is a pattern that has been developing over the past 30 years, more and

more students and teachers will likely find themselves at odds on issues of faith. If a student's

faith does not match the teacher's, then, scholars are arguing, the teacher must understand the

faith, especially if the educator's role of training the student to be a critical thinker in the modern

society is to be enacted. Writing about the frustration of religion appearing at the wrong time,

Hansen (2005) shares a comment lament among English teachers when students start

sermonizing or witnessing instead of critically arguing, "'Don't these kids know,' we lament,

'that you just can't do that? You're not going to persuade any audience that doesn't already share

your beliefs'" (p.24).In a large way, that occurs at the context of the religious ideal and the non-religious or differing religious, and in a smaller way around the existence of the Bible and its presence in the classroom. Because of the Bible's centrality to Christianity, it is referenced as significant to instructors' understanding of their students (Downs, 2005; Hansen, 2005; Perkins, 2001). However, it is not simply that the book exists that makes it significant; it is the strength with which students believe in it:

> We should recognize that the stubborn rationalism of fundamentalist students – their insistence on the "plain sense" of the texts, of the internal coherence of the Bible, and of its applicability of all human contexts – reveals a strong investment in the power of committed reading practices to change people's lives. Though we may see our students as intellectually and politically misguided, I think it goes without saying that many writing teachers believe just as intensely in the life-changing power of textuality; our task, then, is to help students to see their Bible reading as inherently interpretive and to look at their academic reading as a positive, potentially faith-affirming extension of their more culturally central reading practices. (Perkins, 2001, p. 595)

The fully aware teacher recognizes that both the Bible and the academic reading can play inverse roles if the student is trained well enough to understand that the faith world can understand the academic world and the academic world, the faith world.

Finally, the teacher must recognize the power of the student's language. Anderson (1989) used Berlin's (1988) "Rhetoric and Ideology in the Writing Classroom" to acknowledge there is a space in which "no kind of language should be seen as necessarily superior to any other and that effective teaching and writing are always self-aware, always examining their own assumptions" (n.p.). Berlin's argument was that there was a three point play or dialogue between the observer, the discourse community, and the "material conditions of existence" (p.488). Until all three are present there is no meaning, and all three make sense because they are "grounded in language […] the material conditions of existence are all verbal constructs" (p.488). The student brings to the table a set of experiences, expectations, and talents, and the instructor, despite the

personal experiences and possible prejudices that exist, must apprentice the student into the academic community without denigrating the students religious discourse community. Because the teacher operates in the realm of language, there is an added level of responsibility and caution that must be taken, Anderson (1989) argues, for verbal destruction of a student's world is exceptionally easy. We must allow students an authentic self, one that fully experiences what they bring to us on paper, even if it is not the kind of argumentative writing valued by the academic world. That self must be trained in critical dialogue without being lost, and, Anderson reminds us, "we should be teaching our students to recognize that we are, all of us, continually engaged in the search for values and the making of commitment" (n.p.).

Question Three: What solutions have been/can be implemented and with what results?

The main solutions presented in these texts are suggestions, not scientific answers. They come from practitioner experience, built out of trial-and-error from instructors who have worked with students, implemented writing pedagogies, failed, and tried again. They are also only possible from those who have worked with these students and understand their particular needs. Goodburn (1998), after a semester with a particularly frustrating student, shared what her highly dismissive colleagues told her to do: "some suggested that students with fundamentalist beliefs should go to fundamentalist schools if they do not wish to be influenced by secular values. Others said that I was given an opportunity to 'enlighten' him. And one said that when faced with a similar student, she simply ignored him" (p.347). Their lack of understanding disenfranchises the students for no other reason than misapplied belief, and underscores what the true problem is – a talking at cross-purposes between educators and students. Overall, the most significant solution recommended by scholars was to begin a dialogue. And, while it was not explicitly stated in every article, it was the concept that undergirded the eventual conclusion to

which most articles came. Dialogue, however, cannot simply happen. If students and teachers were able to flow into dialogue naturally, the tension that brought forth these articles and studies would not exist. Therefore, scholars pointed out that two things need to happen. First, teachers need to train students in academic language. While the last question focused on the students' language, here, the academic language prevails. The two can exist in tandem, but unless they both exist, the classroom exercise – and the entire Composition exercise – is a failure. Second, students need to understand that "religious language is rhetorical – that faith is not exempt from reason" (Montesano &Roen, 2005, p.86). The tendency across sources seemed to be that a number of student writers submitted texts that based their arguments on faith as the final selling point. In the end, if the religious rhetoric upheld, then the argument must be true. However, not all scholars uphold the study of rhetoric. Perkins (2001) says that rhetoric "turns potential partners in dialogue into 'detached observers' who know at some level that they are playing an instrumental game with language and therefore have less incentive to revise their ways of being in the world" (p.607). In essence, Perkins argues that to teach Christian students rhetoric is simply to teach them to mimic the dialogue of the "world" until they are free from Composition. In response, Vander Lei and Hettinga (2002) argue that the study of rhetoric has the possibility not only of strengthening the faith of the student but of promoting the learning of "essential lessons about rhetoric – the limits of persuasion as well as the powerful interplay of occasion and author and audience and purpose" (p.723). In order to build a dialogue out of which could grow understanding from both parties, students need to understand that faith and reason can exist in tandem. The rational and the spiritual are not necessarily divergent elements but may rather operate together – a stronger life of the mind sustaining a more passionate spiritual life, and vice versa. This dialogue, once begun, should not only be limited to the student and the teacher. Once

successfully established, it needs to be carried out into the public arena. Hansen (2005) points

out that religion cannot be made a taboo subject and that teachers should not be afraid of it.

"When religious voices are not only tolerated in the public view but listened to, good things may

happen" she argues (p.30). What those good things are will vary with each individual classroom,

for every room is a different mix of students and teacher. But, one can hope that the result will be

a dialogue that creates a new understanding of the humanity in each individual while

simultaneously forwarding a critical pedagogy of collaborative discourse.

Chapter 2: Louise Rosenblatt and the Christian Reader

Being textually-based does not make Christianity unique among religions, nor does its exhortation to its followers to engage with its primary texts on a regular basis. What it does have, however, that may well be unmatched in any other religion, is the vastness of its host of secondary texts, covering everything from eco-Christianity to sexual propriety for the unmarried. Words form the backbone of this organization, as many denominations of the church even encourage their members to transform silent, personal spiritual interactions into spoken ones for the edification of all of the members. Texts for young adults form only a small portion of the works available under the term "Christian." The average Christian home may contain a variety of reading material tied to religion, including books on the arts, daily devotionals, biographies and autobiographies of famous Christians, apologetic texts, Biblical lexicons and encyclopedias, children's books, and even cookbooks. And then, of course, there is Christian fiction, which is now third on the list of most popular genres for e-book sales (Jacobs, 2012).[1]

Within the subheading of Christian young adult literature there are many genres, but the cross-genre of apologetic-devotional lends itself best to a reading style that is highly responsive and self-reflexive. This is arguably best achieved in the analytical methods of Louise Rosenblatt. Begun in 1938 with *Literature as Exploration* and continued until her death in 2005, Rosenblatt's work, considered the forerunner for reader-response theory, is founded on the personal interaction between the reader and the text. Each reader brings his or her own experiences to the work and thus draws different knowledge out of it. That knowledge is moved back through the text, and a cycle of learning and depositing information is created.

---

[1] If we wish to stretch our definition of text further, the Bible is reaching out into the electronic age with music, television (for both adults and children), radio programs, phone and tablet apps, and computer resources.

Rosenblatt's work has several characteristics that make it particularly appropriate for Christian literature studies. First, reader-response theory may be the most inwardly-focused of all the forms of literary analysis. It calls for the reader to have a personal engagement with the text and to use the self as the primary schema through which to engage with the work. A different theory, such as social constructionism, for example, would ask the reader to apply a filter to the reading and create an intellectual film between reader and work. Instead, if the reader is the main form brought to the text, the text has the greatest possibility of reaching the reader on the deepest level, as compared to any other theory. Second, Rosenblatt's work allows for reader growth. If the main purpose of the majority of Christianity-focused texts is inward engagement then, at the heart, the sub-purpose is to promote the Christian life or "walk," as it is often called. By having, as suggested above, a close relationship between reader and reading that allows for engagement on a spiritual level, the reader is able to take from the text the lessons and exhortations imbued by the author (who would could conceivably argue that they were imparted to him or her by the Holy Spirit) and apply them to daily, practical life rather than engaging in the isolated performance of intellectual gymnastics. Third, the theory is self-propagating. Rosenblatt suggests that the reader is engaged in a transaction with the reading. The first step is that the reader gains something from the reading. Then, in the nature of a true transaction, the reader puts something back into the text. Now, there is both a new reader and a new reading. Two readings allows for an entirely new transaction between two new objects to take place – the figure of the reader and the figure of the text. This development can continue, in effect, endlessly. For a person seeking to live a lifetime of religious learning and devotion, the ability to have years of engagement with Christian texts would be crucial. Finally, the theory makes allowance for the inclusion of Scripture, as Scripture is part of the reader who approaches the

text and is usually built into and part of the text itself. Scripture provides a sub-level of transaction that occurs underneath the traditional reader-text transaction as it has informed both the work being written and the reader who is engaging with it. The Christian young adult who is engaging in personal reading of these texts for devotional purposes is reading for a spiritual reaction to the text – a response to be gained that then builds a connection with the world. The young adult reading the apologetic book is looking for understanding, and that response also builds a connection, one Rosenblatt would label differently, but a reader-text-outcome procedure that also falls quite within her ideological system. We can convincingly argue that Rosenblatt's theories of reading are a highly appropriate system of scholarship through which to explore and understand the methods and practices of the Christian reader.

To begin, Rosenblatt (2005) proposes that reading is a transaction between the reader and the text. At any point in the reading process, the reader is engaged in numerous interactions between him or herself and the reading material at hand. Just as with a monetary transaction, there is a back and forth of information.Here, unlike in an interpersonal conversation, the dialogue has far fewer boundaries, as the reader may put into the text anything that is part of her reservoir of experience. In *Literature as Exploration*(1995), Rosenblatt explains that "personal factors will inevitably affect the equation represented by book plus reader" (p.75). What the reader knows, has experienced, and understands is all data that may become involved in the transaction. We cannot argue that it is a clean two part back-and-forth. This concept shifts the field away from the traditional views of dualism, where there is only object and subject – the information at hand and the reader of the information (or the self). Dualism suggests that there must be some kind of concrete fact or information that the reader is attempting to uncover, and an inability to uncover said facts would equate to a failure in the reading process. Here,

Rosenblatt is drawing on the ideas of Dewey and Bentley (1949). In *Knowing and the Known,* Dewey and Bentley argue that traditional scientific theory that suggests that the observer is a separate figure from the observed is incorrect. Because evolution argues that all things are linked from their source, there must be a connection between all organisms in all systems:

> Since man as an organism has evolved among other organisms in an evolution called "natural," we are willing under hypothesis to treat all of his behavings, including his most advanced knowings, as activities not of himself alone, nor even as primarily his, but as processes or the full situation or organism-environment. (p.104)

In essence, evolution is suggesting that there is no one-to-one direct parings, but that all natural interactions take place in a developed environment that influences what occurs within it.

To bring this idea to reading transactions, we cannot have a reader exist fully separate from the text. Rosenblatt supports an extension of this argument that Dewey and Bentley proposed, one that outlined the ideas of *self-action, inter-action,* and *trans-action* (p.108). Self-action is simply the independent actions of a thing. There is the object operating alone, without pressure from external forces. While self-action can exist in theory, it is difficult to accept in terms of reality, as there is nothing in the universe that exists in a vacuum, untouched by external forces. Only in a science lab can an object operate in a vacuum, and there it has no purpose in a systemas it can act on no other object. In terms of reading, the self alone does not exist because as soon as one engages with a text the self is no longer alone. A reader in a room alone may be considered to be by herself, but the moment that the book appears in the room, self-action is gone. The presence of the book creates an interest in the reader, a reaction to the presence of knowledge. And, once the text of the book has been engaged with, the reader is involved in a relationship and clearly no longer alone. Inter-action, as it sounds, is two things together. It is positivistic in that it creates a relationship of "thing balanced against thing" – a very separatist kind of reading theory (Dewey & Bentley, 1949, p.108). Separatist theory is basic scientific

process, the type that we see, and that Dewey and Bentley point out, as occurring in something such as the laws that Newton proposed. Gravity acts upon an object, and, in response to the force, the object must move. When the reader knocks the book from the shelf, the book falls to the floor. However, reading does not occur in such a liner way. In terms of basic textual transaction, a reader might begin in one portion of the text, skip to another, and then return to the first. The detective story reader who thinks he knows who did it and has to find out if he is right is terribly guilty of this, as is the romance novel fan who must know if the leads get together in the end. In more a more theoretical analysis, the reader and the text are not in perfect balance as if on a scale. Even when the reader faithfully follows the structure of the text, they do not bring equal amounts of information and thus need no perfect exchange. The book and the reader do not, if we suggest this in terms of physics, exert equal amounts of force and push back evenly on each other. What occurs between them is complicated, repetitious – uncomfortable, even – as texts may draw things from the reader that a clean, balanced interaction might not. Transaction is a status of growth, where forces operating on each other develop and improve each other, creating new understanding and meaning as they act upon each other. Using this argument of Dewey and Bentley's, we can argue for a transaction between reader and text, where naming and identification occur as a process. Here, the reader and the text operate in tandem, where the reader understands the text and returns that understanding to the text. That returning is given back to the reader loaded with new and fuller information. Salvatori (1996) argues that the possibility to do this is built into the text by the writer:

> The text's arguments can act as a fulcrum that brings parties (reader and text) together. But for this to happen a reader must accept and carry the tremendous responsibility of giving a voice, and therefore a sort of life, to the text's argument […] [A] corollary to the reader's responsibility is the writer's responsibility, the responsibility , the responsibility of writing a text that asks (rather than answers) questions, that proposes

(rather than imposes) arguments, and that therefore makes a conversation possible. (p.441)

The reader, then, falls into place where the writer intends, engaging in a conversation with the text, a back-and-forth dialogue where each has the responsibility of bringing a new life to the other.

In terms of engaging with texts, Christian young adult readers read non-fiction for many different purposes. They may read devotional texts that offer a kind of spiritual guidance or momentary retreat; they may read apologetics that defend the faith; they may read instructional books that teach them how to live; they may also read whatever is put into their hands by parents and faith leaders. Regardless of the type of text, the reader must come to it prepared to take something out of it if he or she wants to have a "successful" reading experience. As Dewey and Bentley point out, it would be impossible for the reader to have a self-action, as once the text has been procured, the self is no longer alone. The very act of contact with text destroys self-action. Furthermore, Biblical analysis shows that the Christian believes the reader can never be without text. The Torah makes a promise that "I will never leave you nor forsake you," (Deuteronomy 13:6, *ESV*), a promise made to the conqueror Joshua but generally adopted by the entire church. This presence is significant in that God is declared in the New Testament to be text himself. At the beginning of the prophet John's book, he says that "the Word was with God and *the Word was God"* (John 1:1, ESV). To declare God himself to be text creates the impossibility of self-action, for if the reader believes God as text is continually present, one might assume that the reader and God are not ignoring one another, or, at the very least, that God is not ignoring the reader, if the Biblical promises hold true.

Where self-action fails, interaction would likely also produce unsuccessful readings. In this case, the reader would go through the text, possibly even in its entirety, but the text would

remain separate from the reader. He or she would take nothing away from it. This separation is seen, on an initial level, in the manner that readings of Christian texts are unbalanced. Devotional works – and of course Scripture – are usually not read linearly, so patterns are difficult to develop. Furthermore, part of the purpose of reading in the Christian tradition is personal edification. Foster (1998) points out that there is a marked difference between those who suggest that they adopt an undefined "spiritual" nature and those who belong to a concrete religious community. The latter, he argues, are "moored:" "Moored spirituality is responsible to textual traditions and the communities that attempt to live by them" (p.xiii). Foster discusses a variety of religious texts before indicating that Christianity must be about textual connection through learning. In an interesting manner, the book of James argues against an interaction-style reading of a text claiming that it ruins the message of the text being transmitted. James uses a metaphor of a mirror to make his point, "Anyone who listens to the Word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like" (James 1:23-24, *NIV*). The comparison suggests that there was a point where person and text met, but no change occurred. Yet such interaction is nearly impossible, for change may be happening just underneath the surface. Religious texts – of any genre – have as their core the subject that forms the deepest part of the readers' lives: their faith. Each of these texts has an inherent connection to what the readers believe about life, death, and the human condition, even if the reader has not fully articulated those beliefs to others of even to him or herself. Even the most banal of texts, such as a Christian teen romance, falls in with what has been called "the greatest story ever told." If the reader is truly religious, there ought to be no walking away from the text. Thus, we end up not with self-action or inter-action but with trans-action. In talking about the Christian transaction with texts,

Ryken (1991) says there are "two phases to our reading experience. The first is a stage of self-forgetfulness in which we surrender ourselves to the work we are reading […] But in addition to allowing for this self-forgetfulness in which we view the world through someone else's eyes, a Christian reader must also become self-conscious about his or her status as a Christian reader. At this point we are interested in assessing the morality and truth claims of the [work] that we read" (p.18-19).Ryken provides an excellent view of the Christian engaging in transaction. In one sense, there is the reader taking in (or being taken into) the work. It is a one-way interaction in which the message or meaning of the work is being absorbed by the reader. However, the Christian reader is called to be discerning.[2] The reader must apply previous knowledge – including Biblical instruction and logic – to the text to determine if the written object is something that can be accepted. If so, it becomes part of what the reader knows. Then, the reader gives back to the text. In having been validated by the reader, it has absorbed all of the information required for that validation. Therefore, if the reader engages with this reading or with a similar one again, he or she will have an expanded version of it already mentally prepared, and the transaction will be more extensive than if the original had never taken place.

Furthermore, the text is influenced by what Rosenblatt in *Making Meaning with Texts* calls the "linguistic-experiential reservoir" (2005, p.5). All of the events in life are catalogued in the mind – and so is the language that accompanies them. Together they form the "cognitive and affective residue of our past experience with life and language, on which each must draw in any linguistic transaction, whether speaking or listening, writing or reading" (p.41). The sum of our human experience – our actions, our knowledge base, our experiences, and our beliefs – forms this reservoir, influencing any and all interpretations we have of texts. When an interaction with

---

[2] "Discernment" or a variation occurs 36 times in the *New International Version* Bible. "Wisdom" occurs 213 times. "Knowledge" occurs 130 times.

a text occurs, a reader interprets the text based on what exists in the reservoir. Because we each bring an independent, individual reservoir to reading, there can be no set meaning to find. A man who has seen his house burn down in a wildfire would find the presence of such a fire in a book a forwarding of Naturalism, while a woman who had a friend who fought those fires bravely might find the same book a celebration of humanity's resilience. Rather, each interaction with the written word creates a two-way transaction; the text speaks to the readers' experience, and the reader "speaks" to the meaning of the text. Just as was proposed before, these two go back and forth (the reader influences textual understanding, the text influences the readers' experience, the experience modifies the reader's reservoir, thus influencing textual understanding – and the pattern continues throughout the reading process), meaning is made between them. Thus, the transactional nature of the text is one in which there is an active relationship between the reader and the text, where meaning is made between the two, a meaning built on the reservoir of knowledge stored in the reader's mind.

There is a unique and important element of Christian experience that is raised here – the element of personal testimony. The idea of story or narrative plays an extremely important role in the life of the Christian. History is seen as a grand narrative in which humanity plays the role of the greatest creation. Thus, readers are frequently encouraged, in text after text, to bring their whole selves at the point they have reached in their own stories to interactions where they might grow closer to God, for example, Curtis & Eldridge's (1997) metaphor of the journey: "As we trace the steps of the journey, we hope to help you discover your soul's deepest longing and invite you to embrace it" (p.11). It's an idea that appears in similar texts: "Finally, we will seek the place where we can gaze over into the promised land. […] Come with all haste. Come to the place of breaking free. […] The place where we experience His peace no matter what the world

may throw our way" (Moore, 2000, p.xiv) and "I invite you to join me in discovering anew the life-giving and transforming power of these Biblical truths […] relying on him to help you face them will indeed change your life" (George, 1977, p.10).

These devotionally-focused texts in particular call readers to bring themselves at the place in their own lives to push further in their religious and spiritual training to achieve, in some cases, a kind of religious euphoria and state of connection with God. In all cases, however, the text is simply a starting point, as no two people have the same experiential reservoir and thus cannot have the same response to the reading.

By its very nature, this idea of drawing from a *personal* reservoir raises the question of authorial intent. If reading is a transaction between text and reader, but the reader makes his or her own meaning based on a reservoir of personal experience, what happens to the meaning the author put in to the text? Rosenblatt (2005) claims that before the text enters the hands of an outside reader, the author must become the first reader of the text. The author must undertake two separate readings, an expression-oriented reading and a reception-oriented reading (p.19). In essence, these translate to a personal satisfaction with the text and an attempt to create the public understanding that the writer desires. Because readers create meaning with texts, writers cannot expect that their desires for the reader will be met; however, performing these readings may aid them in fulfilling self-expression while guiding the reader's understanding. The expression-oriented reading is where the writer "tries to satisfy a personal conception while also refining it" (p.20). Here, the writer is looking inward at her own goals and desires for the text. She looks to be sure that her message is fully communicated and that all of her ideas are expressed in total. An exploration of personal meaning is carried out here. This is a reading designed solely for the author to identify the fullness of self in writing and "nourishes an increasingly clear through

often tacit sense of purpose" (p.20). The reception-oriented reading is an attempt to view the writing as the reader would view it. The writer tries to view his own text as an outsider might, considering the different linguistic-experiential reservoirs that are brought to a text. The demographics of the intended audience may be helpful here, providing the reader with a limiting factor in the face of the infinite number of individual reservoirs that might exist. Rosenblatt calls this a warranted assumption, an idea she creates by again building on Dewey. By using a shared community and criteria, writers can assume some demographical characteristic of the reader with a goal of reaching out to the knowledge base therein (p.23). The reading act must be viewed as "an event involving a particular individual and a particular text, happening at a particular time, under particular circumstances, in a particular social and cultural setting, and as part of the ongoing life of the individual and the group" (p.42). If, after this reading, the writer feels as if his text is not communicating what he wants it to, he must go back and review and alter his work clarify – as much as possible – his readers' understanding of the text. On the other end of the text, the reader may judge any attempts at understanding authorial intent in the same manner. Given the background, experiences, and topic of the text, what is the author likely saying? Rosenblatt (1995) makes a very clear argument for how readers should find meaning: "The reader must remain faithful to the author's text and be alert to the potential clues concerning character and motive. But he must do more than that: he must seek to organize or interpret such clues. His own assumptions will provide the tentative framework for such an interpretation" (p.11). Just as is true of the author, the reader must use warranted assertion as well, attempting to find the clues to make meaning.

Here, the Christian reader and the Christian writer begin a very complicated dance. There are two premises that must be established. First, the massive knowledge base of all

Scripture exists in an exceptionally complicated concept of being a single text – yet 66 books – with a single story – yet telling hundreds – with a single author – yet written by dozens of men in dozens of genres. It is an exceptionally complicated text, regardless of whether or not one attempts to believe that it is divinely inspired. Second, while there are general truths that the overall faith accepts – a divine trinity, a resurrection, an afterlife – even these become complicated in their nuances. How much of the authorial intent of the Bible one assumes to be absolute word-for-word truth as directives, as descriptive metaphor, as story...all of these become an extremely complicated mire than no single denomination can agree on.

The reaching of the afterlife, for example, has become one of the biggest literary debates in the field of Christian writing. In 1995, LaHaye and Jenkins published a fiction novel on what they believed the end times would look like. It was an apocalyptic text of the most incredible sort, taking literally large portions of the final book of the Bible, *Revelations*, a book that many consider to be prophetic, and thus metaphorical in nature. For example, one passage describes battle locusts as having "crowns of gold […] their teeth like lions teeth; they had breastplates like breastplates of iron […] they have tails and stings like scorpions" (Revelations 9:7-10, ESV), and, given the general dearth of battle locusts and the genre of the texts, the section is almost universally considered to be metaphoric[3] or prophetic. LaHaye and Jenkin's book was massively

---

[3] In his posthumously-published essay, "Horrid Red Things," the highly acclaimed novelist and apologist C.S. Lewis (1996) explained how authors could use metaphors – and how they were used in Scripture – without letting aesthetic readings make them into liars. He clearly explains that there are times when the reading is literal, and readers must take it as such, and when the reading is designed to appeal to one's sense of idea and of beauty – the sense that there is something out there the world does not quite understand:

> Where, then, do we draw the line between explaining and 'explaining away'? I do not think there is much difficulty. All that concerns the un-incarnate activities of God – His operation on that plane of being where sense cannot enter – must be taken along with imagery which we know to be, in the literal sense, untrue. But there can be no defense for applying the same treatment to the miracles of the Incarnate God. They

controversial and considered to be very poor hermeneutics.[4] Dart (2002) called it "Beam me up" theology; interestingly, one of the youth leaders surveyed for this project even listed it under texts he encouraged his students not to read. It was, however, a very brash example of the struggle Christianity experiences with author-intended meaning. If a writer is writing about God in some way and encouraging the reader to engage with Him,[5] then the reader would assume that the writer in some way has the backing of God. Divine support requires places an extra level of force or reasoning for the reader to work through when assessing or analyzing the text, for the reader must not only be willing to say "What do I think about this text as text?" but "Do I believe this text was divinely backed by God and thus had a genuine authorship that I am willing or unwilling to address?"

An intelligent Christian writer, then, must understand several things about the Christian reader: First, that there is no such thing as a "stock" or "typical" Christian. It is tempting, especially for those outside of the faith looking in, to assume that all of those belonging to the faith share the same characteristics, focus on the same elements, and hold the same ideas to be self-evident. This is no more true than to say that all members of a university, all followers of a sports team, or all residents of a city are the same. There are, of course, some features that they will share but many more that they will not. Second, that the Christian reader wants to be met in the text. Now, more than at any point in history, there are things pushing the experiential

---

are recorded as events on this earth which affected human senses. They are the sort of thing we can describe literally. If Christ turned water into wine, and we had been present, we could have seen, smelled, and tasted. The story that He did so is not of the same order as His 'sitting at the right hand of the Father.' It is either fact, or legend, or lie. You must take it or leave it. (p.36-37)

[4] In its most controversial moment, the book became a first person shooter video game where the player either converted the enemy…or killed them.
[5] The use of the male pronoun here and throughout is intentional. Evangelical Christians generally use the male pronoun as that is the persona taken in the Bible. For clarity's sake, it will be used here.

reservoirs to overflowing. A single social networking site alone can take up hours of the day.

Thus, if a reader takes the time to sit down with a book – especially a young adult reader, the

writer needs to have performed a very careful and especially reader-oriented exploration of the

text before it is passed into the reader's hands. Third, that the Christian reader may be

particularly discerning. Because there is such a variety among Christians, many Christians will

want to have defined who they are in relation to others. Just as students take the time to identify

their school against other schools, taking pride in their mascot and school colors, they may take

that same time to understand what they believe. A writer needs to be aware of this if the text is

designed to cross denominational boundaries. Finally, the writer needs to take special care, as

readers form identities as they read texts, particularly texts that they have an emotional

connection to. While the identity question has been explored earlier, it is important to mention

again. As Bazerman (1980) notes when students react to reading they gain a "sense of their own

opinions and identity defined against the reading material" (p.659). The idea of self becomes

hugely important when they are reading texts they have been told have a supernatural and eternal

significance, especially during their formative years.

As important as the audience the author writes for is the kind of readings the author

prepares for. Rosenblatt's naming of and distinction between types of reading as efferent and

aesthetic may be the most unique and important of her ideas – and the one most significant to

freshmen Composition students facing their first set of college-level texts. In their simplest

forms, efferent readings are practical ones and aesthetic readings are pleasurable ones. An

efferent reading of a text is one in which the reader focuses on what is to be taken away from the

text, "the residue after the reading" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p.22). Any formulas, facts, figures, dates,

and key ideas found within the text become the focus of the reading. An efferent reading does

not seek the art or style or form of the text, simply the key data that must be exacted by the end of the reading. Textbooks, news articles, directions, instruction manuals, and other purpose-driven works are usually read efferently. In *The Reader, The Text, The Poem,* Rosenblatt (1978) gives the example of the mother whose child has swallowed poison. The mother reads the back of the bottle with the sole purpose of extracting information need to save her child (p.24). The only purpose of this reading is the end result – what is to be taken from the text. In contrast, an aesthetic reading of a text is an experiential one, in which the reading creates a happening within the reader, an artistic experience, much like listening to a piece of music or looking at a painting. Here, the focus is on what is "being lived through during the reading event" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p.11). The style and images in the writing bring up the reader's personal beliefs and attitudes, calling in to being a sort of literary event within the reader. Rosenblatt (1995) describes the "personal affective aura and associations words evoked […] moods, scenes, situations, being created during the transaction" of the event(p.xvii). She compares them to the writing of a play, where the writer must take all of these elements of a situation into account to produce a truly great drama.

While Christian fiction commands a large portion of America's reading market, its non-fiction is varied and often highly emotionally and intellectually engaging yet demanding. It is often difficult to categorize these texts, as they frequently cross-genres and contains multiple purposes. They come in story form, such as biographies and some devotionals, such as Miller's (2001) *Blue Like Jazz*, a text popular enough to be made into a nationally-released film. Others are of a self-help nature, like Warren's (2004) explosively popular *40 Days of Purpose*. Apologetics for Christianity command some of the greatest names in religious philosophy,

including G.K. Chesterton and C.S. Lewis. Finally, there are devotionals are designed to touch the heart, such as the emotionally-charged works of Max Lucado.

It is not a simple thing to categorize Christian literature into texts that obviously call for aesthetic and efferent readings. While readers may address texts with their own agendas, texts can clearly establish themselves towards certain types of readings. A text with this religious background that seeks to give readers an aesthetic experience will appeal to the emotional longing that its followers have for peace, for forgiveness, and for a connection with God. A good writer in this genre will be able to craft a work to satisfy those needs while keeping the text grounded in Biblical tenets, and there are a number of ways to do this. Arthur (1994) interprets Scripture in a highly emotional form. In her book *Beloved*, a daily devotional that emphasizes the idea that people are loved by God, she addresses the concept of the Jewish requirement of circumcision. Note how her answer unfolds. She asks several "why" questions, and then says: "These are probably questions that many have had in their heart but have never verbalized. Well, I can relate to those questions, dear one, because I wondered the same thing […] How beautiful it was for me to see God's answer. Let me share it with you, for I know it will thrill you" (n.p.). This text calls for a highly aesthetic reading. Rather than indicate that an appeal to reason, law, or history is impending, Arthur draws on the reader's emotions, using words like "beautiful" and "thrill," and addressing the reader as "dear one." This is the same kind of reading that we get in comprehensive devotional texts like Lucado's (1997) *The Great House of God*. Unlike Arthur's text, which was a stop-and-go text broken into approximately 250-word daily segments (a style quite popular in Christian devotional books),Lucado's work is in traditional book form. This work juxtaposes the famous Lord's Prayer with the metaphor of the household to suggest that God is asking souls to find a home in him. Although the overall

structure is different, the content of the book reflects Arthur's. Here, Lucado is talking about the belief that the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus was a panacea for sin in the life of the individual. Lucado uses the simile of monetary problems to make the magnitude of the act more accessible: "Don't miss what happened. He took your statement flowing with red ink and bad checks and put his name at the top. He took his statement, which listed a million deposits and not one withdrawal and put your name at the top. He assumed your debt. You assumed his fortune" (p.113). Like Arthur, Lucado has put a very emotional spin on the events he is describing. The writing appeals in every way to an aesthetic reading. However, he has not strayed from the primary text. I Peter 1: 18-19 reads, "For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God" (New Living Translation). Repeatedly both the Old and New Testaments refer to the idea of redeeming a debt. Here, then, we have aesthetic writers shoring up their writing with references to the primary text.

Efferent readings may come from a number of texts, including personal and group Bible studies, sermons, some devotionals, and apologetics. These call for analytical readings of texts.[6] Rosenblatt reminds us that stance focuses largely on purpose. It "provides the guiding orientations toward activating particular areas and elements of consciousness, that is, particular properties of public and private aspects of meaning" (p.12). To conduct efferent readings of Christian texts, we must determine what piece(s) of knowledge we are supposed to leave the text

---

[6] For thoroughness' sake, it is important to note that some Christians see efferent readings as a violation of the Christian experience. To be a Christian, they argue, is to be a spiritual being, not a rational one, as the spirit is what comes of Christ. Womack (2012) claims "Your spirit is your innermost part, not your 'rational soul.'" However, the majority of Christians find that the religion calls for the two to work in tandem.

with, rather than what emotions. In some cases, the author is quite direct about what the reader

must leave with. Schaeffer's (1998) text on Christianity in the post-modern age is extremely

strong in its condemnation of the modern Christian:

> Those standing in the stream of historic Christianity have been especially slow to
> understand the relationships between various areas of thought. [The Christian] must
> understand what confronts him antagonistically in his own moment in history.
> Otherwise he simply becomes a useless museum piece and not a living warrior for
> Christ (p.32).

Schaeffer is pointing out the need not only for thinking, but for metacognition – the Christian

must think about the patterns of thinking that have been going on in the church. This is, as it

were, the ultimate form of efferent reading. What must be taken from the text is not simply what

is in the text itself but an awareness that "I as reader am engaging with the text as the most recent

reader in a long train of Christian readers since 30AD until this point in time, and any choices

that I make as a reader will result in my carrying on the Christian tradition." For Schaeffer, to

not have an efferent reading – to not take something away – is to fail the text and oneself as a

reader.

There is, however, a strange convolution in Christian writing, where writers do not,

cannot, or simply will not write completely in one of the two forms. Their texts are written in

such a way that they attempt to call forth both emotional and practical readings – asking their

readers to have an emotional response and then harness that emotional response into some kind

of action, or simply combining both in their instructions. The later appears in George's (1994)

explanations on how to communicate with God. She begins with a very emotional, thus aesthetic

appeal,

> As we walk closely with Him, we will also experience His power in our life, power that
> can life us out of the depths of death, discouragement, doubt, dread, and depression and
> enable us to better deal with the challenges that come our way. […] we will find strength,

hope, joy, faith, and peace of heart, soul, and mind. As we encounter the events life brings, we will experience victory. (p.25)

Here, George is appealing to a basic human emotional desire for connection with something more, a purely aesthetic reading. It is one she keeps up through large portions of her text. However, quite frequently, she intersperses an aesthetic reading of God, with ideas such as this: "We must see God as the God of the Bible – supreme, sovereign, and sensitive…. The Christian life is kept fine-tuned by biblical theology. We should always interpret experience by truth – we should always filter every pain through the lens of deity. When God is in sharp focus, then life is also undistorted" (p.119). Here, she shifts here concept of God to one that tries to emphasize logic rather than emotion.   There is no defense of her right to make this shift or question of whether or not this is a legitimate literary move to make; it is simply taken. The book, of course, then faces the scrutiny of the Christian community, yet, as its audience it not the academic sphere, it is not likely to fall under the purview of the more critical gaze. It is an interesting hermeneutic to attempt to navigate, especially since George's book is not written for the literary scholar or the theologian, but for women in general, with different lives and different skill sets.

Simultaneously efferently- and aesthetically- driven texts flood the market, and they create a strange place of being and non-being in the text for the reader. It is exceptionally difficult for a reader to enter a text in two mindsets. The reader must "savor" a "lived through" meaning of a text while simply looking for what needs to be "extracted and retained" (Rosenblatt, 2005, p.11). It would be as if one was pulling teeth at a gourmet banquet. Derrida proposes this as his idea of *differance* – in the idea of one idea in comparison with the other, we have opposites, the idea of a logical reading with an emotional one. But, they go beyond that in that they cannot exist together in the same place. (Tompkins, 1988, p.741). However, many Christian readers have grown accustomed to this kind of reading, as they are familiar with it not

only in devotional and apologetic texts but also in the Bible as well. Because the Scriptures are multi-genre, they do change from proscriptive works on how to behave to stories to love songs. A Christian reader might go from a call-and-response worship service where loud praise and worship song texts were sung to a private reading of an epistle from Paul, a very instructive text designed to be read efferently. Readers trained in these texts have a very unique advantage that they do bring to other life arenas that require reading. Thus even a novice reader may be able to surmount post-structuralism without recognizing the objections of the postmodern movement.

Finally, Rosenblatt offers the 1930s reading formulas developed by Peirce. When readers read, they must attach some kind of significance to the information in the text, significance that goes beyond, "do I find this important?" To do that, they must first understand the nature of the things that they encounter. In his 1867 paper, "On a New List of Categories," Peirce attempted to visually explain reading symbols as understood in a combination of the sign, the thing, and the mind – or mental interpretant (Atkin, 2010). The thing is just that, some kind of identifiable object or existence. The sign is an indicator identifying the thing/object. It could be a picture, a sound, or a motion. In a writing system, the sign is a word. The mental interpretant (mind) is the bringing of the reader's mental capacity to the sign-thing system. It is the most important, as it involves the ability to connect the sign and the thing together into a recognized pairing. Without the mental interpretant, the sign and the thing would simply be existences without purpose to their connection. Together, these three things create a symbol, or a linguistic marker. Visually, Peirce's arguments would appear as a triangle:

Sign

= Symbol

Thing————————Mental interpretant (mind)
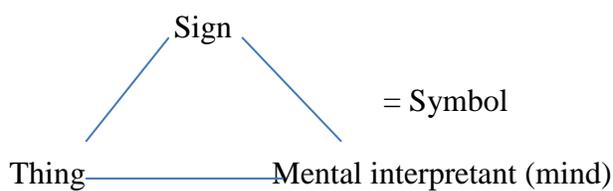
Peirce's claims support Rosenblatt's concept that dualism undermines the holistic nature of the reading and writing process. By creating a textual triangle that produces a symbol, not an indisputable fact, Peirce has eliminated the right/wrong nature of the reading process and opened it up to meet the reader where she is in the reading process rather than telling the reader that she has failed by not reaching the "correct" conclusion. Peirce did point out, however, that there are interpretations (variations on the mental interpretant) that are very specific. These he called "representations." A representation may be a sign accepted by a "mere community in some quality." In other words, a community may operate as a mind upon the triad in a specific way. He named a representation that this group acknowledges an "icon." An "indices" ("index" in singular) is a straightforward fact, and a "symbol" (not to be confused with the symbol above) is a general connection.

There are places in Peirce's theory where the Christian reader may struggle. The Bible is considered by nearly all denominations to be the inerrant word of God. Augustine, possibly the most revered Saint in Christian history, loved by both Protestants and Catholics, argued, that all "know that [God's] Word cannot suffer change, as by now I knew in so far as I was able to know it. In fact, I had no doubt about it at all" (1961, p.153). There are, literally, hundreds of denominations of Christianity, each with differences in doctrine, some subtle, some not subtle. All interpretations are carried out by humans who, according to the majority of Christian sub-groups, are fallible beings. However, Christian readers are inclined to think their own interpretations are right, especially if those interpretations are carried out by a leader in their religious group such as a pastor or a priest. Thus, if one takes the sign and the thing/object (assuming that both are fixed), one may have the application of the mind to it fixed as well, as it comes from as established set of beliefs. Accordingly, all members who adhere to a certain

group should, theoretically, end up with the same symbol when given the same sign and thing. However, this is not the case. Here, Rosenblatt's (2005) words become particularly apt: "Though language is usually defined as a socially generated system of communication – the very bloodstream of any society – the triadic concept reminds us that language is always internalized by a human being transacting with a particular environment" (p. 4). As Rosenblatt points out, each reader will end up with a different understanding of the ending symbol, for, while the sign and the thing remain unchanged, the mind is unique to every person engaging with the text. Regardless of how devout a person is and how faithful to his or her particular denomination or sect, the subtle variances in analyses – skills based on training in Biblical interpretation, personal religious readings, indoctrinations from church and other locations, and any other influences from texts – that are performed on each text will result in different minds, creating different understandings of symbols.

Where Peirce does work in favor of Christian interpretation is in his concept of representations. All three elements break down into individual church experience. Reading for icons, or artistic and aesthetic interpretation of Scripture, happens particularly in worship and in the reading of books of poetry such as the Psalms or Song of Songs. Indices come in historical books like the Torah or the Gospels. Symbols occur when connections are made between the text and the real world. Of course, "favor" may be a deceptive term here. How one church may treat these may be quite different than another. In fact, even within a church there may be divisive elements over these kinds of interpretations. Howsoever that may be, these representations daily occur.

Having reviewed these elements in context of the Christian young adult reader, we can thus derive several ideas from Rosenblatt. The first is that the experiences of the student reader

must be taken into consideration before any judgment or interpretation is made about their reading experiences – who are they? What have they experienced? What has been taught to them about the topic in the text? Though the answers to these questions come over time (and some perhaps not all), without developing the answers to these questions, the observer is essentially "flying blind" into any kind of interpretation. The second is that the observer must know what the readers believe about text themselves. If a two-way transaction is occurring between reader and text it is not enough simply to know who the readers are; the observer must know what the reader believes about texts in order to understand the nuances of the relationship. A reader who values the power of texts will engage in this two-way interaction much differently than a reader who holds little worth for the written word – or at least for this particular text. However, texts as texts are not enough – the observer must know what kind of text the reader values and what goals they are valued for. Finally, anyone hoping to interpret a student reader's interaction with a text must know how the reader is addressing it – efferently or aesthetically – and what the intended purpose is. There are four possible permutations a reader may carry out: an efferent reading of an efferently-designed text, an attempted efferent reading of an aesthetically-oriented text, an aesthetic reading of an aesthetically-purposed text, or an aesthetic reading of an efferently-intended text. Readers who are able to align efferent and aesthetic ideas prove themselves capable of literary awareness and understanding the nuances of a text. Readers who cannot align these may require more instruction in the ways that various types of literature are composed and purposed. A cognizance of how these combinations are manifest in a single reader will dictate the way in which an observer judges the reading process.

It is important here to note that this dissertation study does not attempt to align reader with reading style. Rather, it takes a smaller, yet crucial, piece of the study, attempting to

determine – as Rosenblatt did with efferent and aesthetic terminology – if the texts being read at

the high school level align themselves with the texts being taught in the first-year Composition

classroom. Are the texts being read pre-college promoting the same learning methods as those in

Composition I? Do they require the same set of skills and the same type of understanding? Or is

there a disconnect between the types of text? This work is a first step towards understanding

how students treat these texts and how that treatment serves or fails them as they enter college.

Following the body of this chapter is a short devotional essay and a five point analysis of what a

transactional reading of this essay by a Christian young adult reader might look like. This

addendum looks forward to the following chapter, which identifies the major books these

students are currently reading and towards the penultimate chapter, which suggests a new

method of reading texts.

In conclusion, it is important to note that reader-response theory has fallen largely out of

favor in both theoretical circles and with Compositionists. Harkin (2005) poses an almost

conspiracy-theorist suggestion of where it was gone (although Harkin &Sosnoski [2003] propose

an excellent pedagogical model for bringing back in to the classroom). Harkin suggests that

reader-response, over-time, has faded into other theories – cultural studies, queer studies,

postcolonial studies, etc., in addition to be subsumed by a modern culture who – for possibly the

first time in history – is not being explicitly told how to read every text encountered (p.411).

However, Harkin argues that this fading is not unintentional. Rather, it was purposed by theorists

attempting to establish themselves as true elitists and to forward their own academic personas by

casting down reading theory. Theorists sought to advance their own field by pulling the ultimate

school bully trick – beating up the smaller kid. Considered one of the lower forms of theoretical

analysis, literature, if connected with reader-response, could be the end of the movement:

>Unfortunately, however, discussions of reading have been so thoroughly conflated with discussions of teaching literature, of the purpose of English studies, of the future of the humanities, of the politics of general education, of the definitions and uses of literacy, and so forth, that a pedagogical or curricular decision not to teach literacy texts in writing courses became or entailed a decision not to teach reading. *That*, I think, is what happened to reader-response theory. (p.421)

Over time, the concept "reading" become synonymous with "reading literature." As curricula changed, and literature was phrased out of the highest forms of theory and regaled to a purely English-department kind of study, and a reader-response concept of studying texts went with it. Thus, textual analysis lost the interplay between reader and word that it had enjoyed for so many decades. The question has become, what can bring it back?

This is where text in the Christian tradition preserves reader-response, for religion is as much an emotional experience as an intellectual one. The construction of the texts (and note that the texts are multi-genre) speaks to this idea. Take, for example, the Stations of the Cross – the story of the crucifixion of Jesus. The story is told in thirteen individual panels, in different manners in every church. In Westminster Abbey, they are carved in marble; in St. Peter's Basilica, they are in stone. The reader is called to have a clear emotional response to them, and there is an interplay that goes on between the reader and text – once the reader has seen that particular station for the first time, he or she will never see another set again the same way. That same reader-response experience goes into all forms of religious texts. The monks who spent their entire lives illuminating manuscripts of texts did not do so for them to be deconstructed. Nor did GustaveDoré carve Dante into the circles of hell to let the feminists keep him hemmed in with Brutus and Cassius. This overall study does discuss the strengths and weaknesses that Christian texts have, particularly in terms of preparing rising freshmen for the first-year composition classroom, but it is important to keep in mind that these – and indeed all texts that

encourage true emotional responses, especially in times of cynicism and technologically-forced

ennui – may yet do some good.

And yet Christian texts do not call for a simply emotional response. Some of the greatest

thinkers defended Christian thought and expanded our understanding of the world without

changing their religious beliefs– in terms of exegesis, hermeneutics, theology, eschatology,

science – from Biblical times to the present: The Venerable Bede, Copernicus, Kepler,

Descartes, Pascal, Linnaeus, Newton, Mendel, Kelvin. And, though their arguments did not

always stand the test of time, they responded to the text through genuine personal belief.

In this, Christianity shares the call for reader-response criticism made by Suleiman

(1980) at the opening of *The Reader and the Text*, a call for a possible learning response to texts

made within communities who share responses to texts and thus can make greater use with them:

> Interpretation is a communal, context-specific act, the result of what Stanley Fish calls
> shared interpretive strategies and what Jonathan Culler calls reading conventions. By
> this view, what separates the positive from the negative hermeneuticians is what
> separates any community of readers from any other – whether the separation be defined
> in terms of history, culture, ideology, or simply temperament. And by this view, one
> common task that each variety of audience – oriented criticism might fruitfully assign
> itself would be to study by its own methods and in its own terms, the multiplicity of
> contexts, the shared horizons of belief, knowledge, and expectation, that make any
> understanding, however fleeting, of minds or of texts, possible. (p.44-45)

This communion is what reader-response calls for, and what the Christian organization hopes

that its texts will do, first for the readers who read believing it and then for those with whom they

share it, that "any understanding, however fleeting […] possible."

Addendum A: Sample Essay
"Finding the Smartest Man Who Ever Lived" by J.P. Moreland

In the fall of 1966, I set out for college at the University of Missouri with a scholarship to study chemistry. I didn't know that during my tenure there, I would make a decision that would forever alter the course of my life.

When I started school I had two goals: to prepare for Ph.D. work in chemistry so that I could become a university professor, and to date as many attractive girls as possible to increase my chances of obtaining a wife. So, I joined a social fraternity and took all the chemistry, physics, and math courses I could. Like most undergraduates then and now, I had a disdain for the humanities and was virtually ignorant as to what they were.

The times being what they were, the sixties, I lives a fairly typical pagan lifestyle. I never took drugs, but I drank and partied hard. Occasionally, during my early college years, I would pray to a vague father-figure whose depiction I had managed to glean from the watered-down instruction I had received in a liberal Sunday School prior to college. Yet over all, I was very successful in school and graduated with honors in chemistry.

But it is an event midway through my college life that I want to address. Through a series of spiritual and intellectual encounters with sharp, winsome Christians, I enlisted as one of Jesus' disciples my junior year. Among other life-changing aspects of this profound decision, I found a whole new world of knowledge opened to me in philosophy, theology, biblical studies, and history. I came to see that science, which I had honored above everything else, was merely one source of knowledge. The humanities, which I had disdained prior to my conversion, contained a rich source of knowledge as well.

However, as I grew spiritually, I encountered problems with my new-found faith. Early on I was taught that in Christ "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). I came to believe that while popular in His style of presentation, Jesus Christ was the smartest man who ever lived. I also became convinced that, as the inerrant word of God, the Bible was the source not only of truth but of knowledge.

Armed with these beliefs, I began to explore the world of ideas with the confidence that a biblical world view of any subject would eventually be vindicated in light of relevant experience and proper reason. Along the way, I encountered difficulties in areas such as gospel criticism and the various quests for the historical Jesus, naturalistic evolution, moral relativism, physicalism, and the denial of the soul. Each time, I entered the area of difficulty with the confidence that I would find solid, intellectually satisfying answers that harmonized with a careful, faithful interpretation of biblical teaching. And time and again I found this to be actually true! It was puzzling to me why Christian believers would reinterpret clear biblical teachings to bring scripture into harmony with a politically correct secular outlook when such a move seemed intellectually unnecessary and spiritually unfaithful to Jesus Christ Himself.

What an adventure it has been to explore the world of ideas as a student and co-laborer of the smartest man who ever lived!

Addendum B: A Sample Transactional Reading

Let us examine a sample transactional reading in five parts: 1) the Dewean concepts of self-action, interaction, and transaction, 2) the idea of the linguistic reservoir, 3) the two readings: aesthetic and efferent, 4) the understanding of authorial intent, and 5) Peirce's triadic system. Of course, a reading occurs within an individual, and this is a written work, but here I am attempting to outline what may occur in the Christian young adult reader's mind as he or she engages with the brief devotional, "Finding the smartest man who ever lived." This essay, written by J.P Moreland, a Professor of Philosophy at Biola University, a private Christian school in California, provides a good foundation for a readings study of this kind, as it addresses the writer's own attempt to understand a text, thus inviting study for the reader's personal quests.

Part 1 (Transaction): The writer's frequent use of "I" would help put the reader in a transactional state, seeing that the book represents the work of a fellow person with whom to engage. The writer pulls the reader in immediately with sentences that call upon engagement. The second sentence states, "I didn't know that during my tenure there I would make a decision that would forever alter the course of my life" (79). Instantly, there is an involved reader, first, because the sentence has a level of drama that commands an audience, but second because it appeals to the young adult about the enter college life. What could be more important than hearing about someone who experienced what this reader is about to – and had it change their life? Now, the reader has a personal stake. The writer's next comment about college will carry with it both what the writer puts in to it and what the reader has now added to it. A transaction has begun, one that carries on through the rest of the essay, as the writer gives a straightforward tale of college life, one that invites the reader to insert him or herself quite easily.

Part 2 (Linguistic Reservoir): Moreland is an older writer. If his timeline is typical and he entered college as an 18 year old in the mid-sixties, Moreland is 64, yet his text can resonate with current readers, as it includes elements that appeal to ones likely in his reader's reservoirs. The beginning of his third paragraph is particularly telling: "The times being what they were, the sixties, I lived a fairly typical pagan lifestyle. I never took drugs, but I drank and partied hard. Occasionally […] I would pray to a vague father –figure whose depiction I had managed to glean from the watered down instruction I had received in a liberal Sunday School prior to college." Moreland assumes his readers understand the sixties not just as a historical time, but as a cultural paradigm, a moment of free-spiritedness that, now, people often see as getting to re-enact only

during college. Readers might pull this out of their own reservoirs and their own knowledge of what they see the college life as being. For his Christian readers, this would be extremely telling, as many of them would have been warned against this lifestyle, regardless of their own personal desire to engage in it. The second portion would also appeal to their understanding, as Sunday School instruction, in whatever form it took, would likely also be an experience had by these students.

Part 3 (Aesthetic and Efferent Readings): Of the parts of a transactional reading, for this particular essay, interpreting these readings may be the most difficult. Moreland is, at the core, telling a morality tale, taking an autobiographical experience as a vehicle for explaining a personal belief in the diving intelligence of Jesus. This creates a problematic experience for the reader. During the first part of the essay, the reader is reading aesthetically, experiencing Moreland's tale as story. While it is not deeply descriptive, it is written engagingly, and it does not appear to have a message; it is rather a narrative, suggesting that it should be read for enjoyment rather than for what could be taken way. Then, in the middle of the essay, Moreland's tone changes. He stops telling tales, and begins an intellectual analysis of how he understood biblical interpretations, the intelligence of Jesus, and general apologetics. It becomes impossible here to have an aesthetic reading, as Moreland now clearly has a message for the reader. While he shapes the these sentences of his essay still as personal experience, there is no question that they are meant as a take-away for the reader, as he questions why some Christian distort the Bible "to bring scripture into harmony with a politically correct secular outlook when such a move seemed intellectually unnecessary and spiritually unfaithful to Jesus Christ Himself." He concludes by saying, "What an adventure it has been to explore the world of ideas as a student and co-laborer of the smartest man who ever lived." It's a fascinating sentence, as it can be read it aesthetically, as a sentence that rounds out nicely a personal experience story, but it must also be read efferently, as Moreland wants the reader to walk away with the idea that Jesus was the smartest man who ever lived. It's a fascinating essay to look at in terms of these readings and cannot be boxed into either category.

Part 4 (Authorial intent): The author doesn't provide much room for confusion about what the intent of his text his. He prevents a very clear tale of his personal beliefs on heading to college, how those beliefs changed, and his status now. What makes this a bit more interesting is that he plays with the readers' emotions. In the second paragraph, he makes a hugely

problematic statement designed to upset some readers: "Like most undergraduates then and now, I had a disdain for their humanities and was virtually ignorant as to what they were" (79). Besides the fact that this sentence makes vast generalizations, he opens up room to question the overall premise – if the author disdains the humanities, the reader certainly has room to disdain the author. However, this was a carefully played move, the author wants to explain the transformation that he undergoes as he gains knowledge about philosophy and theology, and only a few paragraphs later he practically apologizes to the humanities. The author describes what he learns, and – this is crucial – supports his beliefs with biblical references. This is designed to clarify what he means, align it with New Testament premises, and support it with authority accepted in the community.

Part 5 (Peirce's Triad): Focusing specifically on the "interpretant" portion of the triad, the reader must look at what Moreland says about Jesus and determine if what he says is correct (since what Moreland says about the general college experience and the sixties is his general experience, and the average college reader will have heard similar stories and will be unlikely to call into question these experiences). Moreland argues for an extremely intelligent Jesus, an intelligence he believes that he has uncovered through solid biblical criticism and reason, one that withstands whatever he attempts to throw at it. On one level, this is an easy essay to believe, as no Christian young adult would want to say Jesus was not intelligent. But Moreland makes a point towards the end of his essay that it is Christians who are some of the worst manipulators of biblical teaching; leaving the reader with a great dearth of information about this issue at hand, and able to say they agree only with *this* point in *this* essay and no more.

Overall, the essay, though short, requires a great deal of thought from the reader. A Rosenblattian transactional reading tells the observer much of what may be going on in the reader's mind and provides possibly the best way to understand how Christian young adults engage with these devotional-style texts, texts that demand so much from them on so many different levels.

Chapter 3: The Survey

Introduction to Research

In *The Making of Knowledge in Composition: Portrait of an Emerging Field*, North

(1987) made one of the earliest attempts at quantifying what we do in our field of Composition

and Rhetoric. At that point in the field's history, it suffered from an identity crisis, a kind of

"centerless-ness" such that, when he attempted to research the field, North "[e]nded up with what

amounted to a loosely organized catalogue of classroom options, everything from curricular

models that would tell me what to do in every class all semester to hundreds, even thousands, of

pedagogical bits and pieces from which I could build my own course" (preface). There was, he

argued, no way to know what was really going on in a classroom or the best practices employed

by good speakers. His solution, then, was to write *Making Knowledge*, in which he studies not

necessarily the content of what occurs in the classroom but rather the manner in which

pedagogical methods are obtained. How does a teacher determine if a multiple choice exam is

the best way to test students over a reading selection? Does he do careful observation and make

field notes? Does she conduct an empirical study? North proposed eight types of data-gatherers,

combined of teacher, teacher-researcher, and researcher, who can gain knowledge in the field.[7]

Each group, divided into larger segments of inquirers, scholars, and researchers, adopts a

different practice for obtaining information about the classroom and then processing it for use in

the classroom.

This study adopts two of North's methods of making knowledge: inquiry into the

experience of the *practitioner* and data from the work of the *experimentalist*. While the act of

---

[7] North's complete list includes Practitioners, Historians, Philosophers, Critics, Experimentalists, Clinicians, Formalists, and Ethnographers. It is important to note that, while these are different categories, they are not distinct; for example, a teacher may be a Practitioner and an Experimentalist at the same time or one of many other combinations.

experimentation can take many forms (control groups, applied treatments, etc.), there is a general principle that holds the method in place: "its core, if you will – is its membership's allegiance to the fundamental positivist assumptions […] that the world is an orderly place, a place of non-random causes and effects; that order exists quite apart from our experience of it, and that the principles of that order are accessible to human inquiry" (p.146). In enacting a survey, I subconsciously argued for those principles – that I could obtain hard data that could be organized into a pattern of understanding, a pattern that would gel with my second method of making knowledge – of being a practitioner.

There is a possible danger in attempting to combine forms of making knowledge. It would be easy to argue that to blend experimental methods would be to cross-contaminate them, simultaneously devaluing both sets of data. I would respond to such criticism with two claims. First, the methods chosen were the most efficient way to collect the data. Salant and Dillman (1994) propose surveys as one of the most cost- and time- efficient ways of obtaining information, claiming that it is only through surveys that we can maximize our understanding of a large population without engaging the entire population (p. 4). Given the resources available, a survey was the best tool. The practitioner method of interviewing graduate instructors, rather than surveying them as a whole is also the appropriate selection, given the population size. As there are far fewer instructors working in the first-year composition classroom and they were interviewed together, it was possible to gain a greater volume of important information.

The second reason this blending of methods is appropriate is based on the type of material that I wanted to collect. My survey of youth pastors in the area was constructed to gather only a few pieces of very specific information which were designed to work together to answer the first governing question: "What are Christian high school students reading?" It was a

question that could be answered via an online poll without the need for more unnecessarily complicated methods of data collection. To create a coding system with which to read the texts, however, I needed a much more detailed type of instrument, one that would allow me to gain a larger volume of information – enough to develop a complete system of reading. In interviewing fewer instructors, I was able to gain great quantities of practitioner data and a variety of answers to the second governing question: "How do you teach argumentation?" From those interviews, it was possible to draw out elements that were repeated frequently or those that were emphasized the most vehemently. These elements allowed me to create a scoring rubric through which to examine the books gathered from the survey. It would have been possible, admittedly, to run a survey through first-year composition instructors asking them what methods they used. It might even have gathered more specific data; however, said data would have two problems. Either it would have been artificially limited by my attempts to fit it into closed-ended questions[8] or it would be far too broad in open-ended questions. An interview setting allowed me as the researcher to guide the question asking, clarifying the type of answers that I was looking for, request further data if need be, and provide some limitations to answers that came outside of the reach of the study. Together, these two methods of data collection worked in tandem to yield information useful to the completion of this particular style of study.

In *Composition Research: Empirical Designs*, Lauer and Asher (1988) take North's concepts and place them along a continuum that runs from a sort of practitioner inquiry where teachers discuss best practices to a hard science of quantitative experimentation. However, every

---

[8] For example, a closed ended question might be "What kind of argumentation to you teach? a) Aristotelian, b) Socratic, c) Toulmin model, d) other." Such a question would not only limit the possibilities of answers that a teacher could provide, possibility causing him or her to select an answer that did not fit their exact teaching methods, or it would be unnecessarily confusing, as one teacher could easily define Socratic argumentation, for example, in a different way than another teacher.

mode of inquiry on that field falls into one of two categories: rhetorical inquiry and empirical

inquiry. Rhetorical enquiry comes out of a "motivating dissatisfaction" with an element in the

field of composition (p. 4). These problems call for action as "they [do] not turn into free-

floating anxiety, but instead [are] transformed into catalysts for inquiry, into *questions* that

specified directions for search, that pointed out what was needed to eliminated these perceived

inadequacies" (p. 5). While empirical research identifies the same problems, its solutions come

from

> inductive practices instead of the deductive and analytical processes of rhetorical
> inquiry. Inductive processes take two forms: descriptive and experimental. The final act
> of an empirical study is very similar to that of rhetorical research – it is essentially one
> of interpretation and argument for the meaning, the significance of both the problem
> and the results. The data and results do not speak for themselves. (p. 6)

What is left then in a field in which rhetorical theory and empirical research feed into one

another: "Rhetorical theory guides empirical research, which in turn helps verify theory, a

reciprocity that other fields lack" (p. 7). We are then left with the possibility of carrying out a

study that uses multiple elements of research to obtain a single piece of knowledge.

This particular study relies heavily on Lauer and Asher's concept of empirical

knowledge. They present four general principles of theory, those traditionally used in social and

scientific studies, and recast them to work in our particular field.[9] It is the first principle that

concerns this study. The authors claim that real knowledge comes out of comparison (p.7), and

that is what the study seeks to do. The survey portion of the study establishes a textual pattern

from which we can draw an understanding of what a certain group of students engages with in

---

[9] In full those are: First, "no knowledge can be gained without comparison" (p. 7). Second,
"measurement instruments are imprecise" (p. 8). Third, "an applied field […] is concerned with
practical *decisions*: choosing alternative pedagogies, environments, and curricula. Such decisions
inevitably involve making judgments about causality, judgments research can bolster" (p.
8).Finally, "the psychological and social sciences have a relatively large number of basic
dimensions of human behavior, on the order of 400" (p. 9).

terms of argumentation and understanding. The interview portion of the study establishes what teachers *want* from students in terms of argumentation and understanding. By comparing the two, it is possible to identify gaps between these two areas and – hopefully – recommend strategies to pull the two the two thinking methodologies together.

The Survey

In order to determine what religious-based texts churched high-school students were reading, the study needed an information collecting tool that would produce hard, quantifiable data. The initial methods for collecting this data involved much trial and re-trial. The first method was to go directly to the publishing companies. While the companies do publish lists of their top-selling books, the lists are based on nation-wide purchases, and, even though lists were obtainable from major publishers, they were not comparable in terms of numbers as they not eclipse the market. A second trial source was online bookstores, which could provide general lists of religious texts across publishers and could even categorize them into texts for young adults, but the lists they provided included fiction works as well, works that would be outside the scope of this study which seeks to build comparisons with Composition I, a course that does not involve fiction. The bookstores also did not have comparable lists, a fact that may stem from the demographic to which they appeal, the ability of their texts to be read on mobile devices, or their price points. Another option addressed was gaining sales information from Christian bookstores. Different bookstores, however, categorized different texts as "young adult" or "for teens." Some also had large teen sections, while others had none. A large secular store chain had more Christian young adult texts than at least one Christian surveyed store. There was also no way of

knowing with the bookstores if the purchasers were young adults or planning on giving the texts to young adults.[10]

The failure of these options to provide reliable data led to an attempt at a different method. Rather than trying to indirectly find what young adults in this area of the country are reading, the survey shifted to using people as the source for the data– if not the readers, then those who guide the readers. Determining who to ask created a different set of questions. The first option was to directly address young adults to see what they are reading. This, of course, presented a number of complications. The population of the two main counties in the area (housing the University and several major businesses and main population centers) is 424,404, of which 26.2% or 111,193 are under 18 years of age (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012, n.p.). Assuming an even year breakdown and a focus on upper high school students (age 16 and 17), that leaves 12,355 in the available sample. A generally acceptable size response rate of 30% would require over 3700 to respond to the survey. Because respondents are under the age of 18, parental approval must be obtained before young adults could take the survey. Thus, this would mean that up to four thousand parents would need to allow their children to give data to a faceless researcher.

However, the potential response rate of teenagers is irrelevant, since it is impossible to contact them using the selected online software. There is no database of email or social networking information of young adults in the area (as, given safety and privacy concerns, there should not be). Furthermore, even if such a database existed, it would not provide the most

---

[10] This point highlights the future of young adult literature. The end of the survey revealed that at least two of the books aren't only "teen" texts but are marketed for both teens and adults and two texts have been published in both young adult and adult versions.

crucial piece of information – which of these students are choosing to engage with Christian, youth-focused texts. Accordingly, the study turned to a second option.[11]

Religious leaders in the area are engaged with youth in a very personal and understanding way. They are tasked by their religious organization with caring for the spiritual health of their constituents, and, for centuries in the Western tradition, there are workers and scholars who are employed in focusing solely on the spiritual health of the young adults in the church. To be effective in their jobs, they need to be aware of what resources are available to help their students and young group members engage more fully with the religious experiences promoted by their churches. Of anyone in the area, youth pastors should be the most aware of existing texts and which they feel are beneficial to their youth. Furthermore, the number of churches in the area is obviously significantly smaller than the population figures. And, because part of the Christian religion calls for reaching out to the unchurched, youth pastors ought to be highly accessible to the general public. These factors forwarded this group as the best possible sample to survey for this data.

Creating limiters for the youth pastor sample was the result of two factors. First, the survey decided to focus on Protestant churches, as the major church body. This was based on a number of factors. First, Protestants form – by a massive majority – the largest religious group in the area.[12] Second, Protestant churches accepted the same compilation of Biblical books to form

---

[11] The options that were rejected are included here for two reasons. First, it is important to identify that measures that would appear to give more exact numbers were exhausted. Second, the study focuses on local pre-college students. These options covered both a localized and a general population. The fact that these options were unable to work with this particular group highlights the significance of a measurement instrument that can provide data purely about local sources.

[12] 78% of Arkansas identify themselves as Protestant Christians. Roman Catholics make up 7%. 14% are non-religious. Eastern Orthodox, Jewish, and Muslim faiths all make up less than 1%. ("Arkansas Demographics," 2012.)

a comprehensive Scripture, and, as this is a study on texts, textual unity is significant here.[13]

Further identification of the groups could be made by their general acceptance in an

"Evangelical" communion of churches. In its most basic form, the Evangelical tradition follows

the beliefs outlined in the Nicene Creed (see Appendix A).

Second, the isolation of the survey group was limited by the technology of which the

churches availed themselves. Of the churches in the area, only those with online contact

information made the original contact list. Some churches asked to be removed from further

emails, and some emails were rejected by their respective host servers, leaving 108 addresses

that received the cover letter and link for the survey. The use of the internet to gather contact

data was not done as an attempt to streamline the data collection process (indeed, given the

unwieldy nature of email mailing lists, it was anything but), but rather an assumption that

internet-savvy churches would be more likely to appeal to today's youth.

While this is not a study on technology, it cannot be denied that the internet and the

nebulous idea of constant connectivity into a larger, nondemarcated yet highly populated space is

one of the forces directing the activities of households across the socioeconomic strata. In 2009,

93% of teenagers aged 12-17 reported internet use. This is up from just below 75% in 2000 (Pew

Research, 2010). These scores were the highest among any age ranking. A youth program that

does not have online information, therefore, loses out on easy access to nearly all of its potential

outreach demographic. Accordingly, in order to add at least one level of assurance that the

---

[13] It should be noted that this is a statement indicating an inclusion of 66 books in the traditional church cannon. It is not an indication of translational homogeny. For example, a church that used the King James 1666 translation of the 66 books and a New International Version translation would both fall under this heading. The Catholic Bible contains Apocryphal writings that are external to the Protestant Bible, meaning that it would be outside of the study. Mormons, using the supplementary text of *The Book of Mormon* also fall outside of this study.

organizations I worked with had some relevance to the young adults they sought to reach, I

limited the study to organizations with internet communications. Using this same theory, these

churches were found and identified through the internet. A number of internet searches, using a

broad variety of search terms, yielded 201 churches in the region. Editing those using the

guidelines just mentioned brought the number down to its final figure of 108.[14]

Construction of the Survey[15]

      Contacting the Subject Population. Prior to the survey, a letter was sent via email (as

was all communication) to the selected population of youth pastors discussing the nature of the

survey, its goals, and its parameters (Appendix B). In the letter, the survey was forwarded as a

measure to help university instructors understand incoming college students and as a way to gain

information that could promote positive classroom relationships. I attempted to take an

empathetic tone and establish myself as a member of their affinity groups, collections of people

that Gee (2007) calls "insiders" who are able to recognize similar patterns of "thinking, acting,

---

[14]Though this is addressed in further detail later on, I would like to circumvent a likely argument that there is no point in this data collection, as we can't prove that these readers are going to college. However, I would argue that we don't need to know what percentage of students will do this. In many cases, such a percentage is impossible to grasp (as it would require churches to submit statistical data on the composition of their youth groups - which, were it even possible to convince the youth pastors to do such a thing would be morally abhorrent in the eyes of many of the congregation). Part of the essence of true (though not necessarily practiced) Christianity is its willingness to cross socioeconomic barriers. Accordingly, a single youth group may contain students who will not go to college, students who will wait and be non-traditional, students who will be first-generation college attendees, and students who will attend college as part of a long tradition of a family of university graduates. The cross-over data between this kind of homogenized church structure and youth college attendance simply does not exist. However, all that needs to be established here is that all senior high school students have reached the stage in their academic careers that directly precedes the first-year of college education. These potential college students are reading the researched texts. These texts are under scrutiny as reading material for seniors, thus making them reading material for the pool from which universities draw. The intersection of academic prerequisite combined with youth group reading proclivities is all that must be established in order to make these texts viable for study.

[15] The survey was constructed and disseminated using Qualtrics, the survey software licensed by the University's business college.

interacting, valuing, and believing" (p. 27-28). Participants in a group are likely to agree with

and support something said by another member of the affinity group, and my goal was to reach

into that assembly. Coming from a background of living overseas where my father, an Anglican

priest, did mission work, I was in a position to establish myself as familiar with and generally in

favor of the ideologies that these organizations upheld. From that stance, I hoped to present my

request for answers to the survey in the tones of almost a favor to friend.

Approximately four weeks later, the survey link was sent out accompanied by a letter that

closely restated the initial letter (Appendix C). It briefly reminded readers of the first letter, gave

a short description of what the survey would be like (making sure to emphasize its ease and

brevity), and closed with a statement of how the information collected in the survey could prove

beneficial to the students with whom the youth leaders worked.

A final reminder letter was sent just under eight weeks after the initial dissemination of

the survey (Appendix D). The shortest of the three letters, it simply stated the need for more

participants, gave assurances that this information was only for academic purposes, and

emphasized the possible community benefits from the taking of the survey.

The Survey Build. The survey had fourteen questions in both open and closed formats.[16]

The questions were divided into three general sections: information on the youth group,

information on texts, and information on the church body. The first general section had three

questions simply establishing basic facts about the youth programs, the structure, the ages, and

the participants. The final general section operated the same way, with two general questions

about the church denomination and size. The reason for collecting information of this type and in

this manner was not random. Both the information collected at the beginning and the information

---

[16] For the complete survey with results, see Appendix E.

collected at the end of the survey were designed to allow the youth leaders to situate themselves

in the context of a larger church body as a sort of protection against any misuse of their answers.

There is, as is discussed later on in this and other chapters, a level of distrust for liberal arts

programs that are not associated with religious groups, particularly programs like Philosophy and

English – programs that may be considered to explore "alternative" ways of thinking to the

Christian faith. Allowing youth leaders to back themselves up with the power of a larger

organization was designed to grant them confidence in engaging with a secular research project.

The middle, second section was the most important to the survey. It attempted to learn which

texts youth leaders actually used, which texts they recommended and – as additional information

– what they avoided. The section was broken into segments based on these ideas.

Initial construction of the survey began with section three opening the survey. The list of

churches, which was later moved to question 13, was compiled using the census data reported for

the *2011 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches'* list of top 25 churches in the United

States (National Council of Churches, 2011). A question of church size followed this. These

questions were later moved to the end for two reasons. First, though they initially do not appear

to be material to the study at hand, they do provide information that will allow for additional

research and an expansion of the study at a later date. Second, they provided good closure for a

survey, as well-constructed surveys should end with easier questions to avoid question fatigue

and unfinished questionnaires.[17] This re-ordering also allowed the key concepts of the survey to

be moved closer to the beginning.

The remaining questions were ordered according to Fink's (2006) recommendations that

questions should move from the familiar to the unfamiliar and that sensitive questions be placed

---

[17] In this case, question fatigue appeared to be avoided, as only one of the respondents failed to finish the survey.

within the survey body but not at the end (p. 33-34). Accordingly, the survey opened with basic

questions about youth group structure: the age limits for the youth programs, the ages of the

members of the youth group, and how many youth are involved in youth activities. The ages of

the youth group members and the number of youth were collected as interesting data but were

also included to allow youth leaders some room to establish their positions and to create a lead-in

or "warm up" to the more sensitive questions.

The middle section contained the questions that were the key information gathering

instruments. The questions were set up in this order first to allow the church leaders to explain

their own use of texts and then to gather their thoughts on current best-selling Christian books.

Together, these two sets of information could be brought together to form a reliable list of books

from which to cull texts to analyze. First, the section asked if the church at hand had Bible

studies for youth and if those Bible studies used secondary texts. An open-ended question

followed in which youth leaders could list some of the texts that they use. A second conceptual

set followed asking if the leaders recommend any books for their youth to read outside of

church-moderated Bible studies with a second open-ended question of what those texts were.

This idea was flipped in the next section, asking if there were any texts that youth leaders told

their students *not* to read.[18] This was followed by a closed-ended question with a list of

characteristics that youth pastors looked for in the works they recommended. There was a final

question, a closed list of texts with a request that the participants check off any works that they

would recommended to their youth. The texts for this section were selected from a cross list of

---

[18] This is another question added largely for external information and the possibility of further research. However, here, it could serve the purpose of indicating any potential clash between what some youth leaders encouraged and others discouraged. Even in a study of this size, clash did occur.

publishers' most popular texts, lists of sales from online book sellers, and books prominently emphasized for sale by local booksellers.

Results

There were 26 respondents who finished the survey and one who did not. While this number was less than the 32 desired (a full 30%), the number was surprisingly high, given two specific factors. The first was the confidentially factor. Youth pastors work with children. Many churches, particularly larger ones (and the data indicated that 76% of the churches surveyed were in the top two size categories) have training programs on how to protect both the church workers and the youth from disasters such as child abuse and molestation. A youth leader who took his or her job seriously might feel that to respond to a survey that gives information about the teenagers in their programs would be a violation of the safety that he or she promised to uphold.

The second factor that kept the numbers slightly lower than one might hope would be that many youth organizations have an inherent distrust of secular liberal arts education, a fact mentioned in the previous chapter. The *Collegiate Devotional Bible,* published by Zondervan (1998), includes mini-devotionals, some with vignettes of students being harassed by atheist professors: "My friend had warned me of the professor […] Up to that time, I felt I'd already answered my own questions to my satisfaction. But the close quarters and his practiced arguments began to hem me in. His skepticism soon raised doubts in my mind" (p.1356).The students at American River College went so far as to adopt a series of resolutions, a form of charter, to attempt to protect their religious population from professors who they feared would try and change their beliefs (Unruh, 2009). It follows that research done "on" Christian youth that stemmed from a liberal arts college would be viewed with extreme skepticism by many in the Christian community.

Information on youth groups. Of the churches who responded, 73% have programs designated specifically for high school students. The remaining churches have their youth programs combined for many ages. Youth participant ages ranged from 12 to 18, with 12 being the mean and median of the lowest age (12 also being the lowest and 13 the highest on the bottom span), and 17 being the mean highest age (with 18 the median and highest age, and 15 the lowest). There was a very broad variance in the number of youth who participated in these programs. 38% of churches indicated that between 20 and 50 students participated in youth events. Both 50-75 and 75+ were at 12%. Under 10 was only 8%, and 10 to 20 was 31%

Information on Texts. In the opening question on Bible studies, 85% percent of respondents indicated that they hosted Bible studies for youth. Of these, 77% use a text in addition to the Bible for the study. The books that were listed as supplementary texts for Bible studies were quite extensive. At least three categories of answers could be identified: respondents listed either authors without specific books, specific books, or group curriculum. Specific books had an exceptionally wide range, from the works of R.C. Sproul, an evangelist who started his ministry in the 1960s to BluefishTV, a series of DVD-disseminated Bible studies. (A list conflated with the list of recommended books is below in [Fig. A]). Nearly all of the texts listed were books; however, there were some multimedia texts, and some references to Bible study curriculum, which are lesson plans

Characteristic	Response
Popularity among Christian readers	21%
Emphasis on issues common to teenagers (peer pressure, sex, dating, alcohol, etc.)	67%
Ease of reading/readability	38%
Emphasis on Biblical passages or examples	75%
Strong emotional appeal	21%
Strong argumentative appeal	17%
Other	21%
Figure B	

that come in units, some based on calendar time and some based on a topic, where leaders guide

students through a series of Bible-based lessons.

Of all those interviewed, 62% said that they recommended devotional or instructional

books apart from the Bible to their church youth. In an open-ended question allowing the

subjects to list which books that they used, they listed a large variety of texts [Figure A]; one

respondent listed 29 and ended with "and possibly a few I'm leaving out ☺ [sic]." In terms of

discouraging youth from reading certain texts, the groups were split nearly down the middle,

with 52% saying they did discourage them, and 48% saying they did not.[19] Youth leaders looked

for a variety of characteristics in the works that they did include. [Fig. B]

The final question on texts was a closed-ended question giving youth leaders a list of

texts and asking them which, if any, they would suggest to their youth. The list was compiled

---

[19] While the main focus of the study is the texts that students are reading, it is important to recognize what they are not to see if the ideas we promote in the classroom are in any way be obviously discouraged by youth leaders. There were three topics that came up frequently in the "do not read" category: texts on secular romance (particularly involving intimacy outside of marriage), gossip or celebrity magazines, and texts studying or promoting witchcraft or the occult. At all its references, the first was stated as a simple fact without any explanation – the assumption being that the researcher would know that conservative Christianity encourages celibacy outside of marriage. The second, on gossip magazines was explained in two ways. One respondent said that secular texts of both the first and second kind encouraged readers to "follow your heart." The respondent countered that with a reference to the prophet Jeremiah, who claimed "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick" (Jeremiah 17:9, *ESV*). A second respondent argued that keeping students away from gossip magazines might help them avoid those behaviors in their own lives. It was the final point, however, that was the most interesting. Several respondents said that they did not want their students reading about the occult or material that promoted "anti-Biblical agendas." While one respondent said that they had held a study explaining demon possession, both that respondent and others wanted their students to stay away from addressing the topic individually. One also rejected readings on other religions, saying "bankers know the dollar so well they know how to spot a fake, our teens need to know the bible [sic] so well that they will know wrong teachings when taught." It is this last point that could be troubling to instructors of Composition I. Part of the essence of the class is understanding opposing arguments thoroughly, assessing them for any element of truth, and then being able to address them specifically and intelligently. To avoid reading opposing arguments because they might be indoctrinating violates a crucial method of Composition I argumentation.

from the texts most frequently sold by Christian publishers and the top referenced Christian youth texts on major online book stores. These selections were validated by the survey itself by the fact that most of them appeared in the open question asking youth leaders to list recommended texts. This section was included here for two reasons: placing it after an open question helped avoid question creep, where giving the respondents a list of questions would then skew their thinking on the following questions. It also allowed respondents who were not able to list any texts without being prompted a list of works from which to draw. The highest ranking texts were both apologetics by Lee Strobel, and the lowest ranking text was Sntezel and Nesdahl's *Nobody Told Me.* [Figure C]

Author	Author Mentioned Independently	Works (Number of times Referenced in Parenthesis)
Arterburn, S.		Every Young Man's Battle (1), Every Young Woman's Battle (1)
Batterson, M.		The Circle Maker (1)
Bevere, J.	1	The Bait of Satan (1)
Blackaby, R., Blackaby, H., King, C.		Experiencing God (1)
Bridges, J.		The Pursuit of Holiness (1), The Discipline of Grace (1)
Cahill, M.		One Thing You Can't Do in Heaven (1)
Chambers, O.		My Utmost for His Highest (1)
Chan, F.		Crazy Love (5)
Dickerson, R.		So Youth may Know (1)
Eastham, C., Farrel, B. and Farrel P.		Guys are Waffles, Girls are Spaghetti (1)
Elliot, E.		Passion and Purity (1)
Etheridge, S.		Every Young Woman's Battle (1)
Foster, R.		Devotional Classics, Celebration of Discipline (1)
Getz, G.		The Measure of a Man (1)
James, S.		How To Smell Like God (1)
Jeffery, P.		Bite-Sized Theology (1)
Kendall, J. and Jones J.		Lady In Waiting (1)
Lewis, C.S.		Mere Christianity (1), Surprised by Joy (1), Screwtape Letters (1)*

Lucado, M.		Cast of Characters (1); God's Story, Your Story (1)
Ludy, E.		God's Gift to Women (1), When God Writes Your Love Story (1)
Ludy, L.		Authentic Beauty (1), When God Writes Your Love Story (1)
MacArthur, J.		The Gospel According to Jesus (1)
McDowell, J.		More Than a Carpenter (1), Don't Check Your Brains at the Door (1)
McDowell, S.		More than a Carpenter (1)
Moore, B.		Praying God's Word (1)
Moore, M.		The Life of Christ (1)
Omartian, S.		The Power of a Praying Teen (1)
Pearcy, N. and Johnson, P.		Total Truth (1)
Peretti, F.		Piercing the Darkness (1)*
Ridenour, F.		So What's the Difference? (1)
Rivers, F.		Redeeming Love (1)
Seth, M. and Johnson, B.		Here Comes Heaven (1)
Sites, J.		Plug Into Power (1)
Sproul, J.R.	1	
Stanley, A.		It Came From Within (1)
Stoeker, F. and Yorkey, M.		Every Young Man's Battle (1)
Strobel, L.		The Case for Christ (3), The Case for Faith (1)
Tozer, A.W.	1	
Voice of the Martyrs		Jesus Freaks (1)*, Extreme Devotion (1)*, Hearts of Fire (1)*
Warren, R.	1	The Purpose Driven Life (1)
Wiersbe, W.		Be Joyful (1)
Wurmbrand, R.		Tortured for Christ (1)
Young, S.		Jesus Calling
Zondervan (pub.)		The Story (1)
[Author Unknown]		Unafraid (1), The Pastor's Wife (1), Learning to love Yourself (1), End Times Simplified (1)
*Indicates Fictional or Biographical Work		
Figure A		

Text	Response
Strobel – *The Case for Christ*	73%
Strobel and Vogel – *The Case for a Creator: Student Edition*	59%
De Moss and Gresh – Lies Young Women Believe	41%
Miller – *Blue Like Jazz*	36%
Omartian – *The Power of a Praying Teen*	32%
Lucado – *3:16 – the Numbers of Hope*	27%
Rainey and Rainey – *Passport to Purity*	27%
Dobson – *Preparing for Adolescence*	23%
Anderson – *the Bondage Breaker*	18%
Lookadoo and DiMarco – *Datable: Are You? Are They?*	18%
Jones and Jones – *Facing the Facts*	9%
Stenzel and Nesdahl – *Nobody Told Me*	0%
Figure C	

Information on Churches. The churches covered a fairly broad range of denominations, with Non-denominational having the most responses at 21%, and Episcopalian, Evangelical Free Church, and Lutheran all having no responses. [Figure D] The fact that only 4% of the respondents answered "other" gives a confident list of churches whose theologies could be incorporated into an extended study on church doctrine in relation to reading patterns. Only one church had fewer than 50 members. 21% of the churches had between 100 and 200 members. The remaining categories of 200-500 members and 500+ each earned 38% of the responses.

Denomination	*Response*
Non-denominational	21%
Baptist	17%
Assemblies of God, Church of Christ, Presbyterian, Southern Baptist Convention	13%
Pentecostal, Methodist "Other"	4%
Episcopalian, Lutheran, Evangelical Free Church	0%
Figure D	

Book selection

From the information gathered in the survey, the following five texts were determined to be the most frequently used and recommended. Strobel and Vogel's and Chan's works were, without question, the most frequently referenced. Miller's work, though it did not rank as highly,

recently gained enough attention to be translated into an independent film, something almost

unheard of among Christian texts, thus warranting its inclusion. The remaining two works by

Bevere and McDowell and Hostetler were selected off the open-answer list; they tied with a

number of other texts, but were selected based on the fact that their content was more

argumentative in nature as opposed to devotional.

The Case for Christ: Student Edition, **Lee Strobel and Jane Vogel.**Strobel's work was

born out of his own determination to prove Christianity false. An investigative journalist and

dedicated atheist, Strobel initially set out to catalogue the flaws and failures of the Christian

religion. Along the way, what he uncovered had the exact opposite effect, and Strobel converted

to Christianity. *The Case for Christ* is the apologetic that he, along with Jane Vogel, developed

in support of his new religion. The student edition was selected because of the specific focus it

would have for future Composition I students.

Crazy Love: *Overwhelmed by a Relentless God*, **Francis Chan.** Chan's book is a

traditional life studies book that outlines specific ways to live and think for Christian youth. His

own life was marked by significant personal tragedy, and thus he focuses on minimalizing one's

connection to the material things in life and accepting and acknowledging the "Crazy Love"

between God and humanity. He also addresses significant world issues in the context of

Christian faith.

Don't Check Your Brains at the Door, **Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler.** Like

Strobel and Vodel's work, McDowell and Hostetler's work is an apologetic for Christianity

designed specifically for teen readers. The work centers on key questions of faith and attempts to

use reason and argumentation to defend Christianity against the criticism and questioning of the

world. These arguments are designed both to help readers better understand the Christian faith

and thus be able to defend it, and to promote change in their own lives as they take their newfound knowledge and attempt to create real-world application.

*Blue Like Jazz***, Donald Miller.** Miller discovered Christianity early in life and was a prolific Christian worker. However, he experienced extreme burn-out that left him almost without faith. This book, part of that story, contains a series of essays addressing a broad variety of themes in faith, ranging from politics to grace to money. The structure of the text is not linear, causing one reviewer to call it a "postmodern riff on the class evangelical presentation of the Gospel" (Reed*,* 2003).

*The Bait of Satan: Living Free From the Deadly Trap of Offense***, John Bevere**. Bevere's book is likely the most controversial of the selections, as it has received both extremely positive and extremely negative criticism. Possibly the most "self-help" style book of the five, the work attempts to outline the specific concept of giving and receiving offense and how this attacks religious souls. Using this knowledge of spiritual dangers, Bevere outlines for his readers ways to avoid the "bait" of Beelzebub and live without his hampering presence.

Together, these texts form the core of the analytical study. They were rated according to a grading rubric based on the requirements of Composition I classes. The creation of that rubric and its focus group development are outlined in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: The Focus Group

Rhetoricians should rule the world. – Focus Group Member Jeanette

Establishing a Focus Group

In order to determine the type of textual interactions that students face in the first-year composition classroom, I conducted a focus group that asked Composition graduate instructors at the largest four-year institution in the area to discuss the kinds of reading and writing skills they expect their students to be able to accomplish. In doing this, I hoped to create a rubric with which I could quantify the types of reading that the survey had revealed that students were doing. While all first-year composition classrooms at the University are required to use Lunsford's (2011) *The St. Martin's Handbook*, many teachers in their second year of teaching (and some in their first-year), bring in outside or supplementary materials. Because a compilation of all of the external information used in these classes is impossible as it changes regularly[20], the focus group section was designed to both help the researcher isolate the most important elements of argumentation employed in the classes and to give the instructors a fairer and less biased hearing of the methods than one that would be provided solely from a study of texts themselves.

This does present an interesting question: for the ease of study, why not give instructors a survey similar to the on youth pastors received? Or, conversely, why not have a focus group of youth pastors? The answer is that the focus group of teachers sought to collect a different kind of information. Meeting with youth workers individually could possibly compromise the nature of the study. In the evolution of the study, it became clear that this is an analysis of texts, not of

---

[20]*The St. Martin's Handbook* is the most commonly used text, and the two most frequently added are *They Say, I Say* and *Reading and Writing Across the Curriculum*, all three of which are addressed briefly at the end of this chapter. In Appendix F,G and H, I have also included three samples of the types of articles that instructors use as supplementary pieces when teaching argumentative writing.

people.[21] The subject of the exploration is the books that the students are reading (and, as the survey expanded the boundaries of the topics, the magazines and other forms of media as well). In this case, the youth workers are being surveyed because they are the most able to indicate which texts are being used in this part of the country. That being said, why not simply carry out the same procedure with teaching instructors? Here, we must recall the main thrust of the study. We are not comparing books to books; we are comparing books to skill sets – things that need the human element to be understood. The main texts used in the class are discussed briefly at the end of the chapter. These texts, however, are designed to be research resources; they are not written with a single central message as the youth devotional texts are. What is being taught in the classroom cannot be determined by analyzing the books but by addressing the teachers directly, asking them how they *use* the books to teach the skills and lessons central to Composition I classes.

Accordingly, the focus group was carried out with the researcher and with three graduate teaching instructors at this particular research university. The English Department at the university houses several subprograms, and I attempted to draw members for the focus group from each of those programs.[22] My largest concern was their familiarity with the Rhetoric and

---

[21] To allow any youth pastors the right to discuss their answers, I included all my relevant information and an open invitation to communicate with me about the study. Only two of the 108 pastors surveyed initiated contact other than completing the survey.

[22] A number of choices had to be made in order to determine from which pool of teachers from the areas of English, Rhetoric and Composition, and Comparative Literature would be fished. Because the department graduates students from those three areas, it was important to ensure that there were interviewees from each area. The English Department at the University has the largest number of graduates. It covers literature from Gilgamesh to Rushdie, and, with the exception of some work in Middle and Old English, is read almost entirely in English or English translation. The Comparative Literature program is housed half-in and half-out of the English department and includes courses in philosophy, theory, and sociology. Graduates of this program need to demonstrate efficiency in at least three languages. The area of Rhetoric and Composition is discussed largely in the body of this work.

Composition program, which operates as a sub-set of the English Department. This program is responsible for all training and staffing needed for Composition I and II classes, Essay Writing Classes, and Advanced Composition classes for undergraduates. Composition I is basic argumentative writing, taken by most students the first semester they arrive at the University. The Rhetoric and Composition program also allows instructors to create and submit original classes to teach Composition II with a unique focus[23]. At the most basic criteria, in order for the focus group members to provide relevant information for the study, they needed to have taught Composition I classes.

Though the members of the focus group had, at the time, each taught (or continue to teach) Composition for a minimum of four years, they all began with the same basic structure, ensuring that there would be some cohesiveness to the goals that they would set for their students. Regardless of the individual emphasis that each student-instructor takes at the University, all graduate students who are granted a teaching assistantship are required to take a week-long intensive seminar before their first semester of teaching begins. This is a series of instruction and activities to help acclimate new graduate assistants to the requirements they will need to fulfill once they are in the classroom. The first semester of teaching includes a bi-weekly class that discusses major pedagogical theories, significant issues, and helpful practices on the first day of the week, then outline lesson plans for the following week on the second day. This is crucial information for this study as it emphasizes that despite individual idiosyncrasies, teaching philosophies, and activities that the participants in the focus group may have, they were grounded in the same pedagogies, initial experiences, and teacher training. So, though the

---

[23]The members of the focus group had taught special classes on Social development and video games, The Dark Quest in Early American Romanticism, Writing for the Legal World, and Vampire Literature.

individual goals they had in relation to specific topics and issues varied – and they did, as do those of all teachers – they were well-schooled in the overall outcomes that the students leaving their first-year composition class should have been able to achieve.

In forming the group, I invited two English literature students, two Rhetoric and Composition students, and one Comparative literature student. The reason that these particular students were invited was because of their interest in Rhetoric and Composition as a major part of their program. I wanted teachers who had several years' experience in the field, either through direct study or through learning-in-practice. Two were unable to participate, leaving the group with participants with backgrounds from each of the three areas (Rhetoric and Composition, English Literature, and Comparative Literature). Given the volume of data to be collected, the collegiality that, fortunately, had already existed between the remaining three members of the focus group, and the breadth of background the members brought to the conversation, I judged this to be a sufficient size for interviews.[24]

Given that the focus group size became fixed at three, it seemed as first as if individual interviews with each members would be easily possible and any consideration about time and resources could be negated. Having the graduate instructors meet together as a group, of course, could have potential downfalls – the first of which would be the possibility that some members of the group would not be granted equal time to speak and to share their opinions if dialoguing with more talkative members. Even among teachers (perhaps especially so), there are those who like to "perform" and those who prefer to monitor and prompt discussion. If there was an imbalance of this form in the focus group, it could possibly skew the results. A second downfall would be that if one instructor presented a particular interesting or intriguing idea, other

---

[24]A study carried out of a larger scale, adding personal interviews from youth workers, for example, would likely use two or more individual focus groups.

instructors would want to suggest that they themselves had used the idea. In other words, if Instructor "A" indicated success having student identify logical fallacies through the use of online advertisements, Instructor "B" might claim to have done that as well to appear as successful and thoughtful about her methods as Instructor "A."

In a random sample focus group, I believe that these detractors could prove significant, and – if the study is carried out on a larger scale in the future – must be answered. However, because the focus group was selected out of an already small pool, these issues become fairly moot. The three members who agreed to be in the focus group had spent significant professional time with each other. They were familiar with each other's research, presentation styles, and general personalities. While this is never entirely true in academics, they indicated almost no desire to compete with each other – even in the employment arena, as the two teachers "going on the market" that year were looking for work in separate areas – thus suggesting that a situation in which they had no significant stakes (such as a dissertation focus group), no one person would feel the need to dominate the conversation. Furthermore, because the pool of potential subjects came entirely from graduate instructors who had been in the classroom for quite some time, each participant had specific ideas, methods, activities, and pedagogies that were well-established. This is not to say that those never changed or modified – it is a mark of the best teachers that they continually update their work to meet their particular students' needs – but rather that these teachers did not need to compete with each other for ideas. Furthermore, outside of the group, activity and lesson sharing is a common and encouraged practice within the department. The department even hosts a wiki for the sharing of ideas, experiences, and resources.

Disproving negative implications of the focus group is hardly enough reason to recommend it. There are several reasons why asking these participants work together proved a better solution than interviewing them independently:

Clarity

All of the participants in the focus group portion of the data collection, including the researcher, were educators. However, with the exception of the researcher, none had received degrees in Education itself. This meant that, while the participants could talk at length about the ideas that they have had or specific theories they have implemented, there could be times when a standardized system of terminology would not exist, especially as developments in the field of Rhetoric and Composition Pedagogy are constantly putting forth new ideas and theories, all often with their own naming systems. By having four people engaged in the focus group rather than simply an interviewer and an interviewee, the information shared could be fleshed out more thoroughly, as participants could ask questions of each other to ensure that they had heard each other's ideas correctly. Take, for example, the word "standardized." For nearly ten years, that word has become an anathema to pre-college teachers as they test and re-test their students to meet government mandates. While a dictionary definition might suggest that the word denotes the reaching or aligning of oneself with a goal, the connotation for a high-school English teacher could be "Your students must score a certain amount on this box or you will lose school funding." However, to a university graduate instructor, that word might mean aligning grading methods to ensure that all students are graded according to a fair rubric. While all members of the focus group were teachers, having them work together forwarded the elements of clarity and certainty in the data collected.

Memory aid

A second benefit that the focus group provided over individual interviews was its subproperty of being a memory aid. Even the member of the focus group newest to education had been teaching for at least four years. The three members had taught a combined ten different classes, from freshmen to senior level classes, two had worked in tutoring centers, and two had worked in athletic academics. This, of course, was in addition to their own coursework. Because of the sheer volume of information that they had been processing during their time at the University, it was highly likely – certain even – that they would not be able to remember all of their goals, activities, learning objectives, class successes and failures, and the like. By grouping colleagues together, I hoped that they would be able to spur each other on to memories and ideas that would not necessarily have come to them without prompting – prompting in this case that would happen without action, as a researcher can prompt for an idea that he or she does not know is present.

Extra-research benefit

In addition to the two factors that a focus group played in advancing the study, it is important to note the two side benefits that such a system could offer back to the college: collegiality and the dissemination of ideas. The first has, unfortunately, not always a primary goal in a field that rewards one's ability to out-publish and out-produce one's colleagues. While Rhetoric and Composition is, one hopes, not as cutthroat as some other areas of English studies, given that humanity should lie at the heart of Rhet and Comp, it, like all fields, succumbs at times to the inevitable competition between scholars. Asking scholars, especially those from more varied backgrounds of experience in the study of English language and literature, to work together on a common goal had the possibility of forwarding ideas in teamwork not for publication but rather for pure learning (or, admittedly, for a feeling of condescension in

assisting a dissertation-mired colleague). The second benefit was that, any time where ideas are being spread in a non-threatening atmosphere, new practices can be learned to modify and adopt when the situation next arises. It is what North (1987) calls *lore*: "It is driven, first, by a pragmatic logic: It is concerned with what has worked, is working, or might work in teaching, doing, or learning writing. Second, its structure is essentially experiential. That is, the traditions, practices, and beliefs of which it is constituted are best understood as being organized within an experience-based framework" (p. 23). When educators share ideas and experiences, particularly in an environment that has, as its very goal, to draw those ideas and experiences out of them, there cannot help but be a positive backlash of "lore" – of what will work, what has work, what hasn't worked, and what has yet to be tried. While this information might at first seem to be less significant than the other positive results, it was an important side benefit that grew out of the larger project.

A group of three participants, then, seemed to be an acceptable size for this particular study.

The Participants

The three participants each had a different background and emphasis in their doctoral studies, but all included Composition and Rhetoric Pedagogy of some ilk. They were all regular attendees at national writing conferences such as Conference on College Composition and Communication and Writing Program Administrators Conference. Their fields of research, however, were quite varied.

Focus Group Member 1: Maria.

Maria was a Ph.D. who had just defended a dissertation that performed discourse analysis on legal documents relating to criminal activities. Because of her experience with legal and technical writing, Maria worked for the office of Rhetoric and Composition, where she organized

the technical writing classes by training the graduate instructors who were going to teach technical writing, establishing class structures, and acting as a liaison between those instructors and the overall Composition program.

Focus Group Member 2: Jeanette.

Jeanette received her MA in Comparative Literature from the University and continued there with her doctoral work. Her field of study was African American English – its presence in schools, the stigma faced by those who speak it, and its highly debated position between being a language and being a dialect. Earlier that year, Jeanette received a grant to create a writing center specifically to serve students taking classes in Business or pursuing a degree in Business. As part of her role as director there, she helped professors structure the writing components to their classes, establish grading rubrics, and grade the papers themselves. She also worked with students who came in needing writing assistance.

Focus Group Member 3: Anneke.

Anneke was a fifth-year Ph.D. candidate who had the strongest background in literature of any of the three. Although, her main focus was 18th Century fiction, she had shifted some studies into Rhetoric and Composition towards the middle of her career. She had begun extensive research in Rhetoric and Composition, including several conference proposals. She was also teaching a highly popular section of Composition II on "vampire fiction."

<div align="center">

The Interview Material

</div>

In order to prepare the focus group members to meet and discuss, I sent them a handout

over a list of topics that I wanted to cover, topics they would likely ask students about their

writing. [Figure A]. The purpose of this was to give the instructors time to think through the

<u>Focus Group Questions Handout</u>

Understanding of Audience
1. Does the writer understand for whom he or she is writing?
2. Is the writer able to tailor the work for a particular audience?

Stance
1. How does the writer go about framing the argument?
2. Which of the three stances does the writer adopt? (as in the work of Slattery, Bizzell)
3. Where is the writer on the Marcia square?

Purpose
1. Does the writer appear to establish an overall purpose for the writing?
2. Can the writer clearly identify the purpose of the writing to the reader?

Form
1. What form does the work take (synthesis, critique, etc.)?
2. Does the form match the purpose of the work?

Structure
1. How is the argument organized?
2. Do the points flow in logical order?
3. Are the main points clearly delineated and separate from the supporting evidence?

Support
1. Is the writer able to clearly connect supporting evidence to main ideas?
2. Is the supporting evidence appropriate for each idea?
3. Is the supporting evidence based on legitimate source material AND/OR
4. Are the logical workings effective and appropriate?
5. If the writer does not settle on a particular answer, is sufficient evidence given as to how/why the answer remains in question?

Grammar/Style
1. Does the work follow the spelling and grammar rules of Standard English?
2. Does the writer adopt a tone appropriate for the task at hand?

[Figure A]

topics and mentally prepare them for any themes that they cared to bring up. The goal was to minimize any sense of apprehension that the instructors might have had that they would be put "on the spot" with a question they did not have an answer for, or that they would be unable to engage in the conversation without time to internalize any of the topics.

The topic list came from the types of arguments forwarded in *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum* (Behrens & Rosen, 2011)*,* the *St. Martin's Handbook* (Lunsford, 2011), and a recent book on argumentation from Bedford Publishing, *Everything's an Argument* (Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, & Walters, 2010) – all texts that were similar to or actually used in these first-year composition classrooms. It broke down the concept of the argumentative paper into its component parts to allow the focus group members to think about how they address (if they do address) each of these parts individually. Questions that attempted to clarify what was meant by each topic followed the paper section. For example, the section titled "Support" was accompanied by the following questions, "Is the writer able to clearly connect supporting evidence to main ideas?" and "Is the supporting evidence appropriate for each idea?" among others. The hope was that these would clarify my meaning for the group so that the terminology would be consistent. It was not certain that "Structure" would necessarily mean the same thing to all of the participants, but asking the question "Are the main points clearly delineated and separate from the supporting evidence?" could focus the group members on the same idea, even if their definitions for these ideas varied.

I set a list of questions to establish the procedure of the group meeting. While on the same topics as the questions list that was sent to the subjects, these were more detailed with the intent of honing in on specific skills, assignments, and requirements that the teachers established in their classrooms. The goal was to identify quantifiable concepts that could be translated into a

coding mechanism for analyzing texts. There were fourteen questions covering the thinking

procedures that students were supposed to engage in, divided into class goals, paper assignment

structure, argumentative methods, and textual interaction:

1. What classes have you taught at the University?

2. When you taught Composition I, what resources did you use?

3. What was your overall class goal for Composition I?

4. How did you set about achieving that goal?

5. What kind of papers did you assign for your class?

6. In those papers, what were your main concerns?

7. How did you grade paper assignments?

8. Did you discuss argumentative methods?

9. If so, how did you teach them?

10. How did you encourage your students to engage with texts?

11. What major concepts did you teach your students about texts?

12. What attitude did you want your students to adopt towards texts?

13. How many (if any) of the questions on Form A do you look for when teaching/grading

    student work? Which ones?

14. Are there any other comments on your teaching or goals for your students that you'd like

    to share?

The Discussion

The conversation opened with a discussion of what classes the focus group members had

taught. They listed Composition I and II, Technical Composition, Advanced Composition,

Writing for the Workplace, World Literature, British Literature Survey, and a few self-designed

"Special Topics" Composition II classes. Because Composition I is the first cross-curriculum argumentative writing class that students take upon entering the University, and thus the one that establishes the requirements to compare with the youth pastor-recommended texts, I asked the focus group to answer the questions in terms of their teaching of that particular class.[25]

As early as the selection of texts for the class, the teachers involved their students in active discussion and participation. Composition I's three texts are determined by the Rhetoric and Composition office and are standard across classes. *The Saint Martin's Handbook*(Lunsford, 2011), *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*(Behrens & Rosen, 2011) and the year's selected "One Book, One Community"[26] text. All of the teachers used *The Saint Martin's Handbook*, not only because it was a requirement for the class but because it was one of the most clearly delineated texts available in terms of describing both global issues (such as types of writing, argumentative methods, and essay theories) and local issues (grammar, paragraphs, transitions, etc.). They also all added articles from outside of the required texts. Maria had her students brainstorm a topic that they would like to address and then found articles that addressed both sides of that issue. Jeanette brought in advertisements and commercials for analysis of argumentative claims. All of the teachers also required their students to find their own outside sources at some point during the semester. As a whole, they believed that the *Writing and*

---

[25] In addition to the discussion, focus group members submitted copies of their paper assignments, documents which show exactly how they put these ideas to work and tangible requirements for their students. Two of these documents are in Appendix I and J.

[26] Each year, a committee made up of University faculty and members of the Fayetteville community select a text that deals with a major social issue. They jointly host several events related to the topic, including film screenings, workshops, and activist gatherings. The program builds up to a visit from the author of the work. Composition I teachers are required to have their students read the work and are expected to tailor a significant section of their coursework – including a paper assignment – around the topic.

Reading text was not interesting to students. Instead, they attempted to use the book as a jumping off point for other topics.

When asked to give a brief statement of the goal of the class (Question 3), the teachers indicated a fairly broad spectrum of purposes. Maria focused on argumentative writing, having students form an argument with good evidence and analysis and then be able to defend their theses. Anneke wanted her students to be able to write reader-based texts, which she said was "writing for the end," or having her students lead readers to a "here it is!" moment where they are able to fully convince their audiences of the soundness of their claims. Jeanette taught argument, especially the classical rhetorical forms, and how to use them to support a claim. She, like Anneke, also emphasized the need for audience awareness.

From the overall discussion, the following topics came up as focal points around which the answers formed: audience concerns, joining a conversation, how to read, summarizing and synthesizing, critiquing, and conducting research.

Audience Concerns. All three teachers indicated that audience awareness was a crucial part of Composition I instruction. For Anneke, it was central to the entire goal of the class. She asked students, "What do you want?" paralleled by the question "What does your audience want?" In order to ensure that her students understood this, she held conferences where she discussed these topics one-on-one with the students, asking them to talk about their answers to these questions. Her work puts into practice the theories of Flower (2009):

> The goal of the writer is to create a momentary common ground between the reader and the writer. You want the reader to share your knowledge and your attitude toward that knowledge. Even if the reader eventually disagrees, you want him or her to be able for the moment to *see things as you see them.* A good piece of writing closes the gap between you and the reader. (p. 107)

Jeanette discussed audience in terms of the paper assignment and in terms of social and business communication. Audience, she claimed, can be in at least four different forms – primary, secondary, real, and imagined – a taxonomy based on Markel (2010). The primary audience is the one for whom the writer directly intends the work. These readers may need or use the work for specific purposes and idea creation. They also have ideas of what is or is not appropriate. Or, as Jeanette said, "You don't just drop the f-bomb for no reason!" The secondary audience engages with the material but was not considered by the writer in the construction of the text (Markel, 2010, p. 83). While the writer may not be writing particularly for this group, he or she must be aware of their existence and potential interaction with the text. The real audience is the one that will be the recipient of the text – the actual people, place, and time that the text will reach. Imagined audience is the one mentally created by the reader, allowing the reader to shape a text based on an internal idea of whom and what the audience will be. Hirsch (1977) described it this way: "Every […] audience is imaginary insofar as the speaker must predict a probable response and a probable understood meaning *before* he speaks […] To speak or write is to project meaning as *understood* meaning, and this requires an implicit imagining of one's audience – a crucial point in composition teaching" (p. 28).

Audience droved most of Jeanette's discussion, and she clarified it with this example two examples. The first was a theoretical scenario she created about "cross-contamination" between audiences: An abortion clinic hires a company to do clean up at their organization. Documents shared between the two groups establish job requirements, pay, and the like. Then, that same organization is hired by a church to do clean up on their grounds. If the documents shared by the company and the abortion clinic are discovered by the church – which has then become the secondary audience – the church may choose to end their interaction with the cleaning company.

Her second example was a real-world news issue about the then-trending scandal of

Congressman Anthony Weiner. Weiner's career in Congress was destroyed when texts of a

sexual nature that he thought were privately were suddenly exposed. The secondary audience of

those texts – the public – became the primary concern when they eclipsed the primary audience,

his secret lover. The significance, Jeanette pointed out, was that – without consideration for a

secondary audience – a written text could fail epically in its purpose. Jeanette also taught this

concept by giving her students an activity. She showed the class a fairly explicit piece of film,

then asked them to summarize what they had seen to the person next to them. Then, she asked

them to summarize it as if they were talking to a child, and then again as to a mother or

grandmother. The purpose was to make the class aware that what goes in to a text is largely

determined by the intended recipients.

Joining the conversation. All of the TAs emphasized the need for students to research in

order to understand a topic, in other words to "join a conversation." The concept of "joining the

conversation" was recently forwarded by Gary Olsen (1997). Good scholarship, he argues,

involves learning as much as possible about the topic at hand before trying to contribute to or

outline one's own opinions on the topic. Building on an earlier metaphor by Burke (1974), he

gives the now-famous example of a cocktail party:

> [I]magine a faculty cocktail party in which various colleagues and their spouses are
> standing in groups sipping cocktails and engaging in intimate, sometimes passionate
> discussions. After freshening your cocktail, you approach several people discussing the
> influence of postmodern theory on composition pedagogy. Obviously, it would be
> considered rude to jump immediately into the conversation that had been going on before
> you arrived. Basic etiquette dictates that you join the group, quietly listen to what is being
> said and develop a sense of the larger conversation—both its tone and content—before
> you begin to make a contribution. The same kind of dynamics attend to the scholarly
> conversation. Before rushing into print about this or that subject, it is imperative that you
> read what is currently being said about the subject, discover what the positions are and
> who is taking what position, and, in general, acquire a sense of the larger conversation.
> (p. 21)

This concept of understanding the breadth of the field was highlighted by all members of the focus group. When creating a text, students need to be sure that they are aware of the issues at hand. For example, three years ago, the "One Book, One Community" book was *The Devil's Highway* by Luis Urrea (2005), a book that highlighted immigration issues and illegal border crossings. Before allowing students to write opinion papers on the topic, all of the teachers required that their students understand what was already being said about the issue so that they would be able to situate their arguments in a larger context.

Jeanette described this concept with the metaphor that "Every paragraph is a room." Before one constructs one's own room, one has to be aware of the other rooms that exist, to enter them and see how they are built, what they include, and who lives within them. Only then can one begin to properly construct one's own room. Another metaphor that arose was the *Star Trek* concept of the "mind meld." One must connect one's mind to a mind that is already established in the conventions and ideas of the field in order to fully understand and participate in what is occurring. To Spock, the comparison may be illogical, but the point is well taken.

How to read. All of the focus group members emphasized the idea of how reading should occur, initially born out of a discussion of their own struggles in adapting to graduate school reading. Jeanette discussed never having been taught any form of criticism before graduate school, and Maria, with a BA in communications, said she had never been taught to read (and here, of course, is meant reading in context, not reading as understanding the basic meaning of words and understanding their combination and usage. Rather, reading denotes understanding topics in the context of governing Discourse, appropriate interpretation in terms of usage and exigency, and ability to restate what has been read).

The agreed upon method of teaching writing was to have students read the text carefully in order to understand its elements, arguments, and details. The general focus is that students need to have more close reading. Leff (1980) argues that current criticism fosters "confusion about the relationship between theory and practice, complaints about methods that lose contact with the objects of study, and warnings about the mechanical imposition of a priori categories on rhetorical artifacts" (p.337). Instead of having students simply go to the text looking for categories like "protagonist," "antagonist," or "thesis," the kind of close reading wanted was something similar to that detailed by Leff – an interaction with the text that brought the reader into a place of knowledge so familiar they were enter in to it and are able to look out at the world from within it (p.377).

Every member of the focus group took time to teach their students how to read academic work. Jeanette included a "How I read it" section in her critique paper assignment, designed to help students fully understand the article before they began to establish arguments. They also all followed the pattern in the Lunsford (2011) text that asks students to play the "believing game" and the "doubting game," a system in which readers are first asked to read the text and work hard to believe everything the writer says and then to read it again, doubting everything the writer says (p. 165). This method allowed students to see both sides of an issue rather than employing a blanket application of their own interpretations without taking the time to assess the entire work.

Summarizing and synthesizing. Two skills that operate as extensions of joining the conversation are the ability to summarize pre-existing information about a topic and the ability to synthesize multiple perspectives based on shared (or not shared) elements of a topic. The writing program at the University places summary at the heart of the writing process and builds all subsequent writing skills on it. The two course texts that the teachers assigned for Composition I

both had significant sections on how to construct a summary, and both place it as the first skill towards argumentative writing. Summaries do, as mentioned above, begin with following a very specific pattern of reading and textual breakdown. In the discussion, Maria specifically focused on having her students summarize texts. She had students engage in debate, but before they could establish arguments, she had them break down readings into their component parts and identify each portion of an article and how it related to the argument as a whole.

In growing students' writing from summarizing to synthesizing, the focus members moved from Huckin's (2004) concepts of conceptual analysis to relational analysis. Conceptual analysis asks readers to break down texts into their component parts so that they may be understood. Relational analysis, sometimes called *conceptual mapping,* "goes one step further: it identifies a number of concepts and then examines the relationships among them" (p. 14). Relational analysis moves the study of meaning from being isolated within a single work to being composed of pieces of many works.Focus group members brought in synthesizing as a second or third step, based on how the particular instructor establishes the writing process. *The Norton Field Guide to Writing*, W.W. Norton's version of *The St. Martin's Handbook*, emphasizes that synthesizing involves finding "bits" of information that transcend two (or more) arguments (Bullock, 2009, p. 404). Correlation is key here in understand how different claims stand up against each other. Because the entire group had readers break down works as they read them in order to identify key points (or "bits"), a summary-focused reading prepared students for synthesizing. Before the students could argue in favor of one claim over another, they must align the specific evidence for each argument. All three teachers assigned papers that involved a specific synthesis component. Traditionally, graduate instructors assigned two different types of papers requiring this skill: the explanatory synthesis and the argumentative synthesis. The

explanatory synthesis matched two sources point-for-point on key issues that enhanced, supported, or proved the sources' overall claims. Typically, the sources analyzed for this paper presented opposing sides to an argument, making it easier to identify points of contrast. The argumentative synthesis took the same form as the explanatory one (and was often taught using the same articles) but added a debate component. In addition to stacking the points against each other, the argumentative synthesis made claims about each point as to which source presented the more convincing argument. Members of the focus group indicated that this construction process was very important, especially in terms of helping the reader understand the path that the writer was taking in conscripting outside essays to his or her purpose. As one member said, "A good student can make an idea their own, but others really need to be able to *see* it."

Critiquing. While all three teachers emphasized the skill of critiquing arguments, each one handled it in a particular manner. Maria focused on breaking down arguments into their component parts so that they could be understood more effectively. The synthesis work that she had students do helped them delineate key issues so that they could be thoroughly analyzed. In order to be certain that students understood the arguments, she had them follow a back-door method in which they came at claims from an opposite side by trying to anticipate counterarguments. In doing this, they were able to see more clearly what kind of evidence they would need to bring to the paper so that they would adequately be able to rebut the arguments.

In a similar fashion, Anneke employed the concept of the Rogerian argument. Rogers, a behavioral psychologist, argued that empathy and understanding only came from a desire to know the other. In his case, it was a relationship that a therapist, minister, or even a lay person would build with someone seeking to discuss personal issues. Rogers' concept was designed to

describe a real-world, in-person interaction. However, Composition conscripted Roger's ideas for their own studies:

> Rogers' ideas as a collaborative form of persuasion has been recognized as a possibility in a face-to-face environment, [some rhetoricians] take their interpretation one step further and attempt to apply their rhetorical theory to the writing class. Such an adaptation requires student writers to listen to and empathize with any opposing viewpoints from their readers and to affect the opinions of those readers accordingly. (Kearney, 2009, p. 168)

In implementing this writing strategy, Anneke hoped to help prevent her students from setting up straw-men to attack rather than looking specifically at the argument proposed by the writers up for critique. By reading empathetically (as mentioned earlier) and applying Rogerian principles, her students were then able to identify key arguments, attempt to understand them, and then move against them, but with a more complete understanding of how they are formed and a better arsenal with which to anticipate and subvert any counter-arguments. She had them specifically look for the three types of appeals: pathos, ethos, and logos – something Jeanette also did.

Jeanette had a particular understanding of those appeals which she drew from her studies of classical rhetoric, which proposes four types of refutation: appeal to reason, appeal to emotion, appeal to ethics, and wit. An appeal to reason suggests two methods to refute an argument: proving the contrary and attacking specific arguments. The latter is a straightforward attack on the pillars of the argument, using identification of the fallacies that both Anneke and Maria trained their students to avoid. The former is an appeal to the reason of the reader, because, the text argues, "all people, because of their rational nature, readily recognize the principle that a thing cannot at the same time *be* and *not be*" (Corbett &Conners, 1999, p. 279). If the opposite is proved, the argument cannot be true. An emotional appeal is simply reaching out to the heart of the reader, attempting to touch the part that reasons with feeling rather than knowledge. An ethical appeal relies on the good character of the writer, calling upon the readers

to believe the writer's claims because the writer is a person to whom it is worth listening. Finally, wit can be used to bring down an argument. The text references the Earl of Shaftesbury, who said, and it paraphrases, "if what was alleged to be the truth could survive the onslaught of ridicule it must really be the truth" (Corbett &Conners p. 280-281). By extension, then, wit, properly applied, could bring down a less-than-perfect argument.

To teach this, Jeanette set up a courtroom scenario in the classroom, where students took the traditional roles of a legal case – lawyers, judges, jury, witnesses, etc. They began by watching a courtroom drama on television in order to see how the appeals they had studied were put into practice. Then, they conducted their own trial based on a topic that they had studied in class, such as immigration or health care laws. Members of the "audience" were allowed to heckle the lawyers, voicing their complaints when a poor argument was made. In this manner, Jeanette helped students break down their issues into component parts and then study those parts in terms of appeals. Arguments became manageable in this form, and students were comfortable working with them – and critiquing them, something students may come into the classroom reluctant to do, especially if the text is from a source they feel inadequate to critique, such as a major newspaper or journal.

Conducting Research. All three members of the group had nearly identical requirements for and methods of conducting research, and patterns of use for the University's available resources. The school offers a general search engine and hosts a large number of databases. The two most commonly taught to students are EBSCO and ProQuest as they cover a broad variety of articles and topics. The focus group instructors said they spent time explaining how to use the databases, including setting limiters and conducting key word searches. They also all agreed that they took the time to explain to their students the difference between a scholarly source, such as

a peer-reviewed article from a reputable journal, and a non-scholarly source, such as Wikipedia or an online blog. Anneke required her students to also create an annotated bibliography to prove that the students had read and understood the main thrust behind the articles. In order to avoid incidents of plagiarism, all three spent a significant amount of time covering citations, Works Cited pages, paraphrasing, and quotations. Jeanette taught her students about copyright and trade laws in addition to MLA guidelines.

All three of the teachers required students to put these skills to work in a comprehensive, final research paper that incorporated all of the writing skills learned throughout the semester. The topics were often self-selected by the students, who had to create and prove an argument through research and an argumentative synthesis of several sources. The required number of external sources ranged from two to seven. One assignment summarized the purpose of the paper (which covered the purpose of the class) as "to evaluate your sources' divergent perspectives, and to develop your own stance fully and persuasively. You should structure your paper logically and coherently by integrating a summary, critique, and/or analysis of salient portions of your sourcesinto your argument." The research portion was integrally tied to all of the other paper requirements, and to the five other focal points.

The Major Texts

As a final addition to the information from the focus group, it is important to give at least a brief description of the major texts mentioned by the participants during the focus group discussion. Each of the participants used the following textbooks in different ways. All three used information from *The St. Martin's Handbook*, and, at some point in their teaching careers, all had used a version of *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum*. Handouts adapted from

They Say/I Say were distributed during the first semester of teaching and, at the present time, the entire book is required for Composition I classes.

The Saint Martin's Handbook. Often referred to as "The St. Martin's" or simply "The Handbook," this is the most widely required textbook on campus, used for Composition I and II (regular and honors), Advanced Composition, Essay Writing, Technical Composition, and special sections of Composition II. Now in its seventh edition, this text is a broad reference work that covers grammar, usage, argumentation, forms of citation, English language learning issues, and general writing issues. Edited by Andrea Lunsford, this book is in twelve parts that fit into approximately three broad categories. The first four parts ("The Art and Craft of Writing," "Critical Thinking and Argument," "Research and Documentation," and "Print, Electronic, and Other Media") look at the global issues of writing in the form of main ideas, overall structure, and big-picture understanding. The following seven sections ("Effective Language," "Sentence Grammar," "Sentence Clarity," "Sentence Style," "Punctuation," "Mechanics," and "For Multilingual Writers") all deal with local, or sentence-level, writing issues. The final section ("Academic and Professional Writing") addresses forms of writing that will be used outside of the classroom setting. The *Saint Martin's* is a particularly beneficial book because of its broad coverage of a variety of topics. The textbook also has an extensive website with grammar and usage exercises and many writing resources. Although the book is expensive, many teachers encourage students to wait to sell it back, as its grammar and documentation sections will be helpful throughout all of a student's college career.

Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum. While the *St. Martin's* focuses on tools, methods, and procedures, *Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum* gives essay examples for students to analyze and examine. The text, now in its fourth edition, is broken into two very clear

sections: Part 1 "How to Write Summaries, Critiques, Syntheses, and Analyses" and Part 2 "An Anthology of Readings." Edited by Laurence Behrens and Leonard J. Rosen, the text gives very orderly directions on how to carry out specific writing tasks. Each of the tasks is presented with clear guidelines for essay construction, and the text gives sample papers, already analyzed, to help the reader see what a well-constructed essay should look like. In the second portion of the book, chapters are separated by topics: Economics, the Environment and Public Policy, Sociology, Biology, and Business. The Business section also contains two chapters solely on visual texts such as print advertisements. Each essay within these sections begins with a brief biography of the author written with the particular context in mind and ends with a set of review questions for discussion. In essence, it is a text that outlines procedures for writing tasks, gives readers the tools to carry out those tasks, and then provides a broad variety of material on which to practice.

They Say/I Say. While pieces of *They Say/I Say* have been used in this particular University FYC classroom in portions for years, it was only recently added as a required textbook in the 2012-2013 year. Now in its second edition, *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* has as its goal to "demystify academic writing and reading by identifying the key moves of persuasive argument and representing these moves in forms that students can put in practices" (p. xv). The book has been the subject of much criticism as it offers templates for students to add their own information and build an argumentative paragraph.[27] The controversy has spread so far that it was even a paper topic at the 2012 Conference on College

---

[27] This text has caused significant criticism. It had several papers at recent conferences, including the 2012 Conference on College Composition and Communication in St. Louis. It has been criticized for being too proscriptive and giving students templates to write with rather than teaching them to write. At the 2012 Writing Program Administrators Conference in Albuquerque, I interviewed the Norton book representative who said to remember the root of the word "templates," "They are 'temp'orary - they simply get you started on your own work."

Composition and Communication. The best response to the upheaval, however, may come in the

form of this student review:

> While the book reviews a lot of basic concepts, it also introduces a new way of thinking about the writing process. Rather than writing a paper for the professor to read and grade, the book encourages writers to think of the writing process as a way to join a much larger debate. […] *They Say, I Say* influences writers to acknowledge this ongoing academic conversation and engage directly with other celebrated academics. Until reading this guidebook, I had never even thought about the larger academic conversation. I wrote my essays because my teacher wanted us to improve our writing skills. The short instruction book changed my entire perspective.("Reflecting,"n.d.)

Together, these texts form the core of the Composition I classroom. However, they are not used

as the coding mechanism because, by itself, a text means little. It is only when it is brought to

life, explained, and used by a teacher that the key ideas become clear. Out of 10,000 pages, an

instructor can find the one page that is crucial for student understanding. Thus, for this study, it is

the word of the teacher, not the word of the text, that is the foundation.[28]

Creating a Code

Very early on in the survey I had discovered that there were, in fact, two halves to what

the interviewees were telling me. The first was that texts themselves need to be constructed with

a certain goal in mind and the second that texts need to carry out specific methods in order to be

---

[28] There will, of course, be objections to this – especially that the text is a static form which we can analyze which will not change from instructor to instructor or class to class. I have two responses to that. The first is that these teachers received training in these texts. And instructors learned how to implement the books in the classroom in order to produce the most efficient, effective learning space that they could in the semester that was allotted them. Add that to the amount of time that these instructors have been teaching and multiply that by the amount of shared practice they have from their colleagues. The second is that the magnitude of these books is such that no student could read all of them over the course of a single class. Combined, these books have over 1500 pages – a prohibitive amount of reading for a doctoral readings course, much less a freshman writing class. By using instructors to help build the coding mechanism, I have, allowed truly knowledgeable people to aid me in carrying out a key step of my research. Instead of having to determine alone what in the texts is important, I am able to find out that information from the focus group which, in the end, is a more accurate representation of what actually occurs in the first-year composition classroom.

legitimate. In other words, the overt telling of the text on what do to and how to think needed to be paralleled on the actual methods used to construct the text. The text needed to be both "say as I say" *and* "do as I do." The primary text on argumentative formulations used in these classes (*The St. Martin's Handbook*), operated in that same way. Where I had initially planned on simply reviewing the content of the books, I realized that the textual construction was just as significant since it exemplified a way of thinking in addition to proscribing a way of thinking. Accordingly, based on the seven focal-point breakdown from the interviews, I created the following elements for a coding system:[29]

Audience Concerns. The concept of audience designates who the intended recipients of the text are. Appropriate use of audience would indicate first a knowledge of who the audience is, identified either through direct address or tangentially through the statement of topic. Audience would also cover how well the author tailors the work for the reader. For example, if the audience was supposed to be elementary school children (not, of course, applicable in this case), a work that discussed theoretical physics would not demonstrate a clear understanding of audience. Finally, an audience-appropriate text would anticipate any responses that came from elements of their readers' backgrounds (such as typical life experiences, education and age level, and cultural standards) and be prepared to address them.

Joining the conversation. Here, the writer most clearly demonstrates the ability to both create a written work appropriately and to add an appropriate method. First, the author must indicate an understanding of what kinds of writing have come before him or her in this genre. A key way of identifying this is simply in-text references to other sources. Second, the author must lead the readers into an understanding of what kinds of ideas are being discussed within the topic

---

[29] For the complete rubric, see the following chapter.

at hand. Thus, both the structure/function and the internal exhortations must align with something(s) that have come before.

How to read. Authors must give reader at least one piece of information – two if they are suggesting other texts to read. In terms of the work the reader is holding, the author would create a stronger piece if he or she explained to the readers how to use the book most effectively – an idea crucial to successfully consuming a text. The author should also indicate how to read in relation to the self – how to build, as Rosenblatt (2005) suggests, the reader-text transaction. The author must also identify helpful reading goals and strategies to address any texts suggested in the book. If the author lists a certain apologetic, for example, it would be helpful for the reader to have guidelines to addressing the book, or, at the very least, a description of what the most important elements of the text are, thus giving the reader a chance to draw key ideas from it.

Summarizing and synthesizing. These ideas fall entirely within a content analysis of the text. Does the author effectively summarize any reference text used in the book? Summarization should include both a clear conception of what the text discusses and a complete sense that all major relevant issues are addressed. It should include a breakdown of key components, yet not be broken down into so much detail that the main purpose of the summary is obscured. In terms of synthesis, are different texts compared adequately to one another, and are the same measurements for comparison used for different syntheses throughout the book? A synthesis should create a sense of the completeness of the comparison; there should be no feeling that elements are missing or have been removed to make an argument fit the synthesis.

Critiquing. This may be the most involved and elaborate section of analysis, as it needs to be broken down into several component parts, including creating one's own argument and addressing another person's claims. The first is the effectiveness of the overarching thesis

statement, including its clarity, its completeness, and its accurate representation of the book. A subset to that is the thesis statements of individual chapters or sections of text. Do the smaller thesis statements adequately outline each section's argument and are they legitimate supporting points for the overall thesis? The second is the outline of the argument, whether or not the points appear in logical order and if these points support the main thesis. The third is the type and appropriateness of the appeals. Of Aristotle's *ethos, pathos,* and *logos*, which are used and to what effect? Fourth is the presence of any fallacies, such as bandwagon, straw man, and *post hoc ergo propter hoc*. Fifth is the use of sufficient and appropriate evidence to prove the main thesis. Finally, analysis of external arguments must be addressed. Does the write use external arguments fairly or do they appear manipulated or misinterpreted? Does the writer identify any fallacies or structural confusion? Is the writer able to look at outside issues from more than one perspective?

Conducting research. Because of the nature of the texts being analyzed, this point will be touched on the least in a textual review. Here, it is simply important to see if the writer directs readers to specific places to conduct further research and if the writer appropriately references any texts used in his or her own work.

Chapter 5: Rubric and Results

At this point in the study, all of the information needed to move forward had been

gathered. The survey had compiled the top books that were recommended to young people, thus

creating a sample list of texts for the rubric to score against. The focus group interviews had

provided the information about writing class requirements, identifying the most important

elements that first-year composition teachers are teaching for. Together, this material provided

the framework to gather the actual information the study was looking for, and to build a rubric to

do so. At this point, the rubric was the most crucial step, the survey and focus group were

designed simply to gather the information needed to produce the rubric and feed it data. The

evidence that the rubric hoped to produce was, in fact, the overall goal of the study.

Rubrics are a scoring methodology that are now gaining popularity. The Association of

American Colleges and Universities recently floated them as a possible alternative to many

college student assessment tests (Rhodes, 2011/2012). The VALUE rubric has been developed to

help ensure general education curriculum students are scored consistently not simply across

courses but across universities (Siefert, 2011/2012; Rhodes, 2011/2012). Eccarius (2011)

suggests that a rubric is an acceptable tool to measure levels of higher-order thinking.

Furthermore, rubrics increase consistency, clarity, and a general sense of focus (Airasian, 2005)

when attempt to quantity something as broad as a devotional text, especially given the idea that a

religious text could have theoretically no boundaries for a reader thinking about eternity.

The Rubric[30]

The rubric took the six points isolated from the focus group production (as outlined in the

previous chapter) – audience, joining the conversation, how to read, summarizing and

---

[30] The rubric is offered in segmented form here. For the rubric in its entirety in a single
document, see Appendix K.

synthesizing, critiquing, and conducting and broke them down into smaller, more specific elements. These elements were placed on a five point scale running from least effective "1" to most effective "5". For each number, there was a description; in other words, the rater did not have to guess what a "2" would be; rather, there was a full description listed underneath the "2" for each item, and the texts were ranked according to their fulfillment of the elements. Unlike many 1-5 scoring scales or rubrics, "3" was not "does not apply" or "unknown," making possible hundreds of combinations for each book. The following sections explain how each of the six main categories from the focus groups were broken down into quantifiable sections.

Audience Concerns

The rubric begins with the concept of audience. The focus group indicated that audience was one of their primary concerns, and it so it takes the first place here in the rubric. The rubric splits the concept into three parts: knowledge of audience, audience appropriateness, and anticipation of audience response. The first indicates an awareness of who the members of the audience are likely to be. Obviously, no author can control who picks up a book, but this point seeks to measure how well an author speaks to the demographic for which the book was intended. A well-constructed book would have an audience "clearly identified through direct address," which would score a "5" on the rubric; meanwhile, a text that "gives no indication of who the recipients are" would score in the "1" category.

	1 (least effective)	2	3	4	5 (most effective)
AUDIENCE CONCERNS					
Knowledge of Audience	Text gives no indication of who the recipients are	Audience unclear – text hints tangentially at it	Audience suggested by text	Audience suggested by text through indirect address or topic	Audience clearly identified through direct address
Audience Appropriateness	Text completely inappropriate for or unrelated to audience	Text contains elements that are irrelevant to or inappropriate for audience	Text is vague – neither appropriate nor inappropriate for audience	Text is relevant to audience and reader-appropriate overall but may contain some unrelated elements	Text fully addresses audience in terms of appropriate content and relevance to readers
Anticipates Audience Response	Text in no way addresses audience thoughts	Text identifies one or two audience reactions but does not respond to them	Text identifies audience reactions but may or may not provide a clear response to those reactions	Text identifies some elements of audience reception and responds to them	Text regularly anticipates and responds to audience reception

Once the author's knowledge of audience is determined, the rater can score the audience appropriateness. Is the text relevant to the most likely readers of the text (remembering again that a brain surgeon may pick up Curious George without skewing the rubric)? On the lower end of the scale, the audience appropriateness ranking looks for elements that are either inappropriate or unrelated. They may be wrong in term of difficulty, of offensiveness, or of confusion, or they

may be completely off-topic. On the upper end of the scale, they texts are relevant to the audience's reading needs and desires, and they meet their skill sets and abilities.

The authors must anticipate audience response in that they must have such a good knowledge of the audience that they can understand how an audience will receive an example, an argument, or a belief, and then can prepare for that response. On the lower end of the scale, that response is seen and ignored or not seen at all. On the upper end, it is seen and responded to regularly.

Joining the Conversation

The concept of "joining the conversation" was the heart of the idea of dealing with both the structure of the texts and the content of the texts – are they operating well both within the

	1	2	3	4	5
JOINING THE CONVERSATION					
Understand writing in the genre	Text does not address the genre	Text incompletely addresses genre and does not explain or describe it	Text addresses genre but does not situate itself in the genre	Text addresses the genre then establishes its place infrequently in the text	Text addresses the genre then establishes its place in the genre repeatedly throughout the text
Integrating Readers	Text does not bring readers into the conversation	Text briefly conversation but makes no effort to build connections to reader or rest of text	Text explains key elements of the conversation but does not connect it to the readers	Text explains key elements of the conversation but does not fully help readers to find themselves within it	Text explains key elements of the conversation and helps the readers situated themselves within that conversation

genre that they belong in and are they carrying out their content well within that genre? This

point looks at their "say as I say and do as I do" moment in relation to their larger position among Christian texts. The first point questions if they could place themselves in relation to other books of a similar nature in their genre of devotional and apologetic books for young adults. The field is enormous and has been building as a body of work since well before this century. In order to score a "5" on this point, a work would have to not only point out the genre but repeatedly situate itself within that genre. The second point brings the text from the genre in to the content itself. Does the writer acknowledge that the information being addressed is not solely limited to this book but rather part of a larger conversation being carried out by many people who are part of this field and reading these books? A reader who is reading a "5" scored book would understand that the topic in that text was being discussed across the genre and would have some idea of what other authors were saying about it (even if the book itself discredited those authors). A reader reading a "1" scored book would see no evidence of anyone else discussing that that topic.

	1	2	3	4	5
HOW TO READ					
Addressing the Text	Text never discusses itself and does not tell reader how to address it	Text partially describes itself and does not address how to read it	Text does not fully describe itself or does not address how to read it	Text describes some aspect of itself and explains how to read it	Text fully explains its own nature and states clearly how to read it
Building Connections	Text obscures a reader-text transaction	Text may incorrectly address a reader-text transaction	Text does not address a reader-text transaction	Text hints at a reader-text transaction	Text encourages a clear reader-text transaction

How to Read

While it may seem counter-intuitive, it is possible for a text to train a reader in its own

reading. In the focus group session, two of the member indicated that reading at the graduate

level was initially a stumbling block for them, as their undergraduate degrees were not in

English, Composition, or Literacy, and they had never received formal training in reading

college-level text. As a result, they spent a significant amount of time training their students to

read. Thus, it was extremely important for them that texts, at the very least, not obscure readers

in the consumption of the information that the readers were attempting to acquire. The first point

then, rates how well the book describes itself to the reader, stating basically "these are my five

chapters; here's the best way to read them." A text may do that in the preface, introduction, or

first chapter explicitly; it may hide such ideas in the early portions of the text for the reader to

infer; or it may not include them at all. The text must actively train the learner in its reading,

building levels of learning and helping move the reader from where the reader begins to where

the reader is able to address the text with confidence and the ability to understand all of its

nuances. The second point looks to measure how well the book suggests strategies that will build

relations between the text and the writer, the kind of relations that Rosenblatt (2005) discusses. As was mentioned earlier, if the text says it will use a certain apologetic (which already moves it up the scale) it will then explain to the reader how to make sense of this apologetic throughout the text and build that connection to the self. Just as it can train readers in its reading, it can also train readers in building connections, gradually easing readers into the connection – something particularly helpful if the book is addressed to an audience who might be initially hostile to the book's contents.

Summarizing and Synthesizing

In the traditional Composition I progression, and in all logical forms of argument, a summary of the issue must come before a well-constructed argument can be formed. An understanding of the skills of surrounding summary is, therefore, crucial to the formation of good writing. Here, a good text must be able to perform a fair summary of the part of any text that it uses. If it uses more than one text, it must be able to look at the two texts in concert with each other, another skill taught in the Composition classroom. Addressing these two skills was similar, as they, theoretically, are.

	1	2	3	4	5
SUMMARIZING AND SYNTHESIZING					
Summarizing Breakdown	Neither restates main issue nor breaks text down into component parts	Generally restates main issue with no breakdown into parts	Breaks down issues to component parts with no explanation	Breaks down issues to component parts but has an incomplete or unclear explanation	Breaks down all issues to component parts and fully explains them
Completeness of Summary	Main idea unclear and irrelevant or isolated supporting ideas	Main unclear and no supporting details	Main idea clear and no supporting details	Main idea clear; minimal supporting details	Clear description of main ideas; supporting details relevant
Presence of Synthesis	There are no texts synthesized	Synthesized texts are irrelevant	Synthesized texts are relevant, but referenced without clear textual connection	Synthesized texts are relevant but are minimally used	Synthesized texts are relevant and are used as key textual tools
Synthesis	Synthesis elements are abused without any clear purpose	Synthesis elements are abused to make a point	Synthesis elements are fairly interpreted but not applied	Synthesis elements appear fairly interpreted and appropriately applied	Synthesis elements appear fairly interpreted and effectively used for argumentation

In terms of summary, there appears to be overlap between the two items. The difference is in their relevance. In the first point, the question is whether or not any points or external sources discussed are broken down fully – is everything in the summary laid bare? The second point is concerned with the relevance of the text at hand. Is the text being addressed appropriate to the main text and are all of the supporting points associated with that text present? This is crucial, as students' concept of "summary" often involves culling a quotation, a story, or a fact from a work, dropping it into one's own text, and accepting that methodology as appropriate.

The second two questions build on the summary with the addition of a second (or more) text, bringing the total number of texts to three or more. The "presence of synthesis" point runs from no synthesis "1" to having an irrelevant synthesis "3" to having a relevant and effective synthesis of the external sources that provides development for the entire text "5." The final point, simply titled "synthesis," interprets how the second or additional texts operate in relation to the first in terms of the fairness of their application and the effectiveness of application for argumentation purposes.

Critique

As the heart of Composition I and the emphasis of the focus group, the critique portion is the longest and most developed part of the rubric. It is divided into sections ranging from the very specific, such the individual thesis proposed by the chapters, to the very general, such as the overall outline of the work. The critique section has tasks that involve being able to work well both within one's own text and outside of one's own text, doing things such as creating one's own argument, drawing from outside sources for support, and critiquing outside sources.

The first two points regarding thesis determine whether or not a text established a clear overarching working argument for itself and whether or not that argument is supplemented by the arguments posed by the individual chapters. The main thesis has fewer options; its concern is largely its presence and to what degree. The smaller, individual thesis sections are concerned not only with their presence but also with their appropriateness to the sections that they are connected to and then the tie of those to the main overall thesis. It is quite possible for a section thesis to be internally correct without being consistent to the main argument. The outline of argument point is the logical sequitor to these two; it is a straightforward order question of how well the order of the points provides support to the main argument.

	1	2	3	4	5
CRITIQUING					
Main Thesis	No statement of main thesis	Thesis statement does not accurately represent the text	Thesis statement present but does not cover main ideas	Thesis statement covers most main ideas but not all	Clear statement of main thesis; complete and accurate to the text
Individual Theses	Inappropriate for chapters; no connection to main thesis	Appropriate for chapters but not connected to main thesis	Connected to main thesis and appropriate for each chapter but with no clarifying detail	Connected to main thesis and effective for each chapter but with little clarifying detail	Fully explained and effective for each chapter; clearly connected to main thesis
Outline of Argument	No discernible order to points or connection to main thesis	Points have some order but no connection to main thesis	Points connect to main thesis but with confusing order	Points clearly ordered with some support for main thesis	Points clearly ordered and effectively support main thesis
Appeals	Appeals unclear from text structure	Appeals present but used inappropriately (wrongly)	Appeals present but applied ineffectively (poor usage)	Effective use of one or two of Aristotle's appeals	Effective use of all three of Aristotle's appeals
Fallacies	Text has multiple fallacies that effect the overall argument	Text has multiple fallacies that do not effect the overall argument	Text has a few fallacies that directly address the overall argument	Text has a few logical fallacies that do not effect the overall argument	Text has no logical fallacies
Evidence	Text makes significant use of inappropriately applied or ineffectively chosen outside evidence	Text uses some outside evidence inappropriate to the argument	Text uses no outside evidence to prove a point	Text uses some outside evidence to make a point	Text uses multiple pieces of external evidence to effectively make a point

Aspects of the Argument	Text performs an unbalanced observation of issues and comes to no judgment	Text performs an unbalanced observation of issues before coming to judgment	Text looks at no issues before coming to judgment	Text looks at more than one perspective of an issue before coming to judgment	Text looks at multiple perspectives of an issue before coming to judgment
External arguments	Text addresses outside arguments using no tools without coming to judgment	Text addresses outside arguments with no tools but does come to a judgment	Text addresses outside arguments with some tools and may or may not address the entire thing.	Text uses multiple analytical tools to address part of an argument, but leaves some untouched	Text uses multiple analytical tools to address complete outside arguments, including finding fallacies, anticipating audience response, and addressing construction and outline

The elements of the argument form a second block of concepts in the critique section. Appeals as Aristotle conceived them, an element that was significant to the testers, form one of the points. The presence of all three of Aristotle's appeals – logos, ethos, and pathos – by usage, not likely by name, is a "5," while inappropriate use is a "2" and non- or unclear use is a "1." The following point, fallacies, are a reversal. The points run from no fallacies to multiple fallacies with the points between being separated based on how the fallacies impact the overall argument. The fallacies, as provided to the raters,[31] were determined based on errors in the application and interpretation of the three appeals. The final portion in this block of the critique section is the aspects of the argument. A text that scored the highest here looked at different

---

[31] See Appendix L

perspectives of an issue. Here, the main element scoring was the ability to observe using different eyes on the evidence. The middle ground would be that no alternate perspectives are explored, while the lowest score occurs when other perspectives are viewed with intentional bias or lack of balance.

The final point under critique is the author's look at outside arguments. A level "5" text looks at other works so completely thoroughly it performs nearly this same rubric in miniature, using balanced judgment, intelligent critique, and a fair observation. A level "3" text performs a middle observation that uses some tools that may address the whole or only a part, while a level "1" text has no tools and no judgment.

Conducting Research

	1	2	3	4	5
CONDUCTING RESEARCH					
Directing Readers	Texts directs readers to works that are not relevant or topical	Text never directs readers to works that appear relevant and topical	Text rarely directs readers to works that appear relevant and topical	Text occasionally directs readers to additional works that appear relevant and topical	Text frequently directs readers to additional works that appear relevant and topical
References	Texts frequently references sources inappropriately or not at all	Text occasionally references outside sources inappropriately	Text does not use outside sources	Text occasionally uses outside sources and references them appropriately	Text uses several outside sources and references them appropriately

The final section on the rubric looks at how the author situates him or herself as a scholar in the field. This is different than being an audience member, because this is not an active portion of the book – this is carried on outside of the reading; it is what is suggested should happen after the reading process is over and the research process begins. The scales on both of the points are fairly simple. The first point, directing the reader, is a straightforward question of how often the reading points out to the reader other places to go to carry on studying the topic at hand. The points run from "2" to "5" with "2" indicating that this never happens and "5" suggesting that it frequently does. The "1" is set even lower because it indicates that the external references are to texts irrelevant to the topic at hand. The final point on the rubric is largely judged in a "do as I do" manner; in other words, does the author perform imitable research methods that teachers would want their students to follow? Here it is outlined specifically as the use and appropriate referencing of outside sources. Though the use of external sources has been mentioned before, this point specifically focuses on their application and structure in a research context. As with the previous point, the scale is set up simply, running from references sources "inappropriately or not at all" to uses several and references them appropriately.

The Raters

In order to avoid researcher bias, I hired two raters to learn the rubric, read the texts, and then apply the rubric to the texts. In selecting the raters, I picked two English college students, one a recent graduate and English Department employee and one a senior and a writing tutor. These two were selected because of their familiarity both with quality argumentative writing and with the particular writing methods required at the university.

The raters were trained using selections from the book *Secrets Young Women Keep* (Hubbard, 2008), a young adult version of a popular devotional for Christian women. The raters

spent time being taught how to use the rubric and then practicing the rubric on the text. Both raters showed an affinity for the process and were quickly matching the scores that I had given the text. The only area in which they disagreed was in the area of fallacies. I created a separate guidesheet for the raters to use when working with fallacies (Appendix L), and we went over the *St. Martin's Handbook* lesson on fallacies to practice identifying the category of fallacy that I was envisioning.

The Results

The results are explained below on a book-by-book basis. For each book, I've given a description that provides more specific detail than was provided in the survey chapter, detail that is tailored more towards the information that became relevant in the survey section. I've then explained the rater's scores and the comments that they included for the texts. Below, the raters scores are listed Rater 1/Rater 2.

Miller, *Blue Like Jazz*

Blue Like Jazz skyrocketed to popularity when it came out in 2003, doing what few devotional texts do and becoming a *New York Times* bestseller with over a million copies sold, and then doing what virtually no truly Christian devotional texts do and getting made into a cinema-released movie in 2012. The book is a winding set of tales that discuss the life of the author his faith journey, from finding it, to stumbling around attempting to make sense of it, to achieving a language of the soul of freedom (his concept of jazz). It is a series of story-chapters, each centering on a lesson that Miller sought to learn yet at the same time is attempt to teach to his reader as well. It is highly episodic, uses extremely lyrical prose, and at times reads like a book of non-fiction essays.

Scores for *Blue Like Jazz*

Audience:

Knowledge of Audience 4/5
Audience Appropriateness 5/4
Anticipates Audience Response 5/4

Rater 1 did not think Miller openly stated who his audience is as much as hinting at their presence was through the text; however, she did add that his text is written directly for that audience. While Rater 2 made the point that audience is directly addressed, she didn't think that the content was appropriate for young adults, as Miller delves into some particularly adult content when he begins his discussion, particularly his talk of drugs. Both raters saw Miller as having a clear understanding of who his audience is and a general understanding of what they expected from their texts.

Joining the Conversation:

Understanding writing in the genre: 4/5
Integrating readers: 5/5

Both raters saw this section as different because Miller makes an open effort to say that this book is not like other books, and both readers made notes that they found this point difficult to score. In the end, they scored these points high because Miller does do these things, just in a very indirect manner. The subtitle of the book is "Nonreligious thoughts on Christian spirituality" which at its outset automatically creates confusion in that the genre seems to be internally compromised. How can one have nonreligious thoughts about a religion? That, of course, is the point that Miller is going to make in the text. Thus, the book is in the genre but it going to attempt to change the genre. The raters gave it a high rating, but with trepidation here.

How to Read:

Addressing the Text: 5/5
Building Connections: 5/5

The raters saw the text as fairly straightforward in its address of the readers. Both readers sensed little confusion in how Miller directed his audience to engage with him and his writing.

Summarizing and Synthesizing:

> Summarizing Breakdown: 5/5
> Completeness of Summary: 5/5
> Presence of Synthesis: 4/5
> Synthesis: 4/5

Miller's text relies largely on his own stories and tales of his life, and rather than give him "1s" on this section, both raters independently determined that personal stories qualified as appropriated source material in an argumentative setting and treated it as such. Rater 1 identified all summaries as performed perfectly but did say that there was some room for bringing the stories together a bit more (an interesting argument, as these were stories all centered around the author's life), while Rater 2 said that the use of the personal experience as external argument was summarized and synthesized strongly across the board.

Critiquing:

> Main thesis: 5/5
> Individual thesis: 5/5
> Outline of argument: 3/5 (Researcher score: 3)
> Appeals: 4/5
> Fallacies: 4/4
> Evidence: 4/5
> Aspects of the Argument: 4/4
> External Argument: 4/4

The two Raters were the most vocal on this point. Rater 1 understood the main thesis to be an emotional appeal rather than a logical argument, which appeared to be the salvation of the book's argument for her. Rater 2 agreed, treating the thesis as Miller's belief system. Rater 1 had a significant problem with the book's outline and remarked that the text was put together "haphazardly". Rater 2 pointed out that Miller connects the points to their predecessors, causing

her to give Miller a "5" on the outline, the only time that the two Raters were separated by more than a point.

Conducting Research

Directing Readers: 3/3
References: 4/ 4

The Raters made the same comments here as they made in the summary and synthesis section, suggesting that any research remarks would only be made in reference to the stories told by Miller's life. Rater 2 made an interesting comment that additional reference could be suggested from the particular use of cultural icons he has as support.

Overall, *Blue Like Jazz* was very effective in terms of audience, but after that, the text began to move in mysterious ways. The Raters were interpreting the text in very unexpected ways in order to maintain degrees of relevance. What was considered acceptable source material for summary and synthesis section and their conducting research section was not at all what I would consider, leaving the question – are we accepting personal story and experience as legitimate argumentation tools and texts when we construct Composition I papers? Should we? In terms of critique, it scored tolerably, but there was significant disagreement among the raters, reflected in the comments as well as their scores. This text was far from what I would consider being good preparatory material for Composition I, yet it scored high and provided a very different set of possibilities for the classroom.

McDowell & Hostetler, *Don't Check Your Brains at the Door*

Josh McDowell's and Bob Hostetler's book is "A book of Christian evidences" designed to ensure high school Christian readers "know what [they] believe and why" (cover). McDowell, who has been nationally known in Christian circles as an apologist since the 1960s and Hostetler, structure *Don't Check Your Brains at the Door* into six "Myth-Busting" sections including myths

about God, Jesus, the Bible, the resurrection, religion and Christianity, and life and happiness. Each myth has several chapters in it, but the chapters can barely be called such, They are about three pages each, followed by a "workout" section, which asks questions about the reader's spiritual condition or provides questions for the reader to consider along with verses for the reader to look up and consider.

Scores for *Don't Check Your Brains at the Door*

Audience:

> Knowledge of Audience: 4/4
> Audience Appropriateness: 4/4
> Anticipates Audience Response: 4/2   (Researcher: 5)

Both readers noted that if the writer knew who the readers were and wrote appropriate for them, but Rater 2 did not believe the writer could anticipate their responses. The raters indicated that some of the content was not relevant for the readers, such as dated references to televangelists that the students would likely not know, thus separating the text from the readers.

Joining the Conversation:

> Understanding Writing in the Genre: 5/5
> Integrating Readers: 5/4

Both raters pointed out references that the text made to other texts in the genre that served the same purpose, particularly the work of C.S. Lewis (a comparison that Lewis does not deserve). Rater 2 took the Integrating Readers category down from a "5" to a "4" however, because she indicated that the language used towards the readers was extremely "didactic," and, according to the rubric, it is possible that such language would make it difficult for readers to situate themselves in the text.

How to Read:

> Addressing the Text: 5/5

Building Connections: 5/5

While the raters pointed out that there were many things that *Don't Check* did poorly, this was something that they agreed it did well. The size and order of the sections, while not necessarily beneficial for learning or appropriate for perfect pedagogy, was at least explained well.

Summarizing and Synthesizing:

Summarizing Breakdown: 4/4
Completeness of Summary: 4/4
Presence of Synthesis: 5/5
Synthesis: 4/3

Each chapter addressed an individual myth, often in the form of a story. Those usually involved some kind of summary, and the raters indicated that those were summarized into their main concepts, but poorly. On the "Synthesis" point itself, Rater 2 indicated out that often the material from the body of the chapter was not the same material addressed in the "workout" section of the chapter, thus her dropping of the score to "3."

Critiquing:

Main Thesis: 5/5
Individual Thesis: 4/4
Outline of Argument: 5/5
Appeals: 4/2
Fallacies: 4/1   (Researcher: 3)
Evidence: 5/4
Aspects of the Argument: 4/2
External Arguments: 4/3

Both raters found an overall argument to the text that was clearly identifiable, but once the book broke down into its individual chapters, it became extremely problematic. The individual stories lacked support, and both raters found the use of make-believe stories not only useless but almost offensive to the intelligence of the intended audience. Rater 2 addressed their

argumentative appeals saying they are "rendered ineffectual by a weak attempt at pathos, a progressively lessening sense of ethos as the authors prove their stated authority to be ill-founded, and a disastrously flippant approach to logos."

Conducting Research

Directing Readers: 4/4
References: 4/4

Outside texts made an appearance in *Don't Check*, but both raters said that their topics were too widespread to make any real impact. Rater 1 pointed out that the authors pulled together a handful of resources then appeared to be unable to do anything with them, while Rater 2 said that the sources were too widespread to be particularly useful.

Don't Check Your Brains at the Door did an acceptable job understanding its audience and moving into its genre, but what it did especially well was explaining to its readers how it ought to be read. After that, it was a disaster, with the summary of external texts being, at one point "horrific" according to Rater 2, and the critiquing section lacking order, support, and argumentative development. Rater 2 wrote a lengthy final note that she also wanted to add. The text included illustrations with every chapter some of which she found (quite justifiably) derogatory towards African-Americans. The presence of these pictures, already hugely problematic, is compounded by the fact that the authors make repeated stances against racism.

Bevere, *The Bait of Satan*

John Bevere's*The Bait of Satan* is an extremely uniquely constructed book. At the beginning of each chapter, there is a full page set aside for testimonials to the book, structured almost as if it would sound on an infomercial: "I just read […] *The Bait of Satan* today – I could not put it down! This is certainly one of the best books I have ever read. –P.A., Missouri." That structure does speak to how the book thinks of itself. The first line of the preface is "The book

you hold is quite possibly the most important confrontation with truth you'll encounter in your

lifetime" (vii). It is likely a combination of this attitude towards texts and the material in the texts

that has made Bevere's book highly controversial. Bevere's writings have been called

"detrimental to the church" (Clare, 2012, p.65) and while he has dedicated followers, his work

promotes even the publication of independent scholarly papers of outrage (Tipton, 2012). The

Bait of Satan proposes that the idea of "offense" or being "offended" is the worst thing that can

drive a spiritual wedge between a person's spirit and the divine connection and that the best way

to solve that is to address the offense. The book has fourteen chapters that use personal

experiences of the author, Biblical story telling, and some theology (interpreted as Bevere sees it)

to attempt to solve the problem of offense. It closes with a lengthy devotional supplement that

has a Bible study attached to each chapter.

Scores for *The Bait of Satan*

Audience:

> Knowledge of Audience: 4/4
> Audience Appropriateness: 4/4
> Anticipates Audience Response: 4/4

While the raters pointed out that Bevere understood who his audience was, they indicated

that he never directly addressed them but rather indicated who they were through the text itself.

Rater 2 pointed out that he overly narrows his audience at times by addressing only people who

have experienced a certain kind of offense.

Joining the Conversation:

> Understanding Writing in the Genre: 3/5   (Researcher: 2)
> Integrating Readers: 5/4

The Raters disagreed on Bevere's knowledge of how his particular text fit into the genre.

Rater 1 indicated that if Bevere had bothered to look at even the other books included in this

study his text might be more effective in terms of critique (which she took points off of. See

below). Rater 2 saw a clearly situated text. This was the only place in the text where the raters

disagreed by more than one point.

How to Read:

Addressing the Text: 4/5
Building Connections: 4/5

Rater 1 scored both sections as a "4" because, while Bevere did point out that there were

two categories of people who could be offended and opens up the reader to find him or herself in

the text, there are many, many more options that were ignored. Rater 2 initially scored the

argument a "4" for that same reason but moved it up to a "5" as she noted that the argument

created stronger connections by the end of the text.

Summarizing and Synthesizing:

Summarizing Breakdown: 5/4
Completeness of Summary: 5/4
Presence of Synthesis: 5/5
Synthesis: 5/4

Biblical stories played a primary role in the external sources that were referenced in the

text. Rater 1 noted that there were no other sources used but did not lower the score based on

this. Rater 2 indicated that the Biblical references were not used appropriately and in some cased

were twisted to make the point that Bevere wanted to make rather than remaining true to the

nature of the text. Accordingly, she scored these points slightly lower than Rater 1.

Critiquing:

Main thesis: 5/5
Individual Theses: 5/4
Outline of Argument: 5/5
Appeals: 4/4
Fallacies: 4/3
Evidence: 3/4

Aspects of the Argument: 4/4
External Arguments: 3/4

Both raters found that the text's most significant problem was Bevere's extreme bias. The author took a very pointed stance and bent his sources and claims to match the stance, rather than creating an argument. That being said, both thought that there was a clear thesis and sub-theses that established the direction of the text. In the individual structure of the argument, the text became convoluted. The use of Biblical passages to prove certain cases was, as Rater 2 puts it, "contaminated," however she continues that Bevere does a good job of staying focused on the nature of the topic. It is this point of manipulation that prompts Rater 1 to call the text "the weakest of the books in this study."

Conducting Research:

Directing Readers: 5/4
References: 5/4

There was some slight point variation here. Bevere had sources and did cite them, but they were not academic sources. He cited the Bible foremost, followed by a variety of dictionaries. These were all found in end notes. Rater 1 found this acceptable, scoring both as "5s." In her comments, Rater 2 ignored any sources other than the Bible and Bevere's experiences, and of these she wrote "Sometimes stretched to make a point, these examples do help a reader be more interactively involved *and point them toward further research* even though not all are fully sound" (emphasis mine) – an interesting comment, given her scores.

Overall, the raters exhibited frustration with the book, suggesting that bias can ruin a text where an author has the skill and the ability to build connections with the readers. The text itself was extremely narrow, focusing only on this particular issue of offense, eliminating any possible options and arguments that might be opposite to what Bevere is suggesting – even for Bevere to

bring the argument up to disprove it and thus make his case stronger. Yet the raters seemed to find that there was something there. The ideas in the text seemed effective and possibly beneficial to young adults: in essence, attempt to live without creating offense and without holding grudges against others. If Bevere could have widened his text to make allowances for a larger group of readers, to try and read texts openly and draw multiple meanings from them, and then to look at possible arguments and address them, this would have been an effective text.

Chan, *Crazy Love*

A book couldn't ask for a better review than Chan's *Crazy Love* received from actor Kirk Cameron: "In an age of religious phonies, spiritual apathy, and disheartening books suggesting that God is a delusion, *Crazy Love* shines like a glorious beacon of hope and light. If you're stuck in a religious rut, read this refreshing book. I found it eye-opening and soul-thrilling" (as cited in Chan, 2012, frontpaper). Chan's text presents the idea that Christians need to avoid being "lukewarm," a concept based on the Apostle John's vision in the Biblical book of *Revelation* where God addresses the church at Laodicea. They aren't working for or against Christianity, and in the vision, John see God address them, "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth" (Revelation 3:15-16, *ESV*). Chan's text pushes to avoid that lukewarm nature, and goes through many examples of lukewarm lives. His book is ten chapters, moving generally from how to behave to an overall concept of grace and the love and goodness of God.

Scores for *Crazy Love*

Audience:

Knowledge of Audience: 5/4
Audience Appropriateness: 5/4

Anticipates Audience Response: 5/4

Both raters assumed Chan understood who the audience was. Rater 1 noted that this was one of the strongest books in terms of audience awareness, that Chan easily identified his audience and wrote directly for them. Rater 2 said Chan used the idea of writing to a larger Protestant audience to avoid some of the smaller argumentative issues that arises between denominations or individuals (such as those in *Bait of Satan*); however, she did say he overemphasized his own church to the exclusion of the readers at times.

Joining the Conversation:

Understanding Writing in the Genre: 5/5
Integrating Readers: 5/4

Rater 1 again marked very strongly that Chan clearly understood how his book fell into a larger category of devotional books and could situate his work in them. Rater 2 also saw the book as clearly brought into a larger group of similar texts; however, she saw Chan as more patronizing in his discussion of readers, calling them "erring, though endearing, student[s]."

How to Read:

Addressing the Text: 5/4
Building Connections: 5/4

The text does not follow a straightforward essay format – there are story sessions, questions blocks, even a call-and-response style section. Rater 1 found these promoted a clear reader-text transaction. Rater 2 found these same elements to appeal less to the reader except that they did promote a message of guilt which, while perhaps not the exact message Chan wanted to send, an awareness of possible missteps, sin, or behavior that needs consideration is exactly what he was looking for.

Summarizing and Synthesizing:

        Summarizing Breakdown: 5/5
        Completeness of Summary: 5/4
        Presence of Synthesis: 5/5
        Synthesis: 5/4

Both raters pointed out his use of external material and his ability to break it down into its component parts. Rater 1 found the material bought in all relevant and well applied, while Rater 2 said that the material was "made to seem," relevant, but that there were some pieces that were not necessarily effective. However, Rater 2 pointed out that this was one of Chan's strong points.

Critiquing:

        Main thesis: 5/4
        Individual theses: 5/4
        Outline of Argument: 5/3   (Researcher: 3)
        Appeals: 4/4
        Fallacies: 4/2   (Researcher: 3)
        Evidence: 5/5
        Aspects of the Argument: 4/3
        External Arguments: 4/2   (Researcher: 2)

There was a great deal of disagreement among the raters here. Both noted that Chan's book operated differently than a straightforward argumentative text; Rater 1 compared it to *Blue Like Jazz* while Rater 2 called it a rant. Rater 1 indicated Chan made few appeals and didn't look at any perspectives other than his own, but, given the message of the text, she decided these were not problematic. Rater 1 made an extremely interesting argument about devotional texts here. In suggesting the text was not argumentative, she said it "was not presented as a logical argument, and thus Chan evaded many of the fallacies that come along with supporting an idea grounded in faith with logic." Rater 1's comment seemed to suggest that it would be impossible to have a logical argument about faith.

Conducting Research:

        Directing Readers: 5/5
        References: 5/5

Chan uses a number of outside sources frequently, for which both raters scored highly.

Overall, Chan's text scored well, until it came to argumentation. Not only did it not score well, but the raters could not come to an agreement about how badly scored (an issue that will arise later). What the text did that should be noted is it played well to its genre and audience, it drew its readers into a text that understood its place in larger texts, could appeal to and reference a variety of texts to make a point, and it wove a main thesis and several sub-theses together throughout the text. Of all of the books read and analyzed, this scored near the top with the raters and, in conversation, was shared as being one of the most enjoyable and "easy to score."

Strobel& Vogel,*The Case for Christ*

Lee Strobel was a dedicated atheistic Chicago Tribune journalist with a Masters in Law from Yale when he discovered his closest friend was a Christian. This led him on a two year journey to discover what the evidence proved – if the evidence proved anything – about Christianity and the divinity of the earthy twentieth-century teacher, Jesus. Strobel's searching eventually led him to a belief in Christ which has turned him into the most prolific and well-respected apologist of modern Christianity. His major texts *The Case for a Creator, The Case for Christ,* and *The Case for Faith* are all major best-sellers, and all three have been made into documentaries. The student version of *The Case for Christ*, a collaboration between Strobel and Jane Vogel, is broken into three sections: the first is about the divinity of Jesus, the second about the actual existence of Jesus, and the last about the resurrection of Jesus. It is the shortest of the books read at only 115 pages, and the text is frequently broken up by texts and graphics.

Scores for *The Case for Christ*

Audience:

Knowledge of Audience: 5/5

Audience Appropriateness: 5/5
Anticipates Audience Response: 5/5

Both raters said Strobel knew his audience well and that he was writing for a crowd that may or may not have agreed with him. While that made it easy for them to select "5s" for the first two points, both indicated that it was interesting choice to select "5" for the last one. Rater 1 said that he reached out to a cynical audience but didn't ignore his Christian readers, while Rater 2 said that he anticipates responses that follow his, but leaves options unresolved – which, we can assume, a fair investigator would do.

Joining the Conversation:

Understanding Writing in the Genre: 4/5
Integrating Readers: 5/5

As an investigative journalist, Strobel knows texts, how to find them, and how to use them when he needs them. Both readers pointed out that Strobel was able to situate himself in the field comfortably. Rater 1 commented that the sources Strobel used were Christian in nature, but then dismissed that comment by suggesting that Strobel's inherent knowledge base would already serve his thesis and purpose.

How to Read:

Addressing the Text: 5/5
Building Connections: 5/5

Strobel's work is a shorter version of the full *The Case for Christ*, and both raters commented on how Strobel did an excellent job showing readers exactly how to engage with the text on their level. It was one of the most positive critiques they gave to the book; in fact, this point was one of the most positive they gave to any point on any book.

Summarizing and Synthesizing:

Summarizing Breakdown: 5/5

Completeness of Summary: 5/5
Presence of Synthesis: 5/5
Synthesis: 5/5

Again, the raters noted that Strobel's experience in journalism served him well here. Both raters particularly commented on Strobel's ability to break the information down into its component parts, something they both found important when dealing with young adults. Rater 2 noted how wide-ranging the sources were, something that can be compared especially positively in comparison to other texts in the study.

Critiquing:

Main Thesis: 5/5
Individual Thesis: 5/5
Outline of Argument: 5/5
Appeals: 4/5
Fallacies: 1/4   (Researcher: 4)
Evidence: 4/5
Aspects of the Argument: 4/5
External Arguments: 4/ 5

Rater 2 found this to be an extremely strong argument, well put together and consistent in its construction. It took some digging for her to find fallacies, and her comment was "No matter how good an argument is, it is always possible to find some point that could use revision or expansion." Rater 1, however, found serious problems with the book. While she gave this high marks on the thesis because it was clearly present, she did not think it was an appropriate thesis, saying that it was an emotive thesis, rather than a logical one. She pointed out that the arguments were based on personal tugging of the facts to fit the claims, and that there was too much pull on the heart strings, such as the writer's discussion of the impact of his atheism or his wife's Christianity.

Conducting Research

Directing Readers: 5/5

References: 5/5

Both raters saw outside sources being brought in to the argument. Here again, Strobel's background played to the strength of the book, and Rater 2 pointed out that this was an "admirable job" in the presenting of a case.

The Case for Christ merited interesting results. As the most clearly argumentative of the five, it earned the highest marks across the board. Holistically, the raters found that it understood its audience, its position in the conversation and then how to bring its own readers into that conversation extremely well. The background and training of its author at one of the most highly respected law schools in the nation clearly came across in the ratings given it. The only place the raters noticeably disagreed was on the use of emotion in the text. Rater 1 found it excessive to the point of interference, while Rater 2 didn't find if worth comment. Overall, it was the most success of all five texts.

Analysis

Given the information gathered from the texts, the following conclusions can be outlined: One thing the texts seemed to be able to do extremely well was to know and speak to their specific audiences. In writing these works, the authors clearly understood their place in the genre Christian non-fiction. This was not, it is important to note, an across-the-board concept where each book is speaking to a generalized audience of young adult readers. *The Case for Christ* is a merger between Zondervan Publishers and Youth Specialties, a very outgoing, street ministries-style organization, and addressed an audience of younger Christian adults eager for easily understandable apologetics. *The Bait of Satan* is a studies book, marketed to Christians in general, as is *Blue Like Jazz*, though it has received particular attention among the late-teen/young adult Christian community. The differences between these texts means that to try

and market one audience-appeasing method for all young adult Christian texts would be impossible and, given the intelligence of teenage readers, possibly offensive.

Instead, these texts each seemed to be able to identify their audiences and address them either explicitly or implicitly. In the case of the first, texts like Strobel's come out and begin a direct dialogue with the reader, one in which he draws the reader into texts in a significant way. Consider the final paragraph from the opening of his book: "After weighing the evidence, I made my decision. But I can't make yours. That's your choice. I hope you take it seriously, because there may be more at stake than just idle curiosity" (8). Instantly, Strobel has engages the reader in the book – whether the reader likes it or not. However, everything about that is appropriate for the reader: tone, sentence length and structure, complication – it all appeals to the young adult reader. In the second case, Miller's book assumes an audience by mentioning destroying his housemates while playing *NFL Blitz* (p.179). In both books, we see that the authors are clearly aware of what their readers expect and can address that regardless of whether or not they need to speak to the audience directly. They also do an excellent job of anticipating the audience response.

As an extension of that point, the writers write to an audience whom they anticipate are generally receptive towards listening to their claims, and so they are very clear in conveying to that audience how to read their works. The messages that most of the texts present are fairly complicated ones: *The Case for Christ* argues for Trinitarian theology, *Crazy Love* looks at harmartiology, and *Don't Check Your Brains at the Door* is a crash course in apologetics. Accordingly, with the exception of Miller's, the books are very specific in stating exactly how they should be read. In their introduction, McDowell and Hostetler directly state that their goal is to create the kind of intellectual growth that is the purpose of the critical reader, and they

explicitly tell their reader how to address the text to achieve that end. What was generally seen in this, and most texts, was a gradual apprenticing of the readers into the type of reading that should be read in a devotional text and an apologetic text, depending on the particular genre, or, at the very least, an addressing of the intricacies and structure of the particular text at hand.

Outside sources play an important role in most of these texts, but they have interesting implications. The two primary external sources of information referenced are the Bible, which was less surprising, and personal experience, perhaps more so. In some texts, this use of outside sources was acceptable, but very little of it occurred. For example, Miller's *Blue Like Jazz* is a work of his own life experience, thus requiring fewer sources. McDowell and Hostetler's work, however, is an apologetic that relies on sources beyond these; however, they appear in bite-sized pieces. At times even Biblical and personal are made to fit where the authors needs an argument. If we continue this point further, what is done well was the synthesizing of these texts. Even though there are places in stories where there are major holes, in instances of multiple arguments, ideas, vignettes, memories, essays, pictures – these writers do a strong job across the board of bringing the elements of their sources together into some kind of cohesive support for the chapter or larger argument of which they are a part. This was true both for the texts that adopt more of a story form, such as Chan's and Miller's texts, and those with more of an argumentative form, like Bevere's and McDowell and Hostetler's.

To provide one final note on that concept, there is no consistency on the concept of directing readers to sources. Not only is their no clear consensus that X number of sources will do better, there are moments of strengths and weaknesses within individual sources. On this point, the data shows that these texts do not give any information on finding and researching source material.

Critiquing is the most fascinating and complicating section of the six. Initially, I had anticipated that the scores in this section would be the lowest, so I was not surprised that, as they came in, they were slightly lower than those of the other sections. What I was surprised about, however, was that it was in this section that the raters had the most difficulty finding agreement. Throughout five of the six sections, the raters scored within one point of each other on every single subpoint of every section for every single text, only separating by one point twice in the entirety of the study. On the critique section, however, they disagreed consistently, and, when they did not disagree, they scored the text extremely poorly. I drew two conclusions from this. One, of course being that there are significant problems with the methods of critique used in these texts. The second, however, was that it is less a problem of straightforward fallacy and more of a problem of a lack of clarity. If two raters who could agree without fail on five out of five sections of the rest of a text (and, lest the rubric itself be called into question, the raters did agree perfectly in testing and, on one book – Bevere's work), could suddenly be unable to agree about what a text is saying about a topic or how a text is behaving in relation to a topic, it is reasonable to suggest that the text's logical movements or information are not entirely clear. The critiquing that the text is carrying out may be jumbled, repetitive, circular, missing sections – it is not that it is not present, nor necessarily biased, nor necessarily Bible-thumping, it is simply unclear or convoluted enough that even the best English scholar can't pinpoint the argument that it is attempting to make. Interestingly, the generally population does a fairly good job of agreeing with the raters about which books are the most confusing. *A Case for Christ*, considered one of the best apologetics of the age, had the fewest points of dissent, while the controversial *Don't Check Your Brains at the Door* had the most.

Where they did agree, across texts, was on the texts' use of appeals, fallacies, and evidence. The raters both repeatedly indicated that the books seemed unable to uphold their thesis statements (which, overall, they scored well in establishing, both the main and supporting theses) through supporting argumentation. At times, the text use appeals successfully, especially emotional appeals; however, logical appeals were a particular problem in McDowell and Hosteter and Bevere's work. In Bevere's and Miller's texts, the raters indicate that they have to stretch experiences to fill in for evidence, and both raters struggled with the concept of whether or not to allow the Bible to operate as a sole form of evidence. Meanwhile, though repeatedly the raters disagreed on the extent to the works' demonstration of significant fallacies, with one rater suggesting that three of the works had a three or below on the scale, an indication of substantial logical failings, both raters did see failings. Though the other rater did score these slightly higher, they consistently remained at four or below. Overall, the information from the critique segment suggested that while these works do have their strong points in this category, there is still a combination of unsuccessful writing, poor argumentation, and confusing detail that would lead a reader to a state of misunderstanding and an inability to properly interpret the texts.

Chapter 6: Recommendations

The Christian student in the first-year composition classroom shares the culture of her peers. She may have played volleyball or been on the debate team. He may have been in a garage band or gaming group. However the addition of the Christian culture brings a new aspect that influences peer interaction, teacher-student relationships, understanding of the role of the university as authority, and of course, all of the class's academic material. There is a measure of distrust of secular higher education, especially of the liberal arts, for many in the Christian community. Mannoia (2000) attempts to make a case for private Christian education by saying state schools have a "diffusing of focus" and "crisis of identity" (p.5), a claim that seems almost mild when placed alongside a comment from Pike (2007) in which he calls secular universities the "the spiritual 'killing grounds' of Christian youth today." The student coming into the Composition I classroom is going to come warily, having had the same cultural experiences as his or her peers, but perhaps having an additional element of warnings to be cautious, lest academic "brainwashing" should occur.

Part of the culture that these students bring is in the texts that they read. It is to their credit that they are reading books outside of what they are required to read for their high school coursework. The survey portion of the study revealed that Christian youth are reading a combination of genres, both apologetic texts that offer them a defense of their religion and devotional texts that provide spiritual guidance and an exhortation to move forward in their faith. From the survey, there were two texts that clearly fell into each category, and a third that had characteristics of both. The two devotional texts, *Crazy Love* (Chan, 2008) and *Blue Like Jazz* (Miller, 2003) are spiritual journey texts, designed to bring the reader to a new state of personal growth and renewal of his or her faith. And while those are texts of the heart, the apologetic

texts, *The Case for Christ* (Strobel& Vogel, 2001) and *Don't Check Your Brains at the Door* (McDowell & Hostetler, 1992), are books for the head, presenting arguments in favor of Christianity. Bevere's (2004) book is somewhere in the middle; it is an argument against spiritual weakness presented (Bevere hopes) in a logical manner.

The scoring of the five texts suggested the following tenets: the texts were able to identify and speak well to audiences, even though those particular audiences were extremely varied from book to book. Furthermore, as the authors knew their audiences, they were successful in communicating how to read their works. Outside sources were important in these texts, in terms of understanding how these the books participated in a conversation with the reader and how other works are integrated in to these five main works, but there was some difficultly at times about how they were included. Some works had good use of external sources, while others relied only on the Bible, and others treated personal experience as argumentative material. Critique (which encompasses argumentation) was the most problematic area the texts. This section had the lowest scores and occasions of rater disagreement, leading to the conclusion that the arguments in the texts were both confusing and flawed.

The following recommendations speak first to the strengths that the student who has been reading these texts will bring to the classroom. There are significant benefits to being engaged with these texts, and a savvy first-year composition teacher can harness these benefits to make the Christian book reader into a better writer. The chapter then speaks to the areas of need that the student may bring when entering the classroom. These five texts, which here we will assume are at least partially representative of their genres, include some significantly problematic elements, elements that need to be addressed and countered in first-year writing training. While many teachers find themselves frustrated and discouraged by writing interactions with Christian

students (see Vander Lei and kyburz, 2005), focusing on the strengths within in the weakness

can help even the most problematic student see some level of improvement.

Developing Reading Strengths

Teaching Audience Awareness

Overall, the books scored very well on all categories of audience concern including the

authors' understanding of their audiences, writing appropriately for those audiences, and

anticipating their audiences' responses. Take this passage from *Crazy Love*:

> This book is written for those who want more Jesus. It is for those who are bored with what
> American Christianity offers. It is for those who don't want to plateau, those who would
> rather die before their convictions do. I hope reading this book will convince you of
> something: that by surrendering yourself totally to God's purposes, He will bring you the
> most pleasure in this life and the next. (Chan, 2008, p.21)

While the passage from this devotional text is not extremely developed, it does a straightforward

job of saying "This is whom I'm writing for, and this is what I'm hoping that audience will get

out of what I'm saying." Chan identifies whom he is talking to (people who want "more Jesus")

and what he wants (to convince them of how to have the best life). In essence, Chan has put in

that paragraph exactly what we as instructors want our first-year composition students to be able

to identify at the beginning of any writing project: audience and purpose.

All of the members of the focus group indicated that audience awareness was an

important part of their classes, and audience was taught not alone but in conjunction with

purpose, for identification of recipients is meaningless without message. Furthermore, audience

was discussed not simply as a singularly entity but as a taxonomy, beginning with the intended

audience and trickling down to the unintended – those who read or hear information second

hand. McDowell and Hostetler's (1992) book is a result of such second-hand information. The

authors argue that Christianity's truth has become a telephone game, and now it is full of myths:

> So what's true and what's myth? Teenagers and young adults get it from every direction. […] That's what this book is all about. These brief chapters discuss common myths, many of which people accept without thinking, and evaluate them in the light of the Bible. It will surprise, delight, and sometimes scare you to discover some deeply held ideas about God and religion and life that are no more than myths. (p.xiv)

Although this quotation is from an apologetic text, it reads in an extremely similar manner to Chan's devotional work. The audience is indicated at the beginning of the text, followed by a clearly stated purpose, and wrapped up with a guess at audience response. Although the raters indicated that the evaluations that occurred "in the light of the Bible" were an argumentative disaster," they scored audience concerns much higher because of sections such as this.

If students are indeed reading texts that clearly identify the audience, addressing them in terms of appropriate content, and anticipating and responding to their results (the requirements for scores of "5" on the three audience concern categories of "knowledge of audience," "audience appropriateness," and "anticipates audience response"), first-year composition teachers need to make good on that in the classroom. These students are reading texts that use audience successfully; now, Composition I teachers need to draw that out of them and help them see it in academic writing and understand how to develop a sense of it in their own writing.

The first way would be to include a broader range of terminology when teaching audience. Moss (1994) in her well-known study of African-American churches points out that, no matter how educated the preacher, he must "preach in the language and culture of [his] people" (p.151), and draws that back further to St. Augustine who said "that preaching is a rhetorical act and that the preacher/rhetor must, if necessary, speak the language of the people to reach them" (in Moss, 1994, p.151). The basic terminology in teaching audience is simply to use the term "audience," and perhaps to explain it as "the reader of the text." The *St. Martin's Handbook*, the staple first-year composition book used at the university of the study, does not

explicitly define audience, asking simply in a question box "What person or group do you want to reach? Is this audience already sympathetic to your views?" (Lunsford, 2008, p. 44). Because all students entering the classroom need to know and understand the elements of audience, basic lessons on audience awareness are crucial. However, students reading Christian texts have a linguistic reservoir– a stored knowledge of words and literacy based on cultural and life experience – that is different from other students. These ideas, many of which come from their reading of books like these five, help them see the world in new ways, including parts of the world like audience. Accordingly, if a teacher can include words that match the audience ideas they are familiar with, in the texts that have successfully dealt with audience, he or she can draw upon their knowledge of what a successfully written text looks like and perhaps trigger in them their own writing of one. For example, simple inclusions such as "witness" or "testimony" resonate with a very specific audience-purpose set for a Christian student, but they are not words that go unheard in a regular Composition classroom, where the courtroom metaphor is invoked frequently. By creating a linguistic touchstone for a student, a first-year composition teacher can find help him or her find the cultural connection to the concept of audience. Furthermore, to look beyond the books, a teacher working with a struggling student can ask these readers to envision the situation Moss points out – a preacher and his or her audience – something the student may see weekly. By helping the student identify how a rhetor he or she is familiar with makes audience connections, a teacher may help a student cross-apply that situation to a new textual problem raised in class.

Guiding Student Reading

The second way teachers can make good on these texts is by playing up the fact that they all scored quite well on the "How to Read" measurement. Across the board, this section scored

nearly perfect for each book in each of the two categories, "addressing the text," focusing

specifically on how the text tells the reader it should be used, and "building connections," what

kind of goals or reader-text connections the book suggests. Bevere's (2004) book, for example,

makes not only read-text connections, but actually connects reader-text-God as he establishes the

reading goals of the book as a prayer:

> Father, in the name of Jesus, I ask that You would reveal, by Your Spirit, Your Word to me as I read this book. Expose any hidden areas of my heart that have hindered me from knowing You and serving You more effectively. I welcome the conviction of Your Spirit and ask for Your grace to carry out what You desire of me. May I come to know You more intimately as a result of hearing Your voice through reading this book. (p.3)

Here, Bevere is not only telling the reader "Here's your purpose in reading this book," but

"Here's your purpose in reading this book – God says so." And while the reader might not

necessarily agree that this purpose is what he or she wants out of the text, the author has made it

very clear that this in the manner in which the audience should read the text. Accordingly, a

smart teacher can make good on these authorial goals by simply emphasizing in class that

students need to look to texts for authors' clues on how their works. This reading instruction is

not simply a need for Christian students, but a need for all students prompted here by our

Christian ones. Unfortunately, teaching students how to read a text may stop at instructions on

how students should carry out the reading, not on whether or not the text itself gives hints as to

how it should be read. A simple in-class assignment would be a partnered question time with 10

minutes to identify at least five clues as to how the author wants the text to be read, and then a

return to the larger class grouping and review those clues together on the board. It is an

elementary exercise, but it appeals both to the skills that the Christian student has already seen in

the genre dedicated for his or her culture and the need that first-year composition students need

to be intelligent writers, especially in a global culture where more and more texts are designed to manipulate readers to think and feel certain ways.

Fostering Inclusiveness

Finally, while Composition I is an argumentative writing classroom, some room must be made for celebrating cultural differences and allowing those to come out in student argumentation. All of the books represent a developed and unique subculture that the student brings to the classroom, a subculture that the student has likely spent thousands of hours of his or her life cultivating, possibly with family, likely with friends. There are, of course, significant problems when poor argumentation based on dualistic methods is used in writing from these students; however, Christian students have an element of belief and fire that is worth noting in a generation that gets its greatest excitement from the release of a new cell phone. When important issues are discussed in the classroom, the teacher needs to moderate without shutting down students who have religious differences, so long as all voices are heard without any being marginalized or belittled. A classroom could successfully operate on Elshtain's (2001) principle of a "common moral basis that does not require doctrinal leveling but does demand searching for certain core norms we share [sic] helps people learn how to compromise because they agree on so many important things" (p.47). Discussions on important topics that open multiple perspectives on issues and that aren't afraid to move into current topics are crucial in a class designed to prepare students for the rigors of academia. The year this study is taking place is a presidential election year, where health care issues are a topic of concern, including requiring religious organizations to provide birth control in violation of their beliefs. Allowing in-class debate on such an issue as that, for example, would allow not only Christian students but all students to find their voices and let them know that they have the right to speak on such

important topics. Marzluf (2006) emphasizes the need "to show students that they necessarily participate in diversity as a social system and, regardless of their opinions, to demonstrate how cultural values are important factors when it comes to judgments about human difference" (p.519). Establishing a "social system" with a broad range of input creates a safe space for both Christian and non-Christian students, and students of every kind, creed, and type. The Composition I classroom, often the first class that incoming freshman takes, will shape the understanding that students have about the university as the microcosm of the world. If the classroom can be established as a place where dialogue is carried out in an open and honest manner, where all ideas are heard and debate can be carried out respectfully, that student will take those ideas out from the classroom into the larger college and, hopefully, into the community.

Addressing Student Needs

Calling for Critical Reading

While the texts did score well in many categories, they were not perfect, and, some scores were deceiving. Summarizing and synthesizing scored extremely well across the board. Repeatedly, raters made comments such as "one of his strong suits," "information given was all relevant, clear, well broken down," and gave the texts mostly "5s" with scattered "4s." However, while these scores would look like extremely good news for the composition teacher, there was more here than the scores indicated. For books that didn't contain any references, the raters (independently) included the Bible and personal lore in the outside text, indicating that the sources the authors chose to synthesize in their works were not academic. Rather than score all of the works with "1," the raters scored how well the works synthesized the Bible and personal tales. These elements call for an increased awareness on the part of composition teachers who

may be faced with student papers explaining that "the death penalty is wrong – the Bible tells me so." It is also important to note that when external sources were included in these books, they came in bite-sized chunks, often taken to fit a context. McDowell and Hostetler pull a line from Stoner (1969) pointing out that the possibility of Jesus fulfilling the forty-eight major of the Messianic prophecies by accident is $1\text{x}10^{157}$, not mentioning that Stoner goes on to point out that there are at least 300, which would change that number dramatically (p.52). Fortunately, this was not true uniformly, as some books were faithful to original sources, including carefully citing them. Overall, however, summarizing and synthesizing presented a two-front problem.

Training for Critical Reading

Because we cannot always control what students read outside of the classroom (and, although we wish, we cannot control what they are reading for the classroom) we can at least teach them something about how to read. On one level, we want them to do the basic Composition I reading styles, the "believing and doubting games" that the focus group members mentioned. Without intelligent readings, misuse of sources and problematic synthesizing occurs. However, when teachers are asking students whose reading habits include things that not only address the personal but things that they consider eternal, they need to consider a more nuanced reading pedagogy.

There are two pedagogies that could be effective here. The first is Berthoff's (1981), who focuses on a reader-text dialogue. Critical reading, she says, should be like a conversation: "We repeat, deny, take back, restate" (p.121). And she is very specific about how to do it, including throwing out one's highlighters, so that all marking must be done by writing in the margins of the page. Reading must be done for meaning, slowly, because the reader is both anticipating what is coming next and providing the means for the meaning in the text to be made. Reading

which draws from the reader resonates back to Rosenblatt and reader-response, where readers look for personal connections with the text, although it perhaps does not go that far. Berthoffian readings in the classroom would call for very close readings by the student, doing specific line-by-line criticism. It could conceivably look like students taking a single passage of text and doing an extending reading of that passage until they have exhausted it for meaning until they understand how and why authors make the choices that they do. Then, Berthoff says, "you're not likely to have to persuade him" of the value of close reading (181, p.121). The second pedagogy that could be played is Elbow's (1968) from his seminal work "A Method for Teaching Writing." Elbow points out that there are two traditional criteria for judging writing: "Is the writing *true*?" and "Is the writing good, effective, pleasing in the sense of *'good style*?'" (p.115) But Elbow introduces a third category, and it is this category that makes this type of reading particularly effective for the Christian student: does it produce in the reader the sensation it is looking to achieve? Are the emotions, desires, energies, called up? Elbow argues that these are put in play in everyday life and yet they are commonly ignored in the classroom, and they are particularly important when discussing religious texts – particularly devotional ones – as the writer is attempting to create an emotional response in the reader, be it a call to repentance, to joy, to worship, to gratitude. Implementing Elbow's work might mean asking students to read the text multiple times, each time answering one of the three main questions. Teachers could ask students to brainstorm in small groups about the sensations that were produced by the text, or have them write an in-class freewrite about how their initial response to the text. Many adherents to Christianity hold emotional response to religious events extremely important, so teachers could have students write about experiences they have had or interview others for non-fiction essays or

biographies. The overarching purpose, then, is not to eliminate critical reading but to balance it with a more affective reading that searches for the human element in the text.

Calling for Critical Writing

Addressing the paper where a student has emphasized faith for reasoning (it is a bit of academic snobbery to say "faith over reasoning" because, for the student, faith was applied as a means of reason. Reason was not ignored in the creation of the argument – faith was the reason that the argument held together), an instructor needs to use particular care that it is the construction of the argument that is addressed and not the faith itself. Frustration with student papers that use biblical evidence or reason, both when highlighted in summary and synthesis and when used in argument is a documented issue (Smart, 2005; Downs, 2005; Anderson, 1989), and, in many cases, the instructor knows the initial response is far more intense than he or she should give to the student.

The issues presented there were similar to those expressed in the critique section. What initially appeared highly encouraging was that out of a possible ten "5s" for the "Main Thesis" point, the books earned nine "5"s and one "4." The individual thesis section scored well also. It was a good way to start the section, as it indicates that students are engaging with texts that have a clear purpose and are demonstrating that to the reader. At the outset of these texts, the arguments that they are planning to make are established in such a way that the reader does not have to find them implicitly but, as a "5" ranking states, these texts have a "clear statement of main thesis, complete and accurate to the text." However, it's important to note that, clearly identifiable or not, these thesis statements don't look exactly like teachers of Composition I might wish:

> That's what this book is about, I'll take you along as I retrace the events that led to a nearly 2-year exploration of the evidence for and against believing in Christ.

After weighing the evidence, I made my decision. But I can't make yours. That's your choice. I hope you take it seriously, because there may be more at stake than just idle curiosity. If Jesus is to be believed – and I realize that may be a big *if* for you at this point – than nothing is more important than how you respond to him.

Check out the evidence for yourself. (Strobel and Vogel, 2001, p.8)

Here Strobel sets up a thesis not as a statement of argument but as a rather blurry two-part idea, one being that he'll take the reader through his personal journey (the assumption being he will prove the argument that Christ is God and Christianity is legitimate) and the other that the reader must engage in his or her own private bildungsroman of young adult faith. While it works as a thesis for a book of exploration, it is not an effective template for a first-year composition paper thesis. And, it is paralleled in form in the other texts. All four other books set up their thesis statements as exploratory concepts about what will happen throughout the work rather than a clear statement of argument of the type anticipated in the Composition I classroom.

While the previous two concepts appeared positive on the surface, the rest of the critique section did not. The critique had a middle section of "appeals," "fallacies," and "evidence" that were scored consistently low and had several instances of disagreement between raters. In their comments, the raters said that these sections were "brimming with logical fallacies to […] pull on the heartstrings of his readers," "as often a rant as an argument," "rendered ineffectual by a weak attempt at pathos, a progressively lessening sense at ethos, […] and a disastrously flippant approach to logos." The texts were dualistic, the examples were unacademic, and the fallacies ran rampant.

The thesis issues identified in the texts should be addressed in the essential teachings of the first-year composition syllabus, as the construction of an argument is the very heart of the class. The flaws in the critique, however, may warrant more attention. The texts demonstrated an abuse of appeals, and a lack of evidence in some cases and misuse of it in others, and the

presence of logical fallacies. Together, these contributed to the production of texts that are, by the standards set by Perry, "dualistic" (Bizzell, 1984, p.153). Perry proposed that there are world views that the student-thinker moves through in becoming an intellectual: dualism, relativism, and commitment-in-relativism. Dualism is a sense of absolutes with the existence of only two options: right and wrong; relativism finds the dualistic thinker uncertain about beliefs, with too many possible and the thinker no longer able to commit to any known whatsoever; committed-in-relativism is the final sense that one may make informed judgments acknowledging that other intelligent thinkers may arrive at different conclusions. These texts operated largely under dualistic principles: the concept that there is a committed right and wrong. When discussing religious beliefs, that's not necessarily surprising; however to compose poor texts for an already reading-poor culture is not excusable under the mantle of religion.

When instructors are dealing with arguments that are lacking nuance, Hays (1983) suggests that to push an unready student into a fully developed or "committed-in-relativism" stage will only cause the student to push back further against the instructor. However, students may be encouraged to take incremental steps towards seeing possible alternative perspectives to their own. For instructors working with students whose reading of highly dualistic texts has carried over into their writing, the extra effort needs to be made to find exactly where students fall in the spectrum of understanding and to help the student move towards the final stage. This may mean tailoring a writing assignments specifically towards helping a dualistic student when the rest of the class is on a clearly relativistic assignment. Such an assignment might ask a student to read speeches given by opposing politicians on a major issue and then write an argumentative paper determining who has the better case, based on the politicians use of rhetorical tools. It is a complicated assignment because it does not allow the student to fall prey

to the candidates' arguments themselves. Rather, the student must look at the rhetoric itself while observing the two separate beliefs. It also helps the student move forward in understanding, as he or she may safely agree with a politician who would otherwise be off limits, as agreement in this case would only appear to be on a rhetorical level. Overall, the project is a safe step to relativism.

Rosenblatt (2005) writes that the "teaching of language and literature can be a potent means of nourishing the diplomatic appreciation of each human being as an individual, unobscured by any group label – racial, religious, national, social, or economic – which may be applied to him"(p.59). Each instructor enters the college classroom with certain dreams and goals about what he or she will do, some with *Stand and Deliver* fantasies and others simply planning on pushing through the graduate instructor responsibilities to pay for the degree. However, we cannot deny that in a society that is making it increasingly possible for people from all social groups to enter the classroom, we will be facing challenges from students' reading backgrounds like never before. Educators who are dedicated to seeing that any and all backgrounds are worth appreciation will be able to apply their methods – not always effectively, for not every method succeeds – but with grace, and the possibility of new plans, new ideas, and the learning that will come from them.

Chapter 7: A New Kind of Critic: A Student-Centered Model of Rhetorical Criticism

As a field of study, if Composition and Rhetoric wants to remain more than a theoretical discussion in liberal arts, we must continue to emphasize a criticism that is *real* and *relevant* to today's world. Our critical approaches must be appropriate for each and every student, regardless of belief structure. For many Christian students, college education may mean four years operating either on the outside of the educational world or lying to be safe on the inside, for their intellectual understanding is not only not always appreciated, it is often outright rejected. In an article from *The Wall Street Journal*, Ruth Wisse (2012) describes an Ivy league campus so liberal that students are supporting political campaign rallies they don't believe in to avoid censure, to sneak in under the radar of their "insulting [professors] with the smirking assurance with talk show hosts unaware that their laugh lines reap from some students the contempt that they sow" (p.A15) Though we live in an American society that preaches equality – particularly in access to education – it has become an unspoken acceptability to marginalize the Christian student. If we are to perform real, accurate rhetorical analysis, then, we must ensure that our rhetorical model makes room for this learner in particular.

Our act of criticism must begin with a particular kind of look at the artifact itself – its living existence in the present. Whether this is a moment after the words are written or a thousand years after they are transcribed, the text is never in stasis. Rather, it is fluid, constantly changing in response to the environment. It would be misleading, however, to suggest that the text and the present are discrete elements. Instead, the two are symbiotic, constantly changing and thus changing each other, intertwined, such as the double-helix strands of DNA. Together, they emphasize that meaning is made in the world – an expansive, complex, unfettered world.

Nothing exists apart from context, and context is expressed (and understood) through the lens of rhetoric and composition

Accordingly, we must look to the future of criticism, seeking to ensure our methods accommodate all students with all types of understanding. The theory I here propose attempts to reconcile elements of traditional methods with a need for *cultural* relevance. And where does cultural relevance begin? In the classroom, where students must be taught to critique texts in such a way as to empower them as critics and thinkers regardless of the works they choose to engage with and regardless of what belief structure they hold. Accordingly, I here present a model that includes several significant factors as proposed by major critics but also suggests outlets to allow for an overflow of information. I further add the new – and necessary – dimension of societal osmosis between the text and the present. Each of these factors is then addressed in terms of praxis – how we make our systems useful in the classroom through best practices. The system ensures that any student, here focused mainly on the Christian, can read and understand a text without being discounted. In brief, this chapter first discusses the theoretical and rhetorical concepts behind this new model for criticism. It then describes this model as a new and necessary pedagogy. The chapter ends with an example of how the model could be applied to a short essay on a controversial issue in order to help the reader gain new perspective and write on the topic critically and with an academic focus.

The Need for a New Model

In the 21st century, our students are being asked to interpret and internalize more messages than any of their predecessors. They text; they IM; they message; they watch the television and surf the internet. They Twitter and Facebook, getting minute by minute updates of their friends' lives. Christian students, furthermore, have an expansive increase in spoken and

written rhetorical input. They read the Bible, listen to sermons, read personal devotional and apologetic texts, and, as the survey in chapter four revealed, often engage in Bible study. As if that weren't enough, in the Composition classroom they often face short fiction, poetry, critical articles, and speeches – to say nothing of the nine to fifteen other course hours they take. The amount of information they are asked to process is historically unparalleled. As teachers, we have frequently failed to present these students with a complete model that can be used to explore multiple aspects of texts, particularly the variety they hear of oral and visual rhetorics. We walk the borderline of over-emphasizing reader response, asking students what they *think* is in the text, or we privilege historical criticism, particularly ignoring textual surface features. As Harriman (1992) suggested, "generally the canon of style remains identified with cataloging discursive forms, rather than understanding the dynamics and social experiences or the relationship between rhetorical practices and political decisions" (p. 149).   Where we could take our students to a greater understanding of themselves and the society that they exist in, the society that they may be scared to enter, we leave them doing simple thematic criticism that only scratches the surface of their potential.

Encouraging students towards this reductionist type of criticism creates two significant problems. First, by asking them to engage in a single type of criticism, we are imposing an epistemological hegemony on them. In privileging one critical act over another, we are supporting Foucault's "orders of discourse," in which we create "restrictions on who may speak, how much may be said, what may be talked about, and on what occasion" (McKerrow, 2005, p.116). Even when we assign a reader-response approach to the text, we may be preventing some students from engaging with the text as a whole, as we have not shown them other means of exploration. This is not to say that reader response is negative; as we said in chapter three,

Christian texts lend themselves strongly towards reader response and to eliminate it would be an act of silencing. However, it cannot be the only act we offer, or we will effectively prevent them from creating the types of criticism that they might want to attempt. We must offer multiple avenues to engage with the text or we become the voice of the dominant, creating a single path through which students are supposed to gain knowledge. Then, rather than opening doors to information, as should be our purpose as educators, we end up blocking students from exploring all that they can. In effect, we work against our end goals rather than for them. We become like Downs (2005), Anderson (1989), and Smart (2005), teachers who become angry with their Christian students and approach them with frustration or fear. We again wall off students from who they could be, again by not trusting their intellectual ability to engage with truly complicated and diverse methods of textual analysis.

Second, in minimizing our critical approach, we also minimize our students' ability to shape their identities in relation to texts. Although students are not always aware of how they are shaped by texts, each interaction between a text and a student presents an identity question that the student must answer. Be it a print of Blake's "The Fly" or a Youtube video of a laughing baby, texts become a part of a student's schema for understanding society, and the student's response to the text shapes his or her understanding of *self* in society. For the Christian student, all knowledge of self is ultimately said to come from a text and from an authority interpreting this text. Here, Scripture is the highest form of understanding and the ultimate source of all religious knowledge. To limit or minimize any critical approach is to reduce the possibility of religious action, not only of selfhood but of the entire religion. While I will discuss this limiting further as part of the outcome section of the critical model, it is important to note that if we encourage students to perform an incomplete act of criticism, we are allowing them only a partial

understanding of the text that then stunts their ability to understand and shape their own identities, here not only of Christian students but of all students who wish to read, critique and develop their identities.

Accordingly, we must present students with a complete model that encompasses the most prevalent elements of rhetorical criticism and the most widely accepted scholastic patterns. Christian students must be encouraged to see not only how their texts can be interpreted to fit in a larger understanding of culture but how they themselves are readers in a world that includes readers and writes of all beliefs, cultures, and politics. Accordingly, this model must not only synthesize popular practices of interpretation, it must also encourage students to see themselves as part of a dynamic humanity constantly changing through interaction with and criticism of acts of rhetoric. While such a model will never be perfect – indeed, it too must remain in flux as we seek to include the "best" elements of contemporary criticism with the accepted and established classic rhetorical theories – it is the responsibility of every educator to engage in the best practices possible for the societal and intellectual growth of our students.

<div align="center">

A New Model[32]

</div>

In seeking to synthesize the most commonly developed aspects of criticism, the new model is centered around three blocks of criticism: the context, the text, and the outcome. Each of these blocks is composed of smaller segments of information that combine to create a fuller understanding of the rhetorical act. As a whole, the model seeks to encourage students to engage in higher-order acts of criticism that will ultimately empower them as citizens and scholars.

Theories of Context

---

[32] For a complete visual diagram of this model, please see page 167

James Paul Gee (2004) argued that all acts of literacy exist in context (p. 3). There is an existent discourse in play at any moment when an act of literacy occurs, and all writing comes into being out of a particular exigency. Of the multitudes of school of literary thought there are some which to treat context as irrelevant when critically addressing a text. According to Lucaites and Condit (1999) and Barton (2008), however, the development of a literary work must occur in the contextual space. The choices made in this space are "conventions of language" Barton argues, and they are more complex than word choice issues. They are "complex connections between the use of a linguistic feature and its function and interpretation in a text or context" (p. 60). This contextual space that these choices speak to contains three elements: the culture of the work, the readers (audience) of the work, and the need for the work. Together, these three elements create a foundation on which a writer can begin to build a text and by which the writer is constrained.

The *culture* of a piece has several aspects which work in tandem with the audience to create the constraints of the situation. The easiest to define is the "action" culture – the activities and events that have shaped the situation leading up to the text. On a basic level, all of history is part of the action culture; from the earliest recorded event of human history to the second before the text is completed, each discrete moment works together to create the present. However, if we do not wish our criticism to become so voluminous as to be impossible, it is of course acceptable to deem some of these elements as unnecessary to understanding a particular text. We do not need to have read Ovid in order to understand the essence of *The DaVinci Code*. There are still many elements of the action culture that are crucial to critical analysis, however. These are the activities and events that play directly into our understanding of the events. They may be as significant as stories on the front page of *The New York Times*, or as minor as a pictorial Bible.

What is important is that together they have shaped the culture from which the text will be produced. A text that ignores or misunderstands the action culture will be unable to connect with an audience that lives within it.

A second aspect of the culture is the textual culture – the development of media and message that the audience is prepared to understand. The methods of transmitting information have developed steadily since the first person decided to preserve information through making marks. We value text as a medium for a message, but it is, in many cases, merely the medium. The author must create a text that appeals to the readers' developed understanding of the transmission of words. Jamieson (1973) describes this understanding as genre – the expectations in any given situation created by what the audience expects to hear. "Genres," she argues, "are shaped in response to a rhetor's perception of the expectations of the audience and the demands of the situation" (p. 163). All situations create specific generic constraints. Let us take a letter written by Pope Benedict XVI marking the 10th anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center as exemplary model of text in the genre. The letter, posted on the Vatican's News Portal, included the following remarks: "The tragedy of that day is compounded by the perpetrators' claim to be acting in God's name. Once again, it must be unequivocally stated that no circumstances can ever justify acts of terrorism. […] Every human life is precious in God's sight and no effort should be spared in the attempt to promote throughout the world a genuine respect for the inalienable rights and dignity of individuals and peoples everywhere." (qtd. in "Pope marks 9/11"). An understanding of the requirements of the situation aids in critically understanding the text and the audience's response to it. In the case of the attacks on September 11, the tragedy demanded both a continued call for justice for the attackers (for some have but caught but not all) and an exhortation for peace and respect between peoples. For those who had

heard the President of the United States of America's speech that same day, those generic

constraints were also upheld, as the president had reminded his listeners how soldiers, diplomats,

and intelligence workers continue to fight terrorism: "They have demonstrated that those who do

us harm cannot hide from the reach of justice, anywhere in the world" (Obama, 2011, n.p.) He

went on to say,

> And they will know that nothing can break the will of a truly United States of America. They will remember that we have overcome slavery and Civil War; bread lines and fascism; recession and riots; Communism and, yes, terrorism. They will be reminded that we are not perfect, but our democracy is durable, and that democracy -- reflecting, as it does, the imperfections of man – also gives us the opportunity to perfect our union. That is what we honor on days of national commemoration -- those aspects of the American experience that are enduring, and the determination to move forward as one people. (Obama, 2011, n.p.)

While the President's remarks look slightly different here, we see the same concept. The genre

of an anniversary speech of a tragedy – the need to express the strength for justice to continue

around the world paralleled with the celebration for the American spirit and how far justice has

come on these shores. As a religious figure, the Pope emphasized the element of God in his talk,

and, as the leader of a nation, the President emphasized his national values, yet both upheld the

constraints of the genre. Here students can see how maintaining these constraints allows the

insertion of religion to occur without the text moving away from its situated purpose or losing

the majority of its audience. The significance is that all concepts and references match the

content and the genre. As long as students understand how the elements intertwine, they are free

to carry out criticism from a variety of angles, provided they can connect their ideas back to the

underlying material. Rather than limit students such as Christians, it gives them the liberty to

pursue new avenues of criticism, provided that they are able to always stay within the evidences

provided by the texts.

Out of the culture and yet distinct from it is the *audience*. As Black (1978) argues, "criticism is concerned with humanity" (p. 5). So too is the writer. In the construction of the text, the author must understand the nature of the audience and thus form the work around it. Simultaneously, the reader is able to understand the text as it was intended through uncovering the intended audience. If it is not constructed with a thorough knowledge of those it is intended for, the text will fail to obtain its purpose. It, Park (1994) argues, "points to the final cause for which forms exists" and, it may be the judge of text's success, for Park goes on the say that its "purposefulness – or lack – that makes a piece of prose shapely and full of possibility or aimless and empty" (p.233). Understanding the audience is understanding the text.

An understanding of the audience is two-fold. For the author, the audience is first a composite of beliefs and expectations. He or she must take into consideration the audience's experiences, history, convictions, and ideals. To tailor a text around an idea or an argument without consideration for the recipients can be considered, on its own, a failure on the part of the creator. It is, in effect, shooting a bullet without knowing the direction of the target. Successful authors, convincing essayists, and popular bloggers are those who understand the composition of their audience. Such understanding must be particularly true of those writing for a Christian audience, an audience who are frequently enjoined to be discerning. The book of Hebrews, for example, calls its readers to actually *train* in the practice of discernment (Hebrews 5:14, *ESV*). Speakers, of course, must also have discernment if these listeners are the recipients of their words. Take, for example, John F. Kennedy's campaign speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association. Kennedy was seeking to be the first Catholic president of the United States, yet he was facing an audience of largely Evangelical Protestants. In order to persuade his audience – to say nothing of avoiding downright hostility – Kennedy had to first understand the

disparity of beliefs between himself and his listeners. Accordingly, Kennedy appealed to the history of his audience, reminding them of the time when Baptists did not have religious freedom in America, and calling on their love of that freedom in order to have it granted to himself. He encouraged them to look back on their own victimization and thus give credence to his appeal that "[t]oday I may be the victim, but tomorrow it may be you" (Kennedy, n.d., original speech, 1960). By invoking a historical event that was foundational to his audience, Kennedy was able to build a connection with them. Through his understanding of his listeners, Kennedy had "marshaled in defense of religious equality, cherished American principles such as separation of church and state, basic cultural truisms such as fair play and the golden rule, a revered founding father, and a powerful historical illustration" (Jamieson, 1996, p.132). Kennedy was successful because he understood who the audience was – in this circumstance both who they were historically and who they had chosen to be as Protestant Christians – and could thus speak to them as individuals, not simply as a listening body.

The second element that the reading audience and the critic must both understand is that the audience is human, containing all the elements of human emotion. They can be bored and roused, driven to sorrow or to anger, and elevated in spirit and in soul. It is to these aspects of the readers that the eloquent writer appeals, the aspects that cannot be defined by a timeline of events or a box checked on a form. It is the suggestion that a person is more than the biological sum of his or her parts. The authors who have been the most successful in moving their reading audiences are those who are the most able to connect with those audiences as humanity. Colton Burpo is not known by name to most people – but almost everyone knows the boy who claims *Heaven is for Real*. In this *New York Times* best-seller, Colton describes how he died after his appendix burst and supposedly he went to heaven, where he met deceased family members,

biblical characters, and historical figures. The emotional appeal of Colton's story – little boy saved from death, assurances of heaven – has kept the book on the bestseller list for 59 weeks. Presenting ideas such as a boy being reunited with a baby sister who died, the triumph of a young child over illness, the strength of family – these ideas speak to the good in the reader. These appeals, made to the emotions rather than the intellect, style themselves as ones that life the audience out of their own sorrows, providing hope. Such appeals emphasize the common humanity of both the creator and the audience.

The third and final element of the context is the need for the text, the situation that creates an impetus for the rhetorical act. Lauer (1980) argues that "writing, like all creating, beings with […] a sense of dissonance, an awareness of ambiguity, the urgency to know something unknown" (p.56). Theoretically, if there were no stimulus to activate a response by a rhetor, no rhetorical act would come into being. Bitzer (2005) describes stimulus or push as the *exigency* of a rhetorical situation. Bitzer argues that we view the

> rhetorical situation as a natural context of persons, events, objects, relations, and an exigence which strongly invites utterance; this invited utterance participates naturally in the situation, is in many instance necessary to the completion of situation activity, and by means of its participation with situation, obtains its meaning and its rhetorical character. (p. 61)

Understanding the concept of exigency means that we view rhetoric of any ilk – written, spoken, visual – as an act dedicated to promoting change. If a rhetor expends the energy to respond to a situation, it means that the rhetor believes the rhetorical act can produce some type of change or, at the very least, inspire those who receive it to change. The texts that we preserve throughout history as influential and enduring are those that have called for – and have produced – an

alteration in the actions of society. Whether the audience is being encouraged to relinquish the fear of annihilation or to treat their neighbors as they themselves would be treated, the rhetor acts to satisfy a need created by an exigence.

In interpreting a written, spoken, or technological piece of rhetoric, Selzer (2004) emphasizes that "rhetorical performances are an irreducible mix of text and context" (302). We cannot separate the object of the study from the elements of context which brought it into being. For the Christian student attempting to understand text, being able to identify the contextual elements that created both the exigency and the background for the written product may help create a greater understanding of what the text is and how it fits in relation to other classroom and non-classroom texts of a variety of genres. Indeed, for students coming from any marginalized background, being able to study and understand the source situation of the text can help make the text clear and help the student make decisions about how to make intelligent decisions about how to interpret the text. Understanding the nuances behind a piece of writing may help a student feel more at ease working with the writing rather than attempting to critique a faceless work backed simply by "the institution."

Theories of Text

Born out of the context, the text is composed of two parts: the writer and the reader. Together, they form the text as whole, the entity which interacts with the reading, listening, or viewing audience. Barton (2004) proposes two methods of analyzing texts – from the top-down and from the bottom-up. Top-down focuses on elements of context and exigency. Bottom-up looks at the deeper elements of the text itself, "their richer feature and associated conventions" (67). These bottom-up elements are what theories of text seek to uncover.

There are three elements of the text: the appeals, the form, and the topic. Though much of his *Rhetorica* has been discredited, Aristotle's appeals remain fundamental to modern understanding of the rhetor. Aristotle proposed three portions to the rhetor, ones that are still taught in most first-year composition classes: *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*. *Logos* is the logical appeal presented by the rhetor, *pathos* is the emotional, *ethos* the ethical. (Garver p.14). These are developed by the wordsmith, and are present in object itself. An author's logic is stagnant in discourse if it is not shared, something true of the ethics and emotion as well. Thus, we see a fundamental connection between writer and reader. If writing has no reader, it becomes meaningless.

The text as *act* itself, in addition to incorporating Aristotle's features of the writer, can also be defined by its forms, its literary elements, which appear on the exterior of the product. Jolliffe (2009) suggests four surface features that are born out of the text's claims: diction, syntax, imagery, and figurative language. A slight condensing of these last two under the term of "descriptive language" leave us with the vehicles by which the content of the text is transmitted. Without these literary styles or flourish, the information transmitted in the production of the work can become dull and lifeless.

The topic of the text is its purpose. Without content, the form and the appeals discuss nothing. Parrish (2005) emphasizes considering the content of a text and ensuring that the *how* a text was carried out is looked at differently from the *what* was in the text, a task he admits is a difficult one (42). The writer of a text must be have a clear understanding of what he or she aims to produce – the message that needs to be sent – before the appeals and forms are put into place. Without this understanding, the product will be a half-work where the lack of understanding is only superficially hidden under misused appeals and an awkward form. Understanding still does

not mean the writing will occur linearly, however. Perl (2008) explains that retrospective structuring, writing out of a sense of the missing and moving back through the writing process, is as important as projective structuring, planning on moving forward.

Each of the three elements of the act – topic, appeals, form – are crucial to having a complete rhetorical act. The text itself requires pure linguistic analysis, but the shape of the model structures it in such a way that it has guidelines. The breakdown into the three parts helps prevent extremely open-ended analysis that could lead to potentially extremely unrelated politically or religiously-bent readings while still allowing room for individual interpretation of texts.

Theories of Outcome

To understand the impact of a text, we must acknowledge that *rhetoricautens* – the discursive practice – does not only refer to the textual product of the rhetor but also to the society that develops from interaction with that product. Once a rhetorical act has been released into the world, it becomes influential.Traditionally, these would be thought of as texts bound by geography, however, with the dissemination of the internet, books on tablets and e-readers, and smart phones, rhetoric is no longer what it was – influence can come immediately and in an incredible variety of ways. For Neo-Aristotelian critics, impact is the entire purpose of the text; rhetors act in order to produce immediate effects on an immediate audience. Aristotelian rhetoric is pragmatic, and its effectiveness can only be judged against the particular historical time and place in which the rhetorical act was produced. Did a pamphlet designed to enrage Catholic voters over forced birth control engender enough anger? Did a mass mailing regarding excessive waste remind a neighborhood to recycle? As Bitzer (2005) suggested, a work of rhetoric "comes into existence for the sake of something beyond itself; it functions ultimately to

produce action or change the world, it performs some task. In short, rhetoric is a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action" (p. 60).   Bitzer's concept of rhetoric strongly reminds us of Freirian pedagogies, where it is training in discourse that changes the societies with which Freire engages. In the literacy exercises Freire (2008) carried out in Brazil, where he taught language using a series of pictures, he explained literacy development as such:

> To acquire literacy is more than to psychologically and mechanically dominate reading and writing techniques. It is to dominate these techniques in terms of consciousness; to understand what one reads and to write what one understands; it is to communicate graphically. Acquiring literacy does not involve memorizing sentences, words, or symbols – lifeless objects unconnected to an existential universe – but rather an attitude of creation and re-creation, a self-transformation producing a stance of intervention in one's context. (43)

Ultimately, Freire's students produced new selves from the rhetoric of the picture texts and their interactions with it.

Black (1978), expanding on the neo-Aristotelian model espoused by scholars like Bitzer and Wichelns, suggested that, while a rhetorical act may have implications to the immediate audience, it may also instigate changes that extend beyond the initial recipients of the message. He criticized the traditional, one-dimensional approach by arguing that " the neo-Aristotelians ignore the impact of the discourse on rhetorical conventions, its capacity for disposing an audience to expect certain ways of arguing and certain kinds of justifications in later discourses that they encounter, even on different subjects" (p. 49). Black's concept that a text could produce multiple layers of influence did several things for the understanding of the effectiveness of rhetoric. First, it suggested that the impact of a text can be more than producing an effect aimed to solve the exigency. Not only can the reader walk away with a changed understanding of the

issues discussed in the text, the reading audience will have developed new thoughts on rhetoric itself based on their interpretation of the text. Second, it suggested that the impact of a text is a vector, not a point. The text produces an effect on the readers, yes, but that effect is not limited to the time and place in which the rhetorical act occurs. Here, we must stop to note what may seem perfectly obvious: that, thanks to technology, the audience of a rhetorical act can extend far beyond the time and place in which it was produced. Be the technology as simple as the marginalia a student creates or as complex as real-time tweeting, a rhetorical act can exist far beyond its immediate moment in history. It can be read, re-read, and shared. It may be parodied, memed, satirized, made into a movie or series, or become the inspiration for an album. And, most obviously, it may be recreated and passed on. While it may seem almost redundant to mention, the expansiveness of technology was not a concept scholars always embraced. Neo-Aristotelians did not consider an audience beyond the immediate one, and Black, though he acknowledged it, sought to make excuses for it. In a modern, computerized world, where books are no longer limited to paper and ink, our audiences can extend far beyond the ones envisioned by Black and Bitzer, situating the text in a universal body of information, unbound by either time or place.

What more critics should argue for and what is, I believe, crucial to an understanding of the impact of rhetoric in the world, is that the impact on the reader is not a static, one-directional change. When a rhetorical act is produced, the recipients do not absorb the information blindly; they parse it based on the schema that they already have, both on the topic that is being discussed and their understanding of how rhetorical acts should occur. They then are left with choices – should they accept the information as agreeing with their pre-existing schema, should they reject the information as existing outside of or in opposition to their schema, or should they alter their

schemas to incorporate the new information? Regardless of how they choose, readers leave texts with a new schema for rhetorical acts, having assimilated what they have just read into their current understanding, either strengthening, weakening, or modifying their current schema. From that point on, they will judge all rhetorical acts in the context of the text they have just experienced. Their newly shaped criticism will extend into *all* rhetorical acts that they experience.

The audience, therefore, becomes – perhaps unintentionally – critics. What occurs next is the most important factor in understanding a socially-active rhetorical theory: the audience changes the text. At the point that the recipient hears or reads the rhetorical act it, as has been shown above, changes their schema. Once the audience has been changed, however, the text exists in a new audience, one that is different from the original one. The concept parallels the reading theories of Louise Rosenblatt. Rosenblatt (2005) argued that all readers have reservoirs of knowledge that they bring to each text, reservoirs filled with the linguistic knowledge they have accumulated over a lifetime. When a reader faces a text, he or she interprets the text through that material, seeing the text in a light that can only be seen in that way, by that reader. The text then is added to the reservoir. Now, neither the text nor the person will ever be the same again. Even if the members of the audience are the same people, the way that they view historical acts will forever be different. The texts and the audience are irrevocably entwined, moving forward together.

Take, for example, a student who reads the diaries of Frederick Douglass for the first time. Before she reads it, she likely has some kind of knowledge about the American Civil War, the horror of slavery and the nature of diary as genre (though she may not be able to define "genre"). Her understanding may be simple – she may be aware that the diaries were written a

man born into slavery – or it may be elaborate – she may know the time, date, and situation of their writing. Once she reads them, however, her understanding of all these things is fundamentally altered. She can now place in context one man's feelings about his world – feelings that have influenced her society for over one hundred and fifty years. She makes choices about the text, which parts of it to accept, and which to reject. She adds it to her body of knowledge about American history (either incorporating the historical information correctly or incorrectly; what matters is that information is transmitted). In effect, her schema has changed. It might have been strengthened or adapted, but it is different from what it was. Now, she is a different intellectual being. When she returns to the reading, it is with a new mind. If she discusses it with her teacher or her classmates, she is not the same contributor she was before the reading. As for the text, it exists in a fundamentally different discourse. This student will never address it as she did before and those with whom she discusses it must look at it with her interpretations taken into consideration. Though she is a single mind, she has altered the discourse in which the diaries exist.

This transformation could be compared to the double helix structure of the DNA. Each building block contains two portions, the rhetorical act and the recipient (i.e. the text and the reader). As they join, they turn back on each other, each twist influencing the block that is formed on top of it. It continues on and up, constantly building on what has come before, no segment able to exist without the segment it is built upon. When there is a change, the halves change together – it is impossible for one to be altered without the other adapting to it. Thus, the reader and the text exist co-dependently in society. As McKerrow (2005) suggested, "those […] who participate in the social structure […] are affected by – and effect – the orders of discourse by which their actions are moderated" (117). Each time the rhetorical act is addressed, it

changes and is changed, thus reshaping both itself and the world of minds. It can never be addressed twice in the same way or in the same society. It is an ever-changing discourse, fully dynamic and fluid. When students engage with texts as they become active in the world, the textual realm is a place to develop their own beliefs and become agents of change. The student may safely venture a critical response to a text, as the text, a living thing in society will respond either through those who discuss it, though the student's own continued research, or through return on information from the newly-changed linguistic reservoir. Textual analysis here, while still moderated on some level by the content of the work, helps free the student from the fear that occasionally accompanies having to perform discourse publically in the classroom.

A New Model as Praxis[33]

Simply engaging with the rhetorical act has pedagogical implications. Becoming the audience, however, is only the first level of textually-produced change in a student. In asking students to become critics, we suggest an entirely new purpose for and understanding of their classroom experience.

The value of a critical act that goes beyond reader-response is not nearly lauded enough. Criticism should not be assigned the purpose of change, either of the society or the individual. However, to say that criticism *ought not* purpose to change society is not that same as saying criticism *does not* change society. Thus, we see two understanding of the critical act: the act that intends to change society and the act that has as its byproduct the changing of society.

In 1864, poet and scholar Matthew Arnold suggested that we engage in critical practice for the improvement of the mind. Our impetus to act is the "idea of a disinterested endeavour to learn and to propagate the best that is known and thought in the world, and thus to establish a

---

[33] For an article and corresponding student-style rhetorical analysis, see pages 168-173.

current of fresh and true ideas" (1396).   For Arnold, the critic who does not seek betterment –

either of himself or of society – is not a true critic but rather a selfish intellectual wasting the gift

of the mind. Here, Arnold follows in the classic Aristotelian method, suggesting that the critic

must engage with and seek out a greater truth.

For some critics, the critical act exists solely to propagate criticism, a self-contained

argumentation. For scholars such as Zarefsky (2009) and Brockreide (1974), the most that could

be said of a critical act was that "the product of the process of confrontation by argument and

counterargument is a more dependable understanding of rhetorical experiences and of rhetoric"

(Brockreide, 1974, p. 174). Such a stance ultimately privileges the criticism and the critic as the

intellectual superior minority; however, as outsiders we may recognize scholarship of this kind

as stagnating within the ivory tower. Criticism that does not claim to impact society can have

little purpose except knowledge for knowledge's sake.

And yet, arguing that criticism does not have in mind the goal of societal change does not

answer for the fact that criticism – through its very creation – effects change. Here, we must

return to our double-helix example. Just as the student is influenced by becoming an audience of

the text, so the student must adapt her schema through performing the critical act. In the

performance of the act itself – the thinking, writing, interpreting process – the student increases

his internal body of knowledge and expands his repertoire of interpretive skills and tools.

Through the act itself, the student continues her understanding of herself as an intellectual, and

either improves her self-image (if the critical act is successful and if it meets with praise from the

instructor) or becomes discouraged about himself as an academic (if the critical act is a "failure"

and meets with censure from the instructor). Whichever self-image the student carries out of the

literacy classroom will affect her other academic endeavors and, unless she compartmentalizes

her conceptualizations of herself according to her different life circles, it will influence other areas of her life – social, romantic, religious, etc. Self-identification is where we see this model operating as a unifying force simply as a model before the elements are unpacked. The increased understanding of oneself as an intellectual and a Christian, accepted by the academy and the church is the goal instructors can hope to reach of increasing student self-image and deliminalizing without sacrificing academic performance.

While it is one thing to suggest that engaging with a text as critic will impact a student, it is another thing to suggest a model for such change. This model particularly functions as a cross-curricular model that allows students to situate their acts of criticism in the larger world of their education and prevents their academic work from becoming the one-dimensional act suggested by Fish et al. Furthermore, this model is designed to ensure that marginalized voices are able to speak. While Christian students were the governing idea behind the model's development, it allows any voice that finds itself on the edge to emphasize its own critical analysis without becoming silenced.

Why Context?

In encouraging students to engage with the context of a rhetorical act, we are helping them gain a larger understanding of the interconnectedness of history, a pattern where the church has played a massive role alongside the secular world in keeping texts alive. If students can see how a rhetorical act comes into being simultaneously with (at the very least; it would be more correct to say "because of") a situational exigency, it may become clearer to them how our history is developed of interwoven patterns of thought and activity. The student who studies the background of *Roe v. Wade* gains a greater awareness of the specific needs of society and learns to make judgments about those needs as met or unmet by the case. Here is the concept of a

liberal arts education in practice: that knowledge exists not in a vacuum but as a web of ideas, proofs, logics, and events that depend upon each other for relevance and application.

In training students to think of knowledge as composed of parts, McGee argues, making them "inventors" who interpret the meanings of the fragments of information that go into a text. (McKerrow, 2005, p.131). By suggesting that historical events can have an impact on a persuasive argument, we ask them to envision connections that are not explicitly stated and which, arguably, can never be exhausted. In engaging in the practice of creating connections, we are encouraging students to higher order levels of thinking that take them past route sets of textbook answers. We take the basic ideas of ownership that come from a creative or technological creation and expand them to grant students the identity of the "academic" – something many students don't believe they can (or should) maintain, especially as many students have been told that "academic" equates with liberal, an idea they might consider negative. Furthermore, we are asking them to make the types of inferential leaps that we as critics make constantly. These are not "safe" tasks for students – they are not multiple choice answers that can be marked correct or incorrect. They ask students to draw conclusions that are not explicitly stated for them beforehand and which may be uncomfortable for them to make – conclusions that nationally-implemented standardized testing does not look for. If we ask students to consider that history begets communication, we could teach them to see their media-saturated world in an entirely new way – as the end (but not final) result of millennia of human communication.

Why Text?

The dual nature of text – a combination of both act and author – offers students a variety of interactive methods. In viewing texts as formalists, students can see how we use elements of

literature to shape and emphasize meaning. Through patterns they are likely already familiar

with using from pre-college writing courses (such as metaphor, parallelism, imagery, etc), and

for Christian students, multi-genric texts such as the Bible, even if they are not cognizant of their

usage, students can make connections between the artistic and the scientific purpose of rhetoric.

They may be able to, Rosteck (2009) suggests, situate rhetoric as a *practical* art that lends

credence to both the relevance of art in society and the need for skilled argumentative methods.

Furthermore, formalist criticism encourages them to understand the intricacies of their own

language, one which is becoming increasingly streamlined and less, as Zarfesky (2009) argues,

artistic with each passing decade. In a text-messaging society that encourages communication

distilled down to its most basic form (u no wati mean?), taking time to understand the intricacies

of symbolic language may be a means of preserving the beauty of English for another

generation.[34]

On an interpersonal level – a level of social development and awareness – this dichotomy

encourages students to be aware that words come from people and do not merely exist in the

void space of modern technology. More and more frequently our society engages with texts that

have seemingly become independent of an author. Our students post anonymously on blogs and

web pages, read information columns without authors, and accept as truth pieces of information

that stem from possibly unreliable sources. Online writing becomes incarnate in everything from

cyberbullying to composition papers that cite Wikipedia and *Bad Catholic*, a top Christian blog.

In tying a text to an author, we are taking steps to encourage textual responsibility, to add a face

and a name to the abyss of information from which students draw. Furthermore, we are

---

[34] Note that this is not an attack against text messaging or an attack on the "new" English created
by a world replete with the language of technology. This is a method of understanding one that
could be applied to everything from a Shakespearean sonnet to webcomic dialogue.

hopefully heightening their awareness of their own connections to the texts that they produce. If

a rhetorical act studied in first-year composition can identify the patterns of an author, is it

impossible to suggest that students could develop their own styles of writing and learn to take

pride in their work? Adding the human element to textual production has the possibility to help

students reclaim the act of authorship as pride and ownership in a truly thoughtful text – a

concept that may be slowly fading into an electronic age.

If we can encourage students to make the connection between person and text, we open

up the possibility of engaging them in what Foucault calls the "discourse of freedom" (qtd. in

McKerrow, 2005, p. 116-119). Asking students to build these connections grants them voices as

critics by making vulnerable figures of authority that they may never have been asked to

question. In encouraging a student to see how the characteristics of a writer – the beliefs, biases,

and situations that helped shape the act of writing – we suggest to students that the established

discourse is not above scrutiny. If we tell students to look critically at the health care bills of

President Obama, we are not only suggesting to them that the president is not above reproach but

that they possess the critical minds to question him (or, possibly someday, her), practices that are

fundamental to a working democracy. In doing so, we overturn any dominant discourse that

seeks to silence reproach. We empower students to become questioning minds that will hold

both themselves and established authority to standards of openness and responsibility.

Why Outcome?

In asking students to look at the results of composition acts, we are asserting history as a

causal activity. The release of the practical art of writing is world-altering, and in teaching this

model we show students that words have power. If we can convey that point, we may make

understand both that intellectual actions have repercussions and that every

compositionistchanges society – and may use that change to impact society for the better. Christian students who feel marginalized may come to see that they not only have the ability to think critically about those who are attempting to silence their voices but also that they have the right to speak back, both verbally and in their writing.

By suggesting to students the infinitely intertwining model of text and audience, we may create an awareness of student-as-audience. If the model holds true for the originally intended readers and has the possibility of solving the immediate exigency, it must hold true for the readers removed through time and space – the ones the author did not imagine. In fact, one might argue that it is even more influential, given the developed perspective that society has granted. When we ask students to treat themselves as audience, we ask them to synthesize several pieces of information that expand on their critical thinking skills, especially if we have applied the entire model as a series of intellectual steps. They must distinguish themselves from the original context and determine the points of connection and dissonance, interpret the text, and then attempt to understand the outcome of the text as it bears upon them as the modern audience. In doing so, they place themselves in a larger historical context, situating their moment in time as one in a series of the infinite moments that make up human history. Their understanding of writing has brought them into contact with the larger intellectual patterns and practices of society. They have brought themselves and their cultural specifics and Christians into society and demonstrated their right to belong in this space and this time.

In addition to helping them become audience, interactions with textual outcome further develop students-as-critics. As the outcome paradigm suggests, texts are living things that grow and respond to the society around them. When students come to texts as critics, they are exploring the ideas that will become building blocks to their intellectual development.

Furthermore, they are contributing to the history of ideas that becomes the thought culture of their society. Wrage (2005) claims that these intellectual activities:

> [m]ay result in ideas which clarify [man's] relationships with his fellow men and to the cosmos, or in ideas which close minds against further exploration in favor of blind conformity to tradition and authority. It is axiomatic that the extant records of man's responses to the social and physical world as expressed in formulations of thought provide an approach to a study of the history of his culture. Whether we seek explanations for an overt act of human behavior in the genesis and moral compulsion of an idea, or whether we accept the view that men seek out ideas which promote their interests and justify their activities, the illuminating fact is that in either case the study of ideas provides an index to the history of man's values and goals, his hopes and fears, his aspirations and negations, to what he considers expedient or inapplicable. (28)
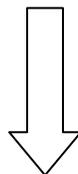
The sooner we can encourage students to see themselves as contributors to a larger body of knowledge, the sooner we can empower them to value themselves as crucial donors to the discourses with which they wish to associate. Granting them the right to contribute grants empowerment, not only as we open students to the possibility of contributing to discourse but to the suggestion that they might change its direction entirely; criticism becomes a transformative activity both as it changes students, it changes the text, and it changes the dominant discourse. Christian students must be encouraged to see themselves as completely empowered, able to transform any discourse that they are part of, equally of a voice with their peers and classmates. Their ability to manipulate discourse, to create change in the world they are in grants them equal rights and moves them off of the margins and into the mainstream society,

There have been, without question, several models for rhetorical criticism far more developed and nuanced than this one, each seeking to serve a different purpose. This model separates itself from others in that it seeks to find a space for a group that other models might have unintentionally left behind. Christian students are part of a group of many students who find themselves disenfranchised in first-year composition classrooms. If we cannot create a rhetorical model that encourages our students to see themselves as thinkers in a larger world that

empowers them to carry out their own critical acts, we have failed as educators. At the end of her article on higher education, Wisse (2012) described a campus that allowed for free thinkers, but then lamented, "The pity is that, so far, students who desire such a campus will have to work for its transformation on their own" (p.A15). It is my hope that this model, though it is but a step into the larger field, breaks ground for the formation of newer – and, hopefully, widely implemented – pedagogically-based methods of rhetorical criticism, the kind that can change not simply first year composition classrooms, but entire universities.

Addendum A: The Visual Model

CONTEXT

Audience		Culture		Exigency

syntax

diction

descriptive
language

TEXT

logos

pathos

ethos

OUTCOME

Text
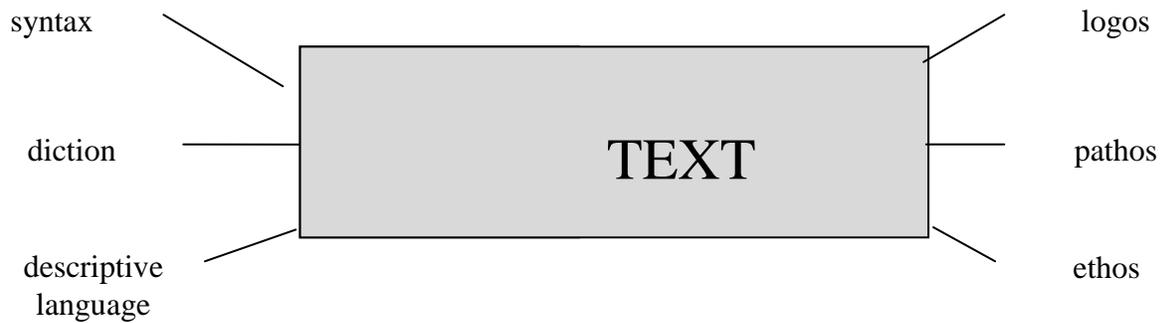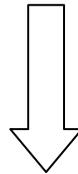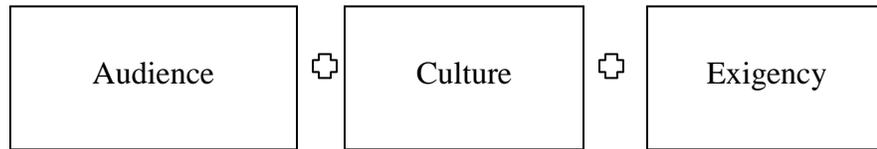
Audience
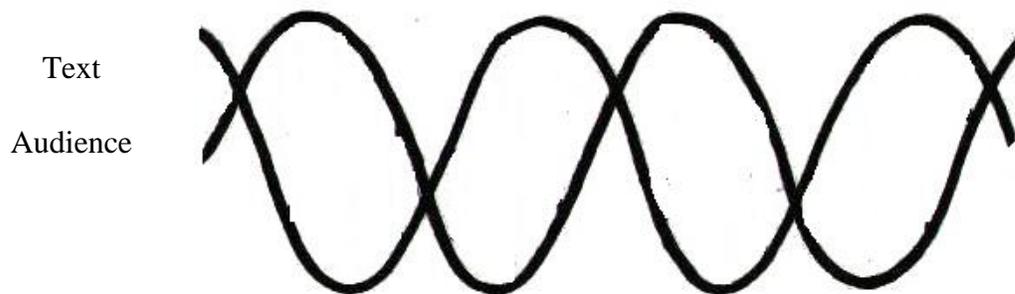
Addendum B: Article for Sample Student-Style Rhetorical Analysis

"Notre Dame sues Obama: Is their religion a faith or an excuse?"

DagneyVelazquz, May 25, 2012

Notre Dame is leading the charge in suing the Obama administration over the health care mandate requiring that employers' health care insurance cover birth control. They claim that the mandate infringes on their religious freedom guaranteed in the constitution.

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

They are the first words in the Bill of rights. I am no constitutional expert, but I can see where they would leave room for interpretation. What does "free exercise" mean? How far can it go?

It was intended to keep the government from getting involved in religion and vice versa, but what do we do when these two worlds cross? When a religious organization buys property, must it abide by all the laws that apply to other property owners? The taxes and codes associated with property fall under the authority of government, but would restricting the legal use of property be prohibiting free exercise of religion? On the other hand, how might allowing free reign to all religious organizations trample the rights of others? And does a religious organization need to be allowed to do anything it wants in order to exercise freely? Do these words mean that anything goes?

This has always been and will probably continue to be debated, but it is disturbing how often religious authorities use the shield of religion and faith to hide their own self-serving purposes, to wield power, or to oppress others. Not all religious people do this, in fact many are sincere in their faith that inspires them to good deeds. When some people's use of religion costs others, though, a line must be drawn.

It makes no sense, for example, that clerics do not pay the same in income taxes as the rest of the country. A minister does not have to pay tax on the portion of income used for housing, which includes rent or mortgage, utilities, furnishings, and all household items. This means that often half of their income is not taxed, and yet they still benefit from all those services paid for by all our taxes. How is it right that our tax dollars are subsidizing the clergy?

Labor laws, intended to ensure equity and justice in the workplace, hold religious organizations to a lower standard. Sex and race discrimination that are penalized elsewhere must be overlooked in faith-based organizations, as people use religion as an excuse for their bigotry. The government won't touch that.

But when religious organizations move out of their private sphere and into the world of education, medicine, and commerce, is it unreasonable that they must submit to the authority that governs these spheres? No, in fact we recognize in so many ways that this is reasonable. Religious schools must meet certain standards to be accredited. Hospitals must follow health codes. Churches must charge sales tax on commodities sold.

And so why, if the government requires specific minimum standards for health care insurance, standards set for the good of public health, would it not apply to all employers choosing to operate in the sphere of employer-employee relations? It may have been religious fervor that inspired the building of a hospital, but its existence is not necessary for the free exercise of religion. A high-minded faithful person may have felt called by God to start a university, but its parent organization does not require its continuance to practice its faith. Therefore, they fall under the regulation that any other organization would fall under, including laws that we all must follow for the good of society and for justice for all.

Over half of the states in our country already require that any health care insurer that covers prescription drugs include contraceptives in the coverage. This is nothing new, and the laws were created with public health in mind. If private citizens believe this shouldn't be required and want to do away with the laws, then they may. But it is time to stop hiding behind religion to dominate over others, and it is time that we stop catering to that behavior. Freedom of religion does not apply.

Addendum C: Sample Student-Style Rhetorical Analysis
Rhetorical Analysis: "Notre Dame sues Obama: Is their religion a faith or an excuse"

Election day is less than a month away, and every last move candidates make is under fire. President Obama's health care plan, instituted earlier in 2012, has become a central topic in the fight as voters from both parties have found reasons to take issue with it. In a May article from Examiner.com, an online extension of the Kansas City Examiner, Dagney Velazquez approaches the provision of the bill that requires institutions to offer birth-control as part of their insurance's health care plans. Instead of targeting the president, however, Velazquez turns her gaze to the church and argues that it's time for them to stop "hiding behind religion" and instead live a real faith in the real world. Although Velazquez uses excessively strong and unnecessarily aggressive text, her understanding of context and evidence in the outcome suggests that her work will be successful as a rhetorical object.

In "Notre Dame sues Obama: Is their religion a faith or an excuse?", Velazquez understands the context and plays to it well. The exigency of the article is the forcing of the provision of birth control, and the author covers it briefly, just enough to focus on the main information driving the piece, the lawsuit Notre Dame is waging against the president. By doing this, the author is indicating an understanding of the nuances of the current situation, and what the readers already know and what they don't know yet. They don't need to hear more about the law, but they do need to hear more about the lawsuit. The action culture of the article – the events leading up to it are part of the exigency, but the textual culture is developed in Velazquez's discussion of the political texts that shape our nation. In referencing important documents like the Bill of Rights, she is attempting to point out to the readers that the foundational writings of the country suggest that the church may be overstepping its boundaries in this issue. By bringing up works like these at the very beginning, the author is establishing a baseline of who America is and what Americans stand for, an excellent move for the rest of the article.

In terms of audience, the final part of context, Velazquez is playing to a group of people who have certain characteristics. We know that they are internet users, and they are the kind of people that would follow an editorial blog from a newspaper. They are also interested in politics and/or religion. Given that information, we can assume they are familiar with the conventions of a blog that includes extremely opinionated stances, occasionally offensive phrasing – yet not

inappropriate – and dramatic writing. They also expect good, well-supported writing, as the blogs they follow are likely tied to sources like the Huffington Post or Slate. Velazquez does not disappoint here. While her writing skates the border of a rant once or twice, it is well ordered, well thought-through, and well written. Her tone is dramatic, keeping the piece engaging, and she leaves the reader with the sense of a very clear purpose. Her audience should walk away quite satisfied.

While the context of the work suggests an overall successful piece, the text itself presents some issues. Velazquez opens the piece innocuously enough, explaining what the background for the article is. Once that has been completed, however, she turns on the attack. She runs an entire paragraph with slightly rhetorical questions designed to suggest that religious organizations are abusing governmental rights. Within those questions are mingled a few that are legitimately correct, making the entire list seem even more extreme, and give the following paragraphs increased leeway to attack religion, which Velazquez does with vigor. Her diction is extremely incendiary, as she accuses churches of having "self-serving purposes" and suggests they "oppress" others. To placate anyone who might accuse her of ignoring the true religious who desire to do good and improve the world, she drops in a sentence honoring some who have genuine service, but then she goes right back to attacking the general church (ie everybody else religious). The intensity with which she flings barbs at the church hurts her cause. As she ends her paper, she tells her readers, "it is time to stop hiding behind religion to dominate over others, and it is time that we stop catering to that behavior." The descriptive language used here suggests an angry parent to a wayward teenager, or – even more intensively – a government to a rebellion. This is a poor choice. Velazquez is addressing an incredibly sensitive issue, one in which both sides have legitimate cases to make. To come out to intensely, almost offensively, in terms of language is inappropriate, especially when there are so many other effective things in the article, especially the use of logos. The article is outlined in an extremely logical and intelligent way. The discussion of clerics, an often ignored (possibly because it is unknown) concept, explained the complicated concept of taxes extremely because it was a concrete example, and the use of that and other examples allowed for the ethical appeal: "How is it right that our tax dollars are subsidizing the clergy?" These and other questions are raised through example in the text, but they are overshadowed by the anger in the language itself.

Finally came the outcome of the text. My personal response to the text was mixed. While I was a bit taken back by the language, I did in general follow her premise that unnecessary attention is given to the church, compliments of her logical analysis and background information. However, as I based that against what I know, I decided that it is not that attention is given now, but that attention would be given if the birth control laws were extended past the one year mark. In essence, I put two more links on my double helix of understanding this article. But it wasn't my response alone that supported a positive outcome for this text. The majority of the comments posted beneath the article indicated that Velazquez's readers also agreed with her work. Pointing out her concepts of bigotry, Chicagogirl2201 commented, "Everywhere but the church we get slammed for judging people. You're right – that's just not okay." MountainMike said that "absoultely! [sic] i don't need birth control but if I have to pay for it in the plan in order to get my plan, then everyone should. just because youre in one part of the church doesnt get you a free pass." When some readers didn't entirely agree, others picked up Velazquez's cause for her. JJBills said, "While I appreciate that you want the government to treat all people equally which, we hope, is the American way (though this election is proving is perhaps not the case), your isolated attack on the church suggests that you don't believe in the separation of church and state. The state works to not make a practice of forcing action on conscientious objectors, and yet here you are using the bigotry you accuse the church of! Let's say that you are right and the clergy should pay more taxes (although that is a completely irrelevant point), but that is not a point of moral dissent. How can you ask someone to do something they believe is wrong and say it's okay because the government wants them to do it? How does that fit in with your own questions: 'What does "free exercise" mean? How far can it go?'" Answer: It doesn't." However, Velazquez had incoming support. DemismLA responded to JJBills lengthy post quite simply by saying, "The state operates based on the moral beliefs of the many. It's how we set laws that a nation can operate by. Don't like it? Move to Canada and let the government deal with handing out the birth care."

Overall, the content and outcome suggested that "Notre Dame sues Obama" was an effective piece of rhetoric. While I didn't necessarily agree with what Velazquez had to say, I could clearly see how she took her information and used her knowledge of the current situation, the general audience, and pre-existing documents to shore up her ideas. Her argumentation made sense, and the outcome indicated that many people followed her thought pattern. I'm not going

to change what I believe about the birth control laws; however, from the article, I do see that there is not enough open dialogue being carried on about it. People need to talk about the issue and know what other people are saying. Unless there is a space where everyone can hear everyone else out and listen to intelligent thought, there will only be confusion and bigotry.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

It is no easy thing for a Christian young adult to read a book that is written with divine inspiration. The book may tell the teenager that God is a triune being with aspects of power, love, and omnipresence manifested in three difference persons – a massive concept that the greatest theologians of all time have wrestled with – and yet the book presents it to an eighteen-year-old year old whose entire training in philosophy is from a unit on ancient Greece in a high school history class. Yet these are the kind of books that Christian young adults are reading. Whether these are in their apologetic or their devotional form, these texts present exceptional concepts that teenagers are not shying away from as they enter the university. The results of the survey of this study as well as publication figures indicate that Christian books for young adults are being read in vast numbers despite the theological difficulty of the content. Students are engaging issues like exploring the divinity of Jesus (*A Case for Christ),* developing a Christian lifestyle *(Blue Like Jazz)*, and facing the arguments against Christianity *(Don't Check Your Brains at the Door),* all in books from this study, in addition to hundreds of others on the Christian book market. While the content is impressively difficult, the writing is directed to the student, and the genre is flourishing with these readers.

As these students enter the college classroom, there has been some tension with professors as their writing may fall short in argumentation. However, remembering the difficulty of the texts that these students read may help keep instructors from "giving up" on students and instead apply methods to aid students in developing solid academic writing skills, something that teachers should do for all students in the first-year composition classroom.

One significant place that these students may benefit is when engaging in group writing. Collaboration is a place for students to gain voices as individuals through the confidence they

gain in peer interaction. The majority of colleges offer organizations for Christian students to meet together and spend time with their religious social group (although some schools, such as Vanderbilt, have shut down Christian organizations limiting membership to Christian students[Smietana, 2012, March 27], and others, including campuses of the Universities of California, North Carolina, and Buffalo [Smietana, 2012, March 2] have all had – or are currently taking – issue with these organizations); and in the first-year composition classroom, they have forced interaction with students of different backgrounds. Forced or not, collaborative writing is universally accepted to be an effective writing tool (Reither&Vipond, 1989; Yancey & Spooner, 1998; Wolfe, 2010). It allows students to receive feedback on their work; it helps them take ownership of their writing; it helps develop a sense of self-as-writer. It also, as Bruffee (1973) points out, supports the transition students are attempting to make towards a college identity: "gaining new awareness of any kind is likely to be a painful process. People need some kind of support while undergoing it. And the evidence provided by collaborative activity in the society at large suggest that people can gain both awareness and support as adequately in a small group of their peers, as from the ministrations of a teacher" (640). By engaging with peers in the academic process, students are gaining support through the witnessing of others who are experiencing that same transition from high school to college. The discussions of classwork and the off-topic talk that inevitably comes up helps integrate the student into the university culture without ever directly addressing the transition. And, even if these students do not interact with their writing groups outside of the classroom, they have had a chance to be confident in the non-religious university which hopefully may counteract having their "faith […] chewed up at secular schools"(Thomas, 2012). We must make space for this talk and allow students to

interact. This will allow not only these students, but all students who find themselves marginalized to build connections in the university.

Christian students also bring to the classroom a sense of morals that has been slipping out of academia. Though it sounds slightly old-fashioned, the texts that these students are reading encourage the behaviors that teachers want students to mimic but often do not spend class time training their students to engage in (or not engage in). As we look at the overall classroom, we do not want our students to lie, yet the number of "family emergencies" requiring the student to miss class seems to increase every semester. We do not want them to cheat, but the incidence of copied papers is impressively high. We want them to pay attention in class, to be respectful when the teacher is talking or a classmate is presenting, to arrive on time – yet those are often all wishes, not realities. However, the books that these students are reading encourage these kinds of behaviors: being honest, respectful, and kind. Biblical teaching calls for a life that mimics Jesus, and, many people, religious or not, will agree that Jesus lived a good life, caring for people, providing for those in need, and imparting wisdom and knowledge. If students reading these books are actually acting out these lives in the classroom, there will be a partial shift towards a teaching environment where good, honest learning can be done. And, if modeling occurs where other students see this behavior and copy it, there may be entire classrooms of ethical behavior, making writing instruction much easier on the instructor and much more effective for both teacher and student.

For those of us who teach, we must encourage students to remain highly aware of their voices as Christian students in a secular classroom, conforming to the requirements of the first-year composition class and understanding why those are important and appropriate without losing an understanding of their own belief structure. The two must be made somehow to

synthesize, and that requires a great deal of metacognitive focus on the part of the student.

Shaughnessy discusses the difficulty of remaining aware in the complex writing act:

> As the complexity of writing tasks increase and the student pushes deeper into his ideas, the ability to make conceptual maps of where he is going or where he has been becomes an essential skill. It is a difficult skill to isolate for the purposes of instruction. Indeed, it is doubtless related to the processes of intellectual maturation in ways that are beyond the control of the student himself. Just as sentences appear to "grow up" along with the children who use them, so probably do ideas. But writing is a skill that involves a highly self-conscious use of our linguistic and intellectual resources. It demands from the writer a sustained accountability for his thoughts: he must stay with his points or depart from them in ways that make sense to his readers; he must recognize his commitments to explain or illustrate or prove; he must observe proportional he must, in short, keep track of where he has been and look forward to where he is going or risk losing both his line of thought and his reader. (p.249-250)

As Christian students in their writing acts must know where the product has come from and where is it going, the teacher must help the student see where in the academic process he or she has come from, how far they have progressed into learning academic rules without losing the beliefs that make them unique. We must let them know that they have retained their voices and yet have made the inroads into academia that their peers have, the ones that are crucial to a college education. And, if they have not, we need to use this discussion of progress as a time to explain – in a constructive way – that, while the progress made is important, there is more that needs to be done.

Part of this guidance involves helping the student overcome any argumentative struggles that may be problematic in nature. Christian students, as all students, must be taught the basic building blocks of a critical paper: how to summarize a source, how to find the strong and weak points, how to apply knowledge of fallacies, of appeals, of the questions the reader has been trained to ask, how to write a strong thesis statement. All of those elements must go into the writing education of Christian students, as with all students. These students must also understand how their knowledge of biblical teachings is a help, not a hindrance. While the Bible

cannot be applied as a "this is wrong because it clashes with the moral codes of my religion," it can be applied as an appeal to a socially understood text. The student's strength as a frequent reader of difficult texts in a variety of genres can be drawn out, and his or her understanding of textually-based speeches or lectures can be appealed to for analysis of readings. The strengths that the Christian student has must be understood and brought to the surface to encourage the student in his or her ability to operate at a college level and to offset any discouragement that might accompany instruction in areas of writing weakness.

As a reader of unique texts, designed specifically for someone in her belief set, the Christian reader is a special student in the first-year composition classroom. She has likely read more non-fiction than her peers and listened to more speakers talk on arguments and theory. She has lived in a specific discourse built entirely on a text and an idea. Although she does not know how any of these things are quantified, she knows that these make up who she is, and, she believes knows that the secular classroom is going to try and change that. For those of us who are teachers, it is our job to make sure that none of that is changed, as that is the essence of who she is. What we must do is build on those things. A history of reading and listening to texts is an incredible gift to hand to a teacher who wants to train a student in argumentative reading and writing. Even if the student has been trained in the wrong way, the genre has already been established, unlike many other students who may have no idea how an argument should exist and for what purpose. Accordingly, teachers must give them what Rose (1989) calls for in his book for students who come from the outside of the acceptable social group:

> Students need more opportunities to write about what they're learning and guidance in the techniques and conventions of that writing […] They need more opportunities to develop writing strategies that are an intimate part of academic inquiry and what has come to be called critical literacy – comparing, synthesizing, analyzing […] They need opportunities to talk about what they're learning: to test ideas, reveal their assumptions, talk through the places where new knowledge clashes with ingrained belief. (p.193-194)

If we as teachers both teach the core of first-year composition, ensuring that all students are writing, pushing the heart of our argumentation, but also include chances for dialogue – possibly through group work, as mentioned above, or through class discussion, conferences, or other methods – we may allow Christian students to truly excel.

In the end, we hope for a class of readers and writers where no one is marginalized and all are able to engage in texts and assignments. I believe that we must look past the surface goals of the class – past the writing requirements – and ask ourselves if there is something more that we want students to walk away with. Do we want them to understand the college system better? To make the transition from childhood to adulthood? Do we want them to develop the sense of identity that has been poking up at the surface of their minds all through high school? There is something more to our job than simply training students in the proper placement of an essay map, as we are the gateway between high school and college, and we meet students at a crucial part of their development as people, a part where they must decide who they are – partiers, athletes, scholars, artists, gamers, frat members. Our interaction in their lives, simply by being the teacher with the best knowledge of who they are, compliments of a small class size, conferences, and papers, is going to change how they look at that development, even if we are not trying to play an active role. Perhaps the best way to educate is proposed by hooks (1994):

> To educate as the practice of freedom is a way of teaching that anyone can learn. That learning process comes easiest to those of us who teach who also believe that there is an aspect of our vocation that is sacred, who believe that our work is not merely to share information but to share in the intellectual and spiritual growth of our students. To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin. (p.13)

Christian students come to the classroom with their reading and writing patterns established. From the books they have read and the experiences they have had, they bring a preconceived

notion of what the first-year composition classroom is like. As teachers, we must ensure that our personal biases play no part in our interactions with these students. Rather, we must build on the knowledge they have, drawing from their experiences with texts while shaping their understanding of acceptable argumentative strategies. If we can help students remain true to the tenets of their faith while still becoming fluid academic writers, we have done our jobs and truly fulfilled our duty as educators.

References

Airasian, P. (2005). *Classroom assessment concepts and applications* (5th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Anderson, C. (1989). The description of embarrassment: When students write about religion. *ADE Bulletin(94)*, 12-15.

"Arkansas demographics."(2012). *Altus directory*. Retrieved May 31, 2012, from http://www.altiusdirectory.com/Travel/arkansas-demographics.php

Arnold, M. (2008).The function of criticism at the present time. In M.H. Abrams (Ed.), *The Norton anthology of English literature* (8th ed.) (pp.1393-1399). New York: Norton.

Arthur, K. (1994). *Beloved*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

Association of Religious Data Archives.(2008). *Religious preference over time.* [chart]. Retrieved September 14, 2012, from http://www.thearda.com/quickstats/qs_101_t.asp

Atkin, A. (2010, November 15). Peirce's theory of signs.InE. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.*Retrieved June 29, 2012, from http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/peirce-semiotics

Barton, E. (2004). Linguistic discourse analysis: How the language in text works. In C. Bazerman& P. Prior, *What writing does and how it does it* (pp. 57-82). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Bazerman, C. (1980). Relationship between reading and writing: the conversational model. *College English,41*(6), 656-661.

Behrens, L., & Rosen, R. (2011).*Writing and reading across the curriculum* (4th ed).Longman. Glenview, IL: Pearson.

Berlin, J. (1982). Contemporary composition: The major pedagogical theories. *College English, 44*(8),765-777.

Berlin, J. (1988). Rhetoric and ideology in the writing class.*College English, 50*(5),477-494.

Berthoff, A. (1981). *The making of meaning: Metaphors, models, and maxims for writing teachers.* Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook Publisher Ltd.
Bevere, J. (2004). *The bait of Satan: Living free from the deadly trap of offense*. Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House.

Bitzer, L. (2005) "The rhetorical situation." In C. Burgchardt (Ed.), Readings in rhetorical criticism (pp. 57-87). Pennsylvania: Strata Publishing.

Bizzell, P. (1984). What happens when basic writers come to college? *College Composition and Communication, 37*(3), 294-301.

Black, E. (1978). *Rhetorical criticism*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.

Brockreide, W. (1974).Rhetorical criticism as argument.*The Quarterly Journal of Speech,6*(2),165-174.

Britton, J., Burgess, T., Martin, N., McLeod, A., & Rosen, H. (1977).*The development of writing abilities (11-18).*London: Macmillan Education Ltd.

Bruffee, K. (1973) .Collaborative learning: Some practical models.*College English, 34*(5), 634-643.

Bullock, R., Goggin, M., & Weinberg, F. (2009).*The Norton field guide to writing* (2nd ed.). New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Burke, K. (1974). *The Philosophy of literary form* (3rd ed.). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Chan, F. (2008). *Crazy love: Overwhelmed by a relentless god.* Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook.

Clare, A. (2012). *A critical analysis of "covering theology" with particular reference to John Bevere's Under Cover.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Wales, Trinity St. David.

Collegiate Devotional Bible.(1998). Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House.

Corbett, E.P.J., & Connors, R.J. (1999).*Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student* (4[th]ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Curtis, B., &Eldredge, J. (1997).*The Sacred Romance.*Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

Cushman, E. (1996). The rhetorician as an agent of social change.*College Composition and Communication, 47*(1),7-28.

Dart, J. (2002, September 25). "Beam me up theology": The debate over *Left Behind.The Christian Century.* Retrieved June 29, 2012, from http://www.christiancentury.org/article/2002-09/beam-me-theology

Dean, T. (1989).Multicultural classrooms, monoculturalteachers.*College Composition and Communication, 44*(1), 23-27.

Dewey, J., & Bentley A. (1949).*Knowing and the known*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Downs, D. (2005). True believers, real scholars, and real true believing scholars: Discourses of inquiry and affirmation in the composition classroom. In E. Vander Lei and b. l. kyburz (Eds.), *Negotiating religious faith in the composition classroom* (pp. 39-55). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.

Eccarius, M. (2001). Rubric development to assess student learning through asynchronous discussion board. *Quarterly Review of Distance Education¸ 12*(4), 265-268.

Elbow, P. (1968).A method for teaching writing.*College English, 30*(2),115-125.

Elshtain, J. B. (2001). Faith of our fathers and mothers: Religious belief and American democracy. In A. al-Hibri, J. B. Elshtain, & C. Haynes (Eds.), *Religion in American public life: Living with our deepest differences* (pp. 39-61)*.* New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Episcopal Church USA. (1989). *The Book of Common Prayer* 1979 version. New York: Church Publishing Incorporating.

Fink, A. (2006). *How to conduct surveys* (3rd ed.). London: Sage Publications.

Fitzgerald, L. (2005). Torah U'Madda: Institutional "mission" and composition instruction. In E. Vander Lei and b. l. kyburz (Eds.), *Negotiating religious faith in the composition classroom* (pp.141-154). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.

Flower, L. (2009).Writing for an audience. In P. Eschholz, A. Rosa, & V. Clark (Eds.), *Language Awareness: Readings for College Writers* (10th ed.) (pp.107-111). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Foster, R.J. (1998). *Streams of living water.*San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

Freire, P. (2008). *Education for critical consciousness.*London: Continuum.

Garver, E. (1994). *Aristotle's Rhetoric*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Gee, J. P. (2004). Situated language and learning: A critique of traditional schooling. New York: Routledge.

Gee, J.P. (2007). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Gee, J. P. (2008). *Social linguistics and literacies* (3rded.). New York: Routledge.

George, E. (1977). *Loving God with all your mind.* Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.

Goodburn, A. (1998). It's a question of faith: Discourses of fundamentalism and critical pedagogy in the writing classroom. *JAC: A Journal of Composition Theory, 18*(2), 333-353.

Graff, G., &Birkenstein, C. (2010).*They say, I say: Moves that matter in academic writing* (2nd edition). New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Hairston, M. (1992).Diversity, ideology, and teaching writing.*College Composition and Communication, 43*(2), 179-193.

Hansen, K. (2005). Religious freedom in the public square and the composition classroom.In E. Vander Lei and b. l. kyburz (Eds.), *Negotiating religious faith in the composition classroom* (pp. 24-38). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.

Harkin, P. (2005). The reception of reader-response theory.*College Composition and Communication, 56*(3), 410-425.

Harkin, P., &Sosnoski, J.J. (2003). "Whatever happened to reader response criticism?" In M. Helmers (Ed.), *Intertexts: Reading pedagogy in college writing classrooms* (pp. 101-122). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Harriman, R. (1992). Decorum, power, and the courtly style.*Quarterly Journal of Speech 78*, 149-172.

Hays, J. (1983).The development of discursive maturity in college writers. In J. Hays, P. Roth, & J. Ramsay (Eds.), *The writer's mind: Writing as a mode of thinking* (pp.127-143). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers.

Hirsch, E. D. (1977). *The philosophy of composition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Holzman, M. (1986).The social context of literacy education.*College English, 48*(1), 27-33. Retrieved July 21, 2010, from JSTOR (376580).

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom.*New York: Routledge.

Hubbard, J. (2008). *Secrets young women keep.* Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

Huckin, T. (2004). Content analysis: What texts talk about." In C. Bazerman, & P. Prior (Eds.), *What writing does and how it does it.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Jacobs, M. (2012, March 16). Christian fiction a hit for UM publisher.*The United Methodist Reporter.* Retrieved June, 26, 2012, from http://www.umportal.org/article.asp?id=8698

Jamieson, K. (1973). Generic constraints and the rhetorical situation.*Philosophy& Rhetoric, 6*(3), 162-170.

Jamieson, K. (1996*). Packaging the presidency.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Jennings, M. M. (1998). "The Real Generation Gap."Imprimis. Retrieved May 25, 2012 from
    http://www.hillsdale.edu/news/imprimis/archive/issue.asp?year=1998&month=08

Jolliffe, D. (2009) A rhetorical framework design." (Handout).University of Arkansas.
    Fayetteville, AR.

Kearney, J. (2009). Rogerian principles and the writing classroom: A history of intention and
    (mis)interpretation. *Rhetoric Review,28*(2), 167-184. Retrieved May 25, 2012 from
    EBSCO Search Premier.

Kennedy, J. F. (n.d.). Speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association.*American
    Rhetoric.com.* Retrieved March 7, 2009 from Americanrhetoric.com (Original speech
    date 1960).

Lauer, J. (1980). The rhetorical approach: Stages of writing and strategies for writers. In R.
    Donovan & B. McClellan (Eds.), *Eight approaches to teaching composition* (pp.53-
    64.)*.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers.

Lauer, J.M., & Asher, J.W. (1988).*Composition research: Empirical designs.* New York:
    Oxford University Press.

Leathers Dively, R. (1997). Censoring religious rhetoric in the composition classroom: What we
    and our students may be missing. *Composition Studies, 25*(1), 55-66.

Leff, M. (1980).Interpretation and the art of the scholarly critic.*The Western Journal of Speech
    Communication*, *44*, 337-349. Retrieved May 25, 2012, from EBSCO Search Premier.

Lewis, C.S. (1996). *Compelling reason: Essays on ethics and theology.* W. Hooper (Ed.).
    London: Fount.

Lindquist, J., & Seitz, D. (2009).*The elements of literacy*. New York: Longman.

Lucado, M. (1997).*The great house of God.*Dallas: Word Publishing.

Lucaites, J., Condit C. M.,&Cadill, S. (1999). *Contemporary rhetorical theory*. New York:
    Guildford Press.

Lunsford, A., & Ede, L. (1996). Representing audience: "Successful" discourse and disciplinary
    critique. *College Composition and Communication, 47*(2),167-179.

Lunsford, A., Ruszkiewicz, J., & Walters, K. (2010).*Everything's an argument*. Boston:
    Bedford/St. Martin's.

Lunsford, A. (Ed.). (2011). *The St. Martin's handbook* (7th ed.). Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Mannoia, V.J. Jr. (2000). *Christian liberal arts: An education that goes beyond.* Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Marsden, G. (1994). *The soul of the American university: From Protestant establishment to established nonbelief.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Marzluf, P. (2006). Diversity writing: Natural languages, authentic voices. *College Composition and Communication, 57*(3), 503-522.

McDowell, J., & Hostetler, B. (1992).*Don't check your brains at the door.* Dallas, TX: Word Publishing.

McKerrow, R. (2005). Critical rhetoric: Theory and practice. In C. Burgchardt (Ed.), *Readings in rhetorical criticism* (pp. 114-137). Pennsylvania: Strata Publishing.

Merkel, M. (2010).*Technical communication* (9th ed). New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Miller, D. (2001). *Blue like jazz: Non-religious thoughts on Christian spirituality*. Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

Moore, B. (2000). *Breaking Free.*Nashville, TN: Broadman& Holman.

Moreland, J.P. (2002). Finding the smartest man who ever lived. In R.A. Knoll (Ed.), *College faith*(pp.79-80)*.* Berrien Springs, MI.

Montesano, M., &Roen, D. (2005). Religious faith, learning, and writing: challenges in the classroom. In E. Vander Lei and b. l. kyburz (Eds.), *Negotiating religious faith in the composition classroom* (pp. 84-97). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.

Moss, B. (1994).Creating a community: literacy events in African-American churches.In B. Moss (Ed.), *Literacy across communities* (147-176). Cresskill, NJ; Hampton Press.

National Council of Churches. (2011, February 14). Trends continue in church membership growth or decline, reports *2011 Yearbook of American & Canadian Churches*. *News from the National Council of Churches.*Retrieved October 21, 2012 from http://www.ncccusa.org/news/110210yearbook2011.html.

Newkirk, T. (1984). Direction and misdirection in peer response. *College Composition and Communication, 35*(3), 301-311.

North, S. (1987). *The making of knowledge in composition: Portrait of an emerging field.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Obama, B. (2011, September 11) *Remarks at a concert for hope*. Speech presented at a Concert for Hope, Kennedy Center, Washington D.C.

Olsen, G.A. (1997). Publishing scholarship and rhetoric and composition: Joining the conversation. In G.A. Olsen & T.W. Taylor(Eds.), *Publishing in Rhetoric and Composition*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Park, D. (1994). The meaning of audience. In G. Tate, E. Corbett, & N. Myers, (Eds.), *The writing teacher's sourcebook* (3rd ed.) (pp.233-242). New York, NY: Oxford Press USA.

Parker, S. (2009, June 1). Rights, Responsibilities, and Health Care.*Townhall.com*. Retrieved April 21, 2013 from   http://townhall.com/columnists/starparker/2009/06/01/rights,_ responsibilites_and_health_care/page/full/

Parrish, W. M. (2005). "The study of speeches." In C. Burghardt (Ed.), *Readings in rhetorical criticism* (pp.34-45). Pennsylvania: Strata Publishing.

Perkins, P. (2001). "A radical conversion of the mind": Fundamentalism, hermeneutics, and the metanoic classroom. *College English, 63*(5),585-611. Retrieved July 21, 2010, from JSTOR.

Perl, S. (2008).Understanding composing. In T.R. Johnson (Ed.), *Teaching composition: Background readings* (pp.140-147). Boston: Bedford/St.Martin's.

Pew Research Center. (2010, February 3). Change in internet use by age, 2000-2009. *Pew internet and American life project.* Retrieved May 13, 2012, from http://www.pewinternet.org/Infographics/2010/Internet-acess-by-age-group-over-time.aspx

Pike, T.W. (2007). Shaking campus liberalism.*National prayer network.*Retrieved September 22, 2012, from truthtellers.org

Pope marks 9/11 by warning that religion cannot justify violence. (2011, September 9). *GlobalPost.*Retrieved October 5, 2012, from http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/ news/regions/americas/united-states/110911/pope-benedict-xvi-911-flight-93-national-memorial

Prothero, S. (2007).*Religious literacy: What every American needs to know – and doesn't.* New York: Harper Collins.

Radley, G. (2001). Spiritual quest in young adult literature.*The ALAN Review, 28*(3). Retrieved September 21, 2010, from Virginia Tech Digital Library and Archives.

Rand, L.A. (2001). Enacting faith: Evangelical discourse and the discipline of composition studies. *College Composition and Communication, 52*(3),349-367. Retrieved July 21, 2010, from JSTOR.

Reither, J.A., &Vipond, D. (1989).Writing as collaboration.*College English, 51*(8), 855-867.

Reed Business Information. (2003, July 15). *Blue Like Jazz*: What people are saying. *Google Books.*Retrieved May 5, 2012, from http://books.google.com/books/about/ Blue_like_jazz.html?id=rd4l574mTyQC

"Reflecting on Controversy."(n.d.).*Acknowledging the Academic Conversation*. Retrieved October 21, 2012 from https://bu.digication.com/acknowledging_the_ academic_conversation/Welcome

Rhodes, T. (2011/2012).Emerging evidence on using rubrics.*Peer Review, 13/14*(4/1), 4-5. Retrieved from EBSCO Academic Search Premier.

Rose, M. (1989).*Lives on the boundary*. New York: Penguin Group.

Rosenblatt, L. (1978). *The reader, the text, the poem: The transactional theory of the literary work.* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Rosenblatt, L. (1995). *Literature as exploration*. New York: The Modern Language Association.

Rosenblatt, L. (2005). *Making meaning with texts: Selected essays.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Rosteck, T. (2009, January 14). "Introduction to rhetorical theory."[Lecture]. University of Arkansas. Fayetteville, AR.

Ryken, L. (1991). *Realms of gold: The classics in Christian perspective*. Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers.

Salant, P., &Dillman, D. A. *How to conduct your own survey.*Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Salvatori, M. (1996).Conversations with texts.*College English, (58)*4, 440-452.

Schaeffer, F. (1998).*The God who is there*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

Selzer, J. (2004). Rhetorical analysis: Understanding how texts persuade readers. In C. Bazerman & P. Prior (Eds.), *What writing does and how it does it* (pp.279-307)*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Siefert, L. (2011). Assessing general educational learning outcomes.*Peer Review,13/14*(5/1), 9-11. Retrieved October 21, 2012 from EBSCO Academic Search Premier.

Shaughnessy, M.P. (1977). *Errors and expectations: A guide for the teacher of basic writing.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Slattery, P. (1993).Teaching for various literacies.*Journal of Teaching Writing, 13*(1/2), 15-31.

Smart, J.M. (2005). "Frankenstein or Jesus Christ?" When the voice of faith creates a monster for the composition teacher. In E. Vander Lei and b. l. kyburz (Eds.), *Negotiating religious faith in the composition classroom* (pp. 11-23). Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers, Inc.

Smietana, B. (2012, March 2). Anti-bias policies drive some religious groups off campuses. *USA Today.*Retrieved October 21, 2001 from http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/education/story/2012-04-01/vanderbilt-bias-catholic-group/53935512/1

Smietana, B. (2012, March 27). Christian groups differ on compliance with Vanderbilt policy. *USA Today*. Retrieved October 21, 2012 from http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/education/story/2012-04-27/christian-groups-vanderbilt-policy/54581770/1

St. Augustine. (1961). *Confessions* (R.S. Pine-Coffin, Trans.). New York: Penguin Books.

Stoner, P. (2005).*Science speaks.* D.W. Stoner (Ed). Retrieved September 23, 2012, from http://yearofourlord.org/1_bible_divinity_of_christ/ScienceSpeaks.pdf

Stephens, N. (2012, March). Reaching Christian students in secular universities.*The Lutheran Witness.* Retrieved 16 October 16, 2012, fromhttp://witness.lcms.org/pages/wPage.asp?ContentID=1241&IssueID=64

Strobel, L. & Vogel, J. (2001).*The case for Christ: Student edition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Suleiman, S.R. (1980). Introduction: varieties of audience-oriented criticism. In S.R. Suleiman & I. Crosman (Eds.), *The reader and the text* (pp.3-45). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Thomas, S. (2012, June 2). Advice for students attending a Christian college.*Jesus freaks*. Retrieved October 14, 2012 from http://www.patheos.com/blogs/jesuscreed/2012/06/02/advice-for-students-attending-a-christian-college/

Tipton, M. (2012, June 15). *Divine names and* Relentless.(Unpublished paper).*Apologetics Coordination Team.*Retrieved October 21, 2012 from http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com/BevereandLetter.pdf

Totty, M. (2008, July 1).The Case for and Against Nuclear Power.The Wall Street Journal. Retrieved April 21, 2013 from http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121432182593500119.html

Tompkins, J. (1988). A short course on post structuralism.*College English,50*(7), 733-747.

Unruh, B. (2009, April, 10). Students Fear "Anti-Religious indoctrination." *WND.*Retrieved
        May 5, 2012, from www.wnd.com/2009/04/94537.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2012, January 31). "State and county quick facts."*Census.gov*. Retrieved
        May 31, 2012, from http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/05/05143.html.

Veach, G. (2009). St. Augustine and the Christian college composition classroom: Water into
        flame. *Christian Higher Education,8*(5), 440-453. Retrieved September 15, 2012, from
        EBSCO Search Premier.

Vander Lei, E., & Fitzgerald, L. (2007). What in God's name? Administering the conflicts of
        religious belief in writing programs. *WPA,31*(1-2), 185-195. Retrieved September 15,
        2012, from http://wpacouncil.org/archives/31n1-2/31n1-2vanderlei-fitzgerald.pdf

Vander Lei, E, &Hettinga, D.R. (2002). A *Comment* on "'A radical conversion of the mind':
        Fundamentalism, hermeneutics, and the mentanoicclassroom."*College English, 64*(6),
        720-723.Retrieved September 15, 2012, from JSTOR.

Vander Lei, E., &kyburz, b.l. (Eds.). (2005). *Negotiating religious faith in the composition
        classroom.* Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook Publishers.

Velazquez, D. (2012, May 25). Notre Dame sues Obama: Is their religion a faith or an excuse?
        Examiner.com. Retrieved October 7, 2012, from http://www.examiner.com/article/notre-
        dame-sues-obama-is-their-religion-a-faith-or-an-excuse

Urrea, Luis. (2005). *The Devil's Highway.*New York: Back Bay Books.

Warren, R. (2004). *40 days of purpose.* Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

Wisse, R. (2012, August 27). Welcome to freshman disorientation. *Wall Street Journal,* p. A15.

Woolf, J. (2010). *Team writing.*Boston: Bedford/St.Martin's.

Womack, A. (2012). Spirit, soul, and body.*Andrew Womack Ministries.*Retrieved June 26,
        2012, from http://www.awmi.net/extra/article/spirit_soul

Yancey, K. & Spooner, M. (1998). A single good mind: Collaboration, cooperation, and the
        writing self. *CCC, 49*(1), 45-62.

Zarefsky, D. (2009, February 15). [Interview].*NPR.*

Appendix A

The Nicene Creed (1989 prayer book)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son].With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. AMEN.

Appendix B

Dear pastors, youth pastors and church workers,

May I ask for your help? My name is Evelyn Baldwin, and I am a missionary kid and former student at an overseas Christian school. Now, I am a graduate student and teaching instructor at the University of Arkansas. Currently, I am writing a dissertation on the reading practices of Christian teenagers. As readers of the Bible, these teenagers have often engaged in a depth of reading that their peers have not, participating in meaningful interpretation of a deep – and sometimes complicated – book. Furthermore, they are applying what they read to their own lives, making their reading not just an academic practice, but a personal, experiential one.

You know the value of Biblical education and how it benefits our youth all through college. As teachers and Christian leaders, we also know that college is a challenging and faith-building experience for teenagers, especially for those who attend secular schools. Classes can push students to the limit, both academically and spiritually. For my work, I am looking to see exactly how the devotional and instructional books our teenagers read serve them as they begin engaging with college texts. What is being read? What particular skills do these books promote in students heading to the classroom? How do these skills align with classroom expectations? I'm hoping to uncover reading patterns that college teachers may recognize as successful and that may help students succeed in to their classroom work.

In a few weeks, you will be receiving a brief survey by email asking you about what your youth are reading. The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete and is available online. Your

responses would provide crucial data that will allow me to outline our teenagers' reading habits. The information I am gathering is for educational purposes only and will remain anonymous. Your help on this important project will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions about the project, please email me at xxxx@uark.edu or telephone me at xxxxx. I would be happy to talk to you about my research and how I hope to gain valuable information to help our students succeed in college.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Baldwin

PhD Candidate, Rhetoric and Composition Pedagogy

University of Arkansas

Appendix C

Dear youth pastors and church workers,

Thank you for letting me intrude on your busy schedule. A few weeks ago, I sent out an email discussing my dissertation project on the reading habits of Christian teenagers. As per the letter, below you will find a link to a brief survey asking you about what your youth are reading. The answers to the survey will help me identify the reading practices of our teenagers and, ultimately, how those practices can help them succeed in college.

The survey has 14 questions and should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. At the beginning of the survey is an informed consent document, indicating that you will allow your answers to be used in my research. Additional information about the study, including contact information for myself, my dissertation director, and the school's Institutional Review Board coordinator, is included there as well. All answers are anonymous and will not be directly linked to you or your church. Your completion of the survey is completely voluntary but would be greatly appreciated. You can find the survey at: *Reading patterns survey.*

Your participation in this study will assist in advancing relatively new research into how to help our youth best succeed in college, a matter of great concern to all of us. If you would like a copy of the compiled data or have any questions, please email me at *ehbaldwi@uark.edu.*

Thank you for your time and your ministry of training our youth.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Baldwin

PhD Candidate, Rhetoric and Composition Pedagogy

University of Arkansas

Appendix D

Dear Youths Pastors and Church Workers,

About two months ago, I sent out a link to a survey asking youth pastors and church workers to point out what their students read. I'm writing you one last time to ask you to consider filling out the survey. As I work on my dissertation, the information I gather is crucial to help understand how and what we have our youth read and how that reading can help them in college. Potentially this study will contribute to the whole structure of educational knowledge in the State of Arkansas. Improving that structure is good for everyone in our great state. So far, the response rate has been low, which minimizes the learning that can occur.

As I mentioned, this survey is for academic purposes – in this case, writing a dissertation. As a pastor's daughter, I know that the demands on your time are many and filling out a survey is likely at the very bottom of the list. However, I would ask, if you have ten minutes to spare, consider filling out the survey questions. The end result of this information gathering will be helpful for me, of course, and can benefit our youth as they start a new chapter in their lives at college.

The survey can be found at *xxxxx.com*. Thank you for your time.

Blessings,

Evelyn Baldwin

Ph.D. Candidate in Rhetoric and Composition

University of Arkansas

Appendix E

Youth Worker Survey

1. Does your church have a program or group designated specifically for high school students?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes, we have a program for high school students.	███████████	19	73%
2	No, our youth program combines many ages.	████	7	27%
	Total		26	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.27
Variance	0.20
Standard Deviation	0.45
Total Responses	26

2. What ages are the members of your youth program?

Text Response
12-15
2
12 - 18
7th-12th grade
12-17
12-18
13-17

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	7

3. On average, how many youth participate in youth group activities?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Under 10		2	8%
2	10-20		8	31%
3	20-50		10	38%
4	50-75		3	12%
5	75+		3	12%
	Total		26	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	2.88
Variance	1.23
Standard Deviation	1.11
Total Responses	26

4. Does your church or members within your church host Bible studies for teenagers?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		22	85%
2	No		4	15%
	Total		26	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.15
Variance	0.14
Standard Deviation	0.37
Total Responses	26

5. Are there books or other materials used in addition to the Bible for these studies?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes	████████████████████	17	77%
2	No	██████	5	23%
	Total		22	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.23
Variance	0.18
Standard Deviation	0.43
Total Responses	22

6. In addition to the Bible, what are some of the works used for Bible studies?

Text Response
J/R Sproul's books
qwew
Weekly or Quarterly Curriculum
Lady in Waiting, The Measure of a Man, Pursuit of Holiness, Bite Size Theology, Be Joyful (Philippians)
Denominational curriculum, concordances and reference books
BluefishTV DVD Series, MacArthur Bible Studies
Curriculum magazines (i.e. FLYTE by Lifeway), Workbooks (i.e. 30 Days to Understanding the Bible), other books (i.e. Crazy Love by Chan)
The materials used other than the Bible are curriculum (XP3 by Dash Student Leadership) or are devotional books on the Christian Life (E.G. Authentic Beauty, Every Young Man's/Woman's Battle, Guys are Waffles/Girls are Spaghetti, etc.).
Lads To Leaders study material
Rick Warren and John Bevere material
crazy love by francis change the circle maker by mark battersononthing you cant do in heaven by mark cahill the bait of satan by john bevere
Crazy Love, the case for Christ, the little black book.
The Case for Christ (Strobel); The Case for Faith Strobel); Crazy Love (Chan); Simply Youth Ministry group studies, including: "Stressed Out," "GuyTalk/GirlTalk," and others; Who You Are When No one is Looking (Willow Creek)
Group Curriculum
Here Comes Heaven, Cast of Characters, Whats the Difference (World View and Religions)
The Story

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	16

7. Do you recommend devotional and/or instructional books apart from the Bible to your church youth?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		16	62%
2	No		10	38%
	Total		26	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.38
Variance	0.25
Standard Deviation	0.50
Total Responses	26

8. What titles do you recommend? You may explain your choices, if you wish.

Text Response
lots of stuff!
The works of AW Tozer (for theology), Josh McDowell (for apologetics), missionary biographies (for those wishing to go on mission trips)
d363.org, Lenten and Advent studies from Creative Communications for the Parish
We recommend devotional books to our students through our discipleship groups and through our monthly newsletter. All titles that are suggested are either the basis for the discipleship group's study or go along with what we are currently studying in Sunday school or youth group. Some titles are - Authentic Beauty, God's Gift to Women, Passion and Purity, When God Writes Your Love Story, The Discipline of Grace, More Than a Carpenter, The Gospel According to Jesus, Mere Christianity, Surprised by Joy, How to Smell Like God, Unafraid, God's Story/Your Story, The Power of a Praying Teen, Praying God's Word, Tortured for Christ, Jesus Freaks 1&2, The Pastor's Wife, Extreme Devotion, Hearts of Fire, It Came From Within, Piercing the Darkness, Screwtape Letters, Purpose Driven Life, Redeeming Love, Crazy Love, Hard to Believe, Case for Christ, Total Truth, The Life of Christ by Mark E. Moore, and possibly a few I'm leaving out :)
Plug into power... Learing to love yourself.....So youth may know
several different ones
Experiencing God; My Utmost for His Highest (Chambers); Purpose Driven Life (Warren); Devotional Classics (Foster and Smith); Celebration of Discipline (Foster)
I offer for free "take five" it is a quarterly devotional book for teenagers published by Gospel publishing house
Jesus Calling
Dont Check your brains at the Door   Josh McDowell,   End Times Simplified
The Story. It is an easier to understand version of the Bible without repition.

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	11

9. Are there certain texts that you discourage your youth from reading?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Yes		13	52%
2	No		12	48%
	Total		25	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	2
Mean	1.48
Variance	0.26
Standard Deviation	0.51
Total Responses	25

10. What types of text do you encourage your youth to avoid? Please explain your reasons.

Text Response
Popular (secular) teenage magazines, secular romance novels, etc. The world's views are so contrary to Scripture (ex. "follow your heart" contradicts what Jeremiah says - "the heart is deceitfully wicked", etc.)
Texts with bad theology
Specifically this is hard to put into words. Depending on age and maturity level, there is a level of protection and purity that is important to try and help with. By no means do I want to put these kids in a bubble, but if they are choosing to read certain books about certain topics...then I may ask questions that could discourage them from reading. But I don't have some broad announcement...it would be much more on a 1-to-1 conversation.
Excessively inappropriate materials of any kind.
The only texts I've discouraged them from reading that I can remember right now needs explained. We did a series on demon possession in the Gospel of John around Halloween. We hit the issue pretty heavy and we strongly encouraged the kids to not get fascinated by the topic of demons, witchcraft, etc. And we also warnted them about getting so caught up in it that they sought out historical or non-biblical teaching on demons or witchcraft - i.e. reading online literature and even books from the public library about satanism, the occult, witchcraft, demon possession, etc. We DID NOT and DO NOT however discourage them from reading age appropriate fictional works that include fantasaical views of magic, other worldly creatures, etc., such as Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings, Eragon, etc.
Left Behind series
gossip magazines, a lot of times students tend to use gossip in their live to put down students or build themselves up in the eyes of there class mates and we encourage not to gossip at all... so by encouraging them not to fill their heads with that nonsense it might change their patterns of using gossip.
Text with sexual content and foul language
Secular
Holy books other than the bible - bankers know the dollar so well they know how to spot a fake, our teens need to know bible so well they will know wrong teachings when taught. Next is anything that promotes sin - what we put in is what will come out.
Certain writings promoting anti-Biblical agendas

Statistic	Value
Total Responses	11

11. What characteristics do you look for in devotional or instructional works for youth? Please check all that apply.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Popularity among Christian readers		5	21%
2	Emphasis on issues common to teenagers (peer pressure, sex, dating, alcohol, etc.)		16	67%
3	Ease of reading/readability		9	38%
4	Emphasis on Biblical passages or examples		18	75%
5	Strong emotional appeal		5	21%
6	Strong argumentative appeal		4	17%
7	Other		5	21%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	7
Total Responses	24

12. Of the following texts, which (if any) might you recommend to your youth? Please check all that apply.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Neil T. Anderson - "The Bondage Breaker"		4	18%
2	Lee Strobel - "The Case for Christ"		16	73%
3	Nancy Leigh DeMoss and Diana Gresh - "Lies Young Women Believe"		9	41%
4	Dennis and Barbara Rainey - "Passport2Purity"		6	27%
5	James C. Dobson - "Preparing for Adolescence"		5	23%
6	Lee Strobel and Jane Vogel - "The Case for a Creator" Student Edition		13	59%
7	Max Lucado - "3:16 - The Numbers of Hope"		6	27%
8	StormieOmartian - "The Power of a Praying Teen"		7	32%
9	Justin Lookadoo and Hayley DiMarco - "Datable: Are you? Are they?"		4	18%
10	Pam Stenzel and Melissa Nesdahl - "Nobody Told Me"		0	0%
11	Brenda and Stan Jones - "Facing the Facts"		2	9%
12	Donald Miller - "Blue Like Jazz"		8	36%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	12
Total Responses	22

13. Under what denomination does your church classify itself?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Assemblies of God		3	13%
2	Baptist		4	17%
3	Church of Christ		3	13%
4	Episcopalian		0	0%
5	Evangelical Free Church		0	0%
6	Lutheran		0	0%
7	Methodist		1	4%
8	Non-denominational		5	21%
9	Pentecostal		1	4%
10	Presbyterian		3	13%
11	Southern Baptist Convention		3	13%
12	Other		1	4%
	Total		24	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	12
Mean	6.29
Variance	15.35
Standard Deviation	3.92
Total Responses	24

14. What size is your church body?

#	Answer		Response	%
1	Under 50 members		1	4%
2	50-100 members		0	0%
3	100-200 members		5	21%
4	200-500 members		9	38%
5	500+ members		9	38%
	Total		24	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	5
Mean	4.04
Variance	1.00
Standard Deviation	1.00
Total Responses	24

15. **Informed Consent Please note the details of this study. Contact information is listed at the top of this screen. In clicking the box at the bottom, you are indicating your consent for your answers to be anonymously used in this study. This study is for educational purposes only.**

Researcher
Evelyn Baldwin, M.A., Graduate Student
Department of English

Administrator
Dr. XXXXXX, Ph.D., Faculty Advisor
Department of English

Description:This study seeks to determine what specific critical thinking skills are being ingrained in Evangelical Christian teenagers through their readings of religion-based texts. Books selected for study – based off of a survey of Youth Ministers at area churches – will be analyzed for the logical processes they promote. Those processes will be compared to the abilities required for success in the first year Composition classroom, abilities quantified through interviews with writing instructors. The two sets of skills will be compared to determine the strengths and needs of Christian students in the Composition classroom and to discuss the implications and best practices for teaching these students.   Risks and Benefits: Benefits include understanding that extracurricular reading habits in high school impact the reading skills teenagers bring into the Composition classroom. Evangelical Christian students have frequently been trained in a particular type of reading; this reading gives them certain strengths in the classroom while simultaneously handicapping some in certain logical exercises. In understanding these readers, the study hopes to serve as a panacea against teacher-student bias, uncover dualistic patterns of thought (if they do indeed exist), and – rather than silencing faith – help students understand the appropriate contexts for faith-based reasoning versus traditional classroom analytical reasoning. There are no anticipated risks.   Voluntary participation: Your participation in the research in completely voluntary. You may choose

not to complete or to complete only a portion of the survey at any time. There is no payment for completing the survey. Confidentiality: The survey data collected does not include your name or information. The name of your church or organization cannot be associated with your answers, nor will that information be included in the final study. If you have questions or concerns about this study, please contact Evelyn Baldwin at xxx@uark.eduorXXXXX at xxxx@uark.edu. For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact Ro Windwalker, the University's Compliance Coordinator, at xxxxxx or by email at xxxx@uark.edu. By checking the box below, you indicate that you have read the description, including the purpose of the study, the procedures to be used, the potential risks, the confidentiality, as well as the option to stop participating at any time in the survey process. Each of these items has been clearly explained through correspondence with the investigator. The investigator has answered the questions (if any) you have presented, and you understand what is involved. In checking the box, you agree to freely participate in the study and may obtain a copy of this agreement at any time by contacting the investigator.

#	Answer		Response	%
1	I have read the above information form and consent to my answers being used anonymously for educational purposes.		26	100%

Statistic	Value
Min Value	1
Max Value	1
Total Responses	26

Appendix F

Totty, M. (2008, July 1).The Case for and Against Nuclear Power.*The Wall Street Journal.*

Retrieved April 21, 2013 from

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121432182593500119.html

Is nuclear power the answer for a warming planet? Or is it too expensive and dangerous to satisfy future energy needs?

Interest in nuclear power is heating up, as the hunt intensifies for "green" alternatives to fossil fuels like coal and natural gas. Even some environmentalists have come on board, citing the severity of the global-warming threat to explain their embrace of the once-maligned power source. […]

Appendix G

Parker, S. (2009, June 1). Rights, Responsibilities, and Health Care.*Townhall.com*. Retrieved

April 21, 2013 from   http://townhall.com/columnists/starparker/2009/06/01/rights,_

responsibilites_and_health_care/page/full/

Want to know what troubles our American health care system?

Consider the thoughts of psychiatrist and Nazi death camp survivor Viktor Frankl.

After spending time in our country as a visiting professor, he saw the looming dangers of

freedom without responsibility. He observed: "Freedom is in danger of degenerating into mere

arbitrariness unless it is lived in terms of responsibleness. That is why I recommend that the

Statue of Liberty on the East Coast be supplemented by a Statue of Responsibility on the West

Coast." […]

Appendix H

Jennings, M. M. (1998). "The Real Generation Gap."Imprimis. Retrieved May 25, 2012 from

http://www.hillsdale.edu/news/imprimis/archive/issue.asp?year=1998&month=08

Born in 1980, today's college freshmen are part of "Generation X." They came into the world long after Vietnam, Richard Nixon, and Watergate. They never saw Senator Sam Ervin's eyebrows. Can you imagine? They were also born after Saturday Night Fever. They do not know John Travolta has had two movie careers. Nor do they know what it is like to live in a society in which marriage is the predominant social institution. Unfortunately, they do know about broken homes and "single-parent families." And they know what it is like to be the children of child care because 67 percent of them have mothers working outside their homes. […]

Appendix I

Instructor: XXXXX
English 1013

Paper 2 Assignment

Due date: Thursday, February 28

As you continue researching your chosen topic, you will find yourself informally responding to the arguments and statements made in your sources. Such instinctive responses are valuable; however, in academic discourse you must fully articulate your thoughts and provide adequate evidence and reasoning in order to construct a viable critique. The process of writing this assignment, a summary-critique, prepares you to build a full academic argument which expertly responds to sources and evaluates the sources' validity.

For your second paper assignment, write a 1,000-1,500 word (2-3 double-spaced pages) summary-critique of one of your sources. Your paper will have two main purposes: to present the author's arguments fairly and to evaluate the validity of those arguments critically. You should structure your paper logically and coherently by integrating your critique into your summary of the source. You should also include an academic introduction and conclusion. Remember to cite, integrate, and paraphrase your quotations correctly. You may use a source from the PCI reader, or you may use an academic source from the library or library database. In either case, your Works Cited page should only contain one entry; additionally, if your source is not in the PCI reader, please attach a copy of it to your finished paper.

Appendix J

ENGLISH 1013 COMPOSITION I

INSTRUCTOR: XXXX

PAPER FOUR

DUE: NOVEMBER 7

Assignment: Write a 5-6 page argumentative synthesis on the topic of the United State's minimum drinking age. Use the two articles provided for you by your instructor along with one of your choosing. This paper is worth 15% of your final grade.

An argumentative synthesis attempts to explain and evaluate the position of different groups while identifying and arguing a specific position. This paper requires you to synthesize the ideas of three articles in your own words and provide an analysis and evaluation of the argument. Remember that in academic discourse there is very rarely "black vs. white" or "absolute right vs. absolute wrong." You may have to concede points made by the other side because they are valid while supporting your own position with valid arguments. You do not need to simply restate the side with which you agree. You may want to develop your own solution for the problem and use evidence from the articles to support this new solution. This paper will require critical thinking, critical reading, and the development of a valid and persuasive argument.

Paper Format:

Introduction: Introduce the topic and controversy on the issue. In one to two sentences convey

each side's argument on the topic. Create a clear and defined thesis that states your

argument/solution in regards to the controversy.

Body: Here are three specific ways in which to organize your paper. Choose the one that seems

most appropriate.

1) Organize your paper and paragraphs based on the 3-4 main subtopics you discover in

your reading. For each section, outline each side's argument regarding the subtopic and

identify the type of evidence and support used to build the argument. Then compare

these views and their supporting evidence in order to support your own thesis. You may

identify fallacies in opposing arguments while noting valid arguments made by the other

side. Follow this pattern for each subtopic.

2) Present your position first using support found in the various articles. This should extend

for 1-3 paragraphs. Then synthesize the articles that agree with your position. Next,

present your opponent's argument and supporting evidence. Finally, rebut the opposition

realizing that you may have to concede certain points or develop a solution not presented

in any of the articles.

3) Synthesize all three articles examining subtopics discussed in all of them. Relate all

viewpoints and the evidence used to support each. From this discussion, develop your

own argument using each subtopic as a point of development. You will want to include a

thread of argumentation throughout this paper so that the reader understands your

position at all times.

Conclusion: Restate you thesis and the main subtopics. End with flair! Include an interesting question, quote or story. (Do not say anything related to, "You decide." or "It's up to you." You should have persuaded the reader by this stage to your point of view.)

Please Note:

1) All quotes, paraphrases, examples, and other work from the articles must be cited correctly. Include a works cited page.

2) Ensure that your arguments are valid; avoid committing logical fallacies.

3) Revise your paper first on content and global issues, and then on punctuations usage and word choice.

4) Proofread carefully before turning in your final TWO copies.

5) Papers turned in one minute after the start of class will result in a deduction of 10 points. Each additional day late will result in an additional 10-point deduction.

Appendix K

Scoring Rubric

	1 (least effective)	2	3	4	5 (most effective)
AUDIENCE CONCERNS					
Knowledge of Audience	Text gives no indication of who the recipients are	Audience unclear – text hints tangentially at it	Audience suggested by text	Audience suggested by text through indirect address or topic	Audience clearly identified through direct address
Audience Appropriateness	Text completely inappropriate for or unrelated to audience	Text contains elements that are irrelevant to or inappropriate for audience	Text is vague – neither appropriate nor inappropriate for audience	Text is relevant to audience and reader-appropriate overall but may contain some unrelated elements	Text fully addresses audience in terms of appropriate content and relevance to readers
Anticipates Audience Response	Text in no way addresses audience thoughts	Text identifies one or two audience reactions but does not respond to them	Text identifies audience reactions but may or may not provide a clear response to those reactions	Text identifies some elements of audience reception and responds to them	Text regularly anticipates and responds to audience reception

JOINING THE CONVERSATION					
Understand writing in the genre	Text does not address the genre	Text incompletely addresses genre and does not explain or describe it	Text addresses genre but does not situate itself in the genre	Text addresses the genre then establishes its place infrequently in the text	Text addresses the genre then establishes its place in the genre repeatedly throughout the text
Integrating Readers	Text does not bring readers into the conversation	Text briefly discussses conversation but makes no effort to build connections to reader or rest of text	Text explains key elements of the conversation but does not connect it to the readers	Text explains key elements of the conversation but does not fully help readers to find themselves within it	Text explains key elements of the conversation and helps the readers situated themselves within that conversation
HOW TO READ					
Addressing the Text	Text never discusses itself and does not tell reader how to address it	Text partially describes itself and does not address how to read it	Text does not fully describe itself or does not address how to read it	Text describes some aspect of itself and explains how to read it	Text fully explains its own nature and states clearly how to read it
Building Connections	Text obscures a reader-text transaction	Text may incorrectly address a reader-text transaction	Text does not address a reader-text transaction	Text hints at a reader-text transaction	Text encourages a clear reader-text transaction

SUMMARIZING AND SYNTHESIZING					
Summarizing Breakdown	Neither restates main issue nor breaks text down into component parts	Generally restates main issue with no breakdown into parts	Breaks down issues to component parts with no explanation	Breaks down issues to component parts but has an incomplete or unclear explanation	Breaks down all issues to component parts and fully explains them
Completeness of Summary	Main idea unclear and irrelevant or isolated supporting ideas	Main unclear and no supporting details	Main idea clear and no supporting details	Main idea clear; minimal supporting details	Clear description of main ideas; supporting details relevant
Presence of Synthesis	There are no texts synthesized	Synthesized texts are irrelevant	Synthesized texts are relevant, but are referenced without clear textual connection	Synthesized texts are relevant but are minimally used	Synthesized texts are relevant and are used as key textual tools
Synthesis	Synthesis elements are abused without any clear purpose	Synthesis elements are abused to make a point	Synthesis elements are fairly interpreted but not applied	Synthesis elements appear fairly interpreted and appropriatel	Synthesis elements appear fairly interpreted and effectively used for

				y applied	argumentation
CRITIQUING					
Main Thesis	No statement of main thesis	Thesis statement does not accurately represent the text	Thesis statement present but does not cover main ideas	Thesis statement covers most main ideas but not all	Clear statement of main thesis; complete and accurate to the text
Individual Theses	Inappropriate for chapters; no connection to main thesis	Appropriate for chapters but not connected to main thesis	Connected to main thesis and appropriate for each chapter but with no clarifying detail	Connected to main thesis and effective for each chapter but with little clarifying detail	Fully explained and effective for each chapter; clearly connected to main thesis
Outline of Argument	No discernible order to points or connection to main thesis	Points have some order but no connection to main thesis	Points connect to main thesis but with confusing order	Points clearly ordered with some support for main thesis	Points clearly ordered and effectively support main thesis
Appeals	Appeals unclear from text structure	Appeals present but used inappropriately (wrongly)	Appeals present but applied ineffectively (poor usage)	Effective use of one or two of Aristotle's appeals	Effective use of all three of Aristotle's appeals
Fallacies	Text has multiple fallacies that effect the overall argument	Text has multiple fallacies that do not effect the overall argument	Text has a few fallacies that directly address the overall	Text has a few logical fallacies that do not effect the overall	Text has no logical fallacies

			argument	argument	
Evidence	Text makes significant use of inappropriately applied or ineffectively chosen outside evidence	Text uses some outside evidence inappropriate to the argument	Text uses no outside evidence to prove a point	Text uses some outside evidence to make a point	Text uses multiple pieces of external evidence to effectively make a point
Aspects of the Argument	Text performs an unbalanced observation of issues and comes to no judgment	Text performs an unbalanced observation of issues before coming to judgment	Text looks at no issues before coming to judgment	Text looks at more than one perspective of an issue before coming to judgment	Text looks at multiple perspectives of an issue before coming to judgment
External arguments	Text addresses outside arguments using no tools without coming to judgment	Text addresses outside arguments with no tools but does come to a judgment	Text addresses outside arguments with some tools and may or may not address the entire thing.	Text uses multiple analytical tools to address part of an argument, but leaves some untouched	Text uses multiple analytical tools to address complete outside arguments, including finding fallacies, anticipating audience response, and addressing construction and outline
CONDUCTING RESEARCH					

Directing Readers	Texts directs readers to works that are not relevant or topical	Text never directs readers to works that appear relevant and topical	Text rarely directs readers to works that appear relevant and topical	Text occasionally directs readers to additional works that appear relevant and topical	Text frequently directs readers to additional works that appear relevant and topical
References	Texts frequently references sources inappropriatel y or not at all	Text occasionally references outside sources inappropriatel y	Text does not use outside sources	Text occasionally uses outside sources and references them appropriatel y	Text uses several outside sources and references them appropriately

Appendix L

Identifying Fallacies

For the purpose of this study, we'll use the Lunsford, Ruszkiewiz, and Walters (2010) definition

of fallacy: "arguments that are flawed by their very nature or structure" (515).   When you are

attempting to identify a problem in argument, ask yourself if there are elements missing, if an

intellectual leap is made without backing, or if a writer makes a move that doesn't follow.

For example, assume the writer references 1 Cor. 6:19-20: "Do you not know that your body is a

temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your

own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body." The writer then says

that this particular passage means that Christians should not get tattoos. A logical leap has been

performed here leaving a missing step. Why are tattoos not honoring God? A proof needs to be

made that tattoos dishonor God; it is not enough to assume they can.

To make this easier, you can use the following set of fallacies derived from Lunsford (2008).

They are divided into Aristotle's three categories: ethos, logos, and pathos.

Ethos (ethical) – inappropriate personal attacks

Ad hominem – *a direct attack on a person's character as opposed to the issues*

"No one should support President Bush's foreign policy. Bush is a gun-toting, right-wing,

cowboy."

Guilt by association – *assuming a person's arguments are invalid because they work or*

side with a non-credible person

"Condoleeza Rice should be removed from office. She works closely with President Bush."

Appeals to False Authority – *receiving proof or testimony from someone unqualified*

"I'm Michael Vick, and I support stem-cell research."

Pathos (emotional) – the use of emotions to subvert right thinking

Bandwagon – *suggesting that something is appropriate because many are doing it*

"Last year, millions of customers saved money by switching to Geico. Why didn't you?"

Flattery – *convincing the reader he or she is special or smart enough to agree with the argument*

"Buy a Sealy Mattress. Because *you* know quality when *you* see it."

In-crowd – *promoting an idea because a select number of the elite agree with it*

"Paris Hilton, Amanda Peet, and Sandra Bullock all carry Gucci bags. Join the club; get yours

today!"

Veiled threat – *suggestion that something bad will happen if the reader does not agree*

"Houses without extermination tests are at a severe risk of cockroach infestation. Every

minute you wait to use Rid-Ex is another minute for the cockroaches to plan their attack!"

False analogies – *comparisons made by the author that are not alike or effective*

"My husband's computer acts like the mass suicides in Texas last year."

Logos (logical) – flaws in orderly thinking and analysis

Begging the question – *circling the argument, the evidence is the proof, the proof is the evidence*

"Cassie knows everything, she told me so yesterday."

Post hoc ergo propter hoc – *(Latin: "After this; therefore, because of this")Because something*

occurs after something else in time, it must have be caused by it

"I can't gamble at casinos. The last time I gambled, my dog got pneumonia."

Non sequitur – *(Latin: "It does not follow") Two unrelated ideas are linked for an argument*

"If Jessica can write a paper like this, she must be an amazing softball player!"

Either-or – *Only two possible ideas are presented as solutions to an issue*

"If you don't get an A on this next paper, you are going to fail my class."

Hasty generalization – *a final decision or determination is made quickly with little evidence*

"My first date with Jared was amazing. I know we are going to get married someday!"

Oversimplification – *cause and effect is limited to a single factor, and key elements are ignored*

"If we don't allow freshmen to have cars on campus, we will eliminate drinking and driving."

Straw-man – *an easily defeatable fake argument is set up to avoid the real, more difficult claims*

"Mitt Romney wants to shoot all illegal immigrants in the face. Clearly, he can't be

president."

Appendix M

August 18, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Evelyn Baldwin
                             David Jolliffe

FROM: Ro Windwalker
                             IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #:   11-08-047

Protocol Title: *Reading and Religion: Reconciling Diverse Reading Patterns and
                             the First Year Composition Classroom*

Review Type: ☒ EXEMPT ☐ EXPEDITED ☐ FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 08/18/2011 Expiration Date: 08/17/2012

Your protocol has been approved by the IRB. Protocols are approved for a maximum period of
one year. If you wish to continue the project past the approved project period (see above), you
must submit a request, using the form *Continuing Review for IRB Approved Projects*, prior to the
expiration date. This form is available from the IRB Coordinator or on the Research Compliance
website (http://vpred.uark.edu/210.php). As a courtesy, you will be sent a reminder two months
in advance of that date. However, failure to receive a reminder does not negate your obligation
to make the request in sufficient time for review and approval.   Federal regulations prohibit
retroactive approval of continuation. Failure to receive approval to continue the project prior to
the expiration date will result in Termination of the protocol approval. The IRB Coordinator can
give you guidance on submission times.

This protocol has been approved for 100 participants. If you wish to make *any* modifications
in the approved protocol, including enrolling more than this number, you must seek approval
prior to implementing those changes.   All modifications should be requested in writing (email is
acceptable) and must provide sufficient detail to assess the impact of the change.

If you have questions or need any assistance from the IRB, please contact me at 210
Administration Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.