

8-2016

Revision and Re-Writing as Adaptation: Using Adaptation Theory to Encourage Student Recognition of Rhetorical Situations

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Revision and Re-Writing as Adaptation: Using Adaptation Theory to Encourage Student
Recognition of Rhetorical Situations

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in English

by

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Bachelor of Arts in English, and Anthropology, 2014

August 2016
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This thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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Abstract

Many students don't want to revise their writing, or do so in small, surface-level ways. This has been an issue many composition instructors have faced over the years, and there is a large body of scholarship about revision and the writing process by many in writing studies. From Nancy Sommers, Janet Emig, Donald Murray, and others, to more recent publications "post-process," composition instructors and writing studies scholars are concerned about revision and the role it plays in students' learning to write. As a strategy for teaching bigger-level revision, I implemented the use of adaptation theory (reading/watching and doing adaptation) as a way to encourage student buy-in regarding how important revision is. By using adaptation theory to teach rhetorical situations and revision, I conducted a study of students' changing attitudes towards revision. I studied two classes (about 17 students each) of first year, second semester, composition. I collected written work from participating students and then analyzed this data for evidence of changing attitudes towards revision. How exactly did the use of adaptation theory scaffold or support their learning of bigger-level revision? Many students had much more positive attitudes in the classroom, and towards revision, than in previous courses I have taught. There was an overwhelmingly positive response to students adapting work and looking at adaptations in class as a way to learn how to revise.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank The University of Arkansas and the English Department for the opportunity to be a Razorback once again.

I would like to thank all of my committee members for their support during my thesis writing process: thank you Dr. Jolliffe for reading my many drafts and always giving me timely feedback, thank you Dr. Slattery for your guidance when I was first thinking about my thesis topic, and thank you Dr. Kayser for stepping in as a reader and being so flexible with your schedule.

I would also like to thank my students who participated in this study. You were such great sports about trying new ways of writing, and your great attitude towards learning is what made this research possible.

Also, a special thanks to my friends and family who put up with me as I completed this project.

Dedication

This Master's Thesis is dedicated to Dennis and Dorothy Troby, for always supporting me in everything I do and Candra Troby for listening to my never-ending rants regarding this document.

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Chapter One: Introduction and Background

The problem that this study set out to address was that students in first year composition courses often either dislike revising papers as they “don’t see the point,” or they simply do not revise. Many times this attitude stems from a student being uninterested in the writing assignment or because they view essays as something you complete the night before it’s due, not as a document or work that can change. An additional misconception many students have about the revision process is that impeccable grammar is more important than determining whether or not they achieved their purpose for their audience. This belief comes from their understanding of rhetorical situations as limited to written work that is completed for a grade from their audience (teacher) instead of as documents or projects that serve a purpose or accomplish something and make a change. This is a study of students’ changing attitudes towards revision, based on their introduction to the theory and practice of adaptation. How will students understanding and attitudes towards revision change as they work with adaptation theory and create their own adaptations?

Before explaining the different issues that first year students seem to be facing in regards to revision, it is vital to understand revision as part of the writing process and part of the process movement in composition studies. As Chris M. Anson explains in his chapter “Process Pedagogy and Its Legacy,” the process movement was a large step towards writing being seen as a complex meaning-making process instead of a “sum of its linguistic parts.” (218). There was a shift “away from expectations for a final text and toward developing the knowledge and abilities needed to produce it.” (Anson 219). In the words of another process scholar, Donald Murray, “when we teach composition we are not teaching a product, we are teaching a process. (1). As Murray so eloquently says: as teachers “we are coaches, encouragers, developers, creators of environments

in which our students can experience the writing process for themselves.” (Newkirk and Miller 2). What is this writing process he speaks of? This began as a wheel of steps to complete in order as you wrote. This was “Challenged by researchers such as Nancy Sommers and Sondra Perl, the linear “one-directional wheel” model soon gave way to a more sophisticated version that included arrows pointing both forward and backward or between stages, which made the circle recursive” (Anson 224). This idea of the writing process as a sequence of steps that one takes, most of the time (often out of order), as they write was revolutionary to shifting the focus onto ways teachers could support writing instruction and encourage drafting and revision.

Nancy Sommers was vital in shifting the focus towards revision and the ways student writers and more experienced writers revised their work. She emphasized the “recursive process” and the importance of students receiving adequate feedback on their work. We must provide students (and let students provide students) with constructive criticism in an intellectual partnership in the classroom. Sommers acknowledges the “power of feedback, its absence or presence, to shape [students’] writing experiences,” and also students’ desire to “write about something that matters to the student.” (251). This process pedagogy laid the foundation for my approach to teaching revision as a step that students must re-visit throughout their drafting process and as a vital piece to creating effective works.

Richard Gebhardt, another leading scholar in process pedagogy, wrote a reflective piece published by *The Writing Instructor*, in which he reflected on the movement thirty years after writing much of his work on the topic. He spoke of his publications and how revision must be seen a part of the whole revision process instead of only at the end. He also spoke of drafting as “a kind of growth that can only occur as writers sense the need for change, incorporating change into the developing text as they write.” (Gebhardt 81). This focus on students making needed

changes and growing as writers is another concept that I tried to instill in my students by exposing them to adaptations and adaptation theory because these are ultimately concerned with change.

The first main issue is that many students do not understand why revision is necessary. This attitude can stem from many factors, but the main reason is that they don't conceptualize revision as looking at whether or not the writing achieves the purpose and reaches the audience that it desires to. This resistance to revision must be addressed if students are to recognize the importance of "bigger picture" aspects of writing such as content, organization, achievement of purpose, and the importance of writing effectively for different audiences. Harklau and Pinnow define revision as both "a critical aspect of writing effectively" and as "one of the many hundred small steps writers take part in as they produce and polish texts" (qtd in Early and Saidu 209). This is a step that is often overlooked or limited to a one-time action of doing revision. Instead, writing is recursive. The process often looks out of order and revision may be repeated multiple times. In the words of Nancy Sommers, "experienced writers see their revision as a recursive process" as "a process with significant recurring activities" (387). What exactly can this type of revision do? As Lillian Bridwell writes, "Substantive revision can help improve the overall quality of a piece of writing, improve the organization and presentation of ideas, and strengthen a line of argument;" revision is an invaluable tool in helping students create powerful and effective written and/or creative work (qtd. in Early and Saidu 209). Many students think of revision as something that you do once (usually toward the end of the writing process) instead of as a step that you can revisit. They think that they can stop revising when they "have not violated any of the rules for revising." (Sommers 383). These "rules" usually revolve around grammatical mistakes, not effectiveness of argument, purpose, etc...

The next “problem” many students have with revision is that they often confuse revision with editing. Or worse, they value it less than editing. Revision may be confused with editing or valued less than editing by both students and teachers. The negative attitude and misunderstanding of revision has often been taught to students by teachers (or tests) that highly value grammatical perfection. My composition students often reiterate this value system to me at the beginning of my courses; they equate impeccable grammar with “good writing.” This is not a probable and cohesive view of writing. As Nancy Sommers explains in her landmark article “Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers,” many students seem to believe that “most problems in their essays can be solved by rewording.” (381). Similarly, “because students do not see revision as an activity in which they modify and develop perspectives and ideas, they feel that if they know what they want to say, then there is little reason for making revisions.” (Sommers 382). Sommers’ words still ring true today. Students often look for small things to fix, but it is important to recognize that it is not that they just are not willing to revise, “they do what they have been taught to do in a consistently narrow and predictable way.” (Sommers 383). Emily Isaacs, in her article “Process Writing Instruction in Practice: When Revising Looks Like Editing” applauds students superficial revisions as they can “represent thoughtful and important acts of revision...[a] laudable and praise-worthy step toward both fuller, more effective revision, and also, a final draft that readers will recognize as superior to the one that preceded it. (Isaacs 93-94). This can sometimes be true, but in my experience making small revisions is seen as checking revision off of a checklist, instead of truly revising a work to make it more effective. This is why I pushed my students to make more substantial revisions in my course.

If one teaches revision with a surface-level focus they are ignoring other equally (or even more) important parts of the writing process. Students need to look for more than surface-level errors to develop skills and strategies to implement as they write for a variety of disciplines, audiences, and mediums. Revision asks students to “ask themselves questions about the effectiveness of the content, seek additional sources of support, rewrite and reorder sections, and edit conventions” (Graham, MacArthur and Fitzgerald). I am promoting a way of revision that moves past editing, and into the realm of addressing high-level concerns. Viewing revision in this way and encouraging students to develop these skills stems from an understanding of the importance of writing for an audience and with a certain purpose to fill the needs of a certain rhetorical situation. Instead of viewing revision as focusing on small-level editing things, I want my students to think about revision as looking at whether or not the writing achieves the purpose and reaches the audience that they want it to.

First Year Composition often asks students to evaluate their attitudes towards writing, and that is part of what makes this course such a good place to re-think revision and encourage students to think about it differently. This resistance and/or misunderstanding of revision must be addressed if we want students to view writing as a process that is never quite finished. This must be addressed if we want students to think of essays as documents that need time to develop, not things that can be written the day before. I want to encourage students to revise and revise often. I want to truly change what students think a “good writer” is both in my classroom, and through the implementation of the strategies used in this study by other teachers.

The third reason that students may not want to revise is that they are uninterested in the topic or because they feel as if they have nothing to say or that they aren’t worth listening to. One issue that lies at the heart of this resistance to revise is that students are not fully grasping

the idea of rhetorical situations (and purpose and audience) and/or that they aren't given the opportunity to create or write documents that feel as if they are "authentic" rhetorical situations because they are constantly asked to write for an audience that consists of one teacher. They believe or have been led to believe that the teacher equals their audience. Many students who have had bad experiences with teachers being picky about grammar or format in the past become inherently focused on these things instead of bigger content level revision when they arrive in my courses. Some students also say that they think grammatical correctness is more important than content and that revision of overall ideas is not necessary. Many of these reasons go back to students' misunderstanding rhetorical situations or not having the opportunity to write or create assignments where they have been asked to clearly articulate a purpose and audience which they choose. Students are rarely asked to write or create assignments that ask them to have a clear purpose and audience that "make sense" to them. Students learn through doing, and in many composition classrooms they are not given the opportunity to "do" writing or creating that feels "authentic." Even though this new audience may still be "invoked," using the terminology of Lunsford and Ede, the audience (even if only perceived to exist), should be logical and bigger than a composition teacher. I asked students about their past writing experiences in their first journal, and there was an overwhelming sense of frustration with timed writing assignments and uninteresting topics, or even as one student said it: "I feel currently exhausted by reading and writing." There was an overwhelmingly negative response when I asked students about past writing experiences, a few said that they liked to write, but almost always provided the caveat that they liked to write...if it wasn't for school. These attitudes towards writing and revision are far from ideal. Some students provided alternatives; they would like writing more if they were

allowed to connect to the topic personally or if they were able to do some sort of creative writing.

Proposed Solutions

To address these problems regarding revision, I conducted a study of 33 freshman composition students in two sections of a second semester first year writing course (although for most assignments I received at most 31 due to incomplete or missing assignments.) As written, the course stressed rhetorical situations, purpose, and audience, and was based on the *Writing about Writing* Curriculum. In an attempt to address the previously described problems with revision, I employed the theory of adaptation (using various definitions and conceptions of the term) to teach my students. I asked them to read, write, and create adaptations of varying sorts. I was primarily interested in how learning about revision and rhetorical situations in this way would influence their understanding of these skills, and whether or not a sense of creativity and empowerment would emerge throughout the course as they began thinking about writing in new ways. Before explaining the specific activities and teaching methods I implemented in this course, I must take some time to explain adaptation studies and why this is an appropriate solution for the problems explained previously.

Adaptation Theory Background and Potential Applications

I am suggesting an approach to teaching composition that is structured around the use of adaptation theory, a multi-dimensional theoretical lens that is inherently concerned with rhetorical situations, audience, purpose, and revision. Before explaining how the use of adaptation theory is helpful in solving problems with revision, we must understand the accepted definitions and history in the field of adaptation studies. Linda Hutcheon, in her seminal work *A Theory of Adaptation*, states three criteria for something to be an “adaptation;” in order for a

work to be considered an adaptation it must be “a creative *and* interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging,” “an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work,” and “an acknowledged transposition of a recognizable other work or works,” (8). For the sake of this study, and for having students adapt their own work, “recognizable” has been used in a classroom-specific way instead of the work they were adapting being recognizable by the general public. Julie Sanders, another leading adaptation theorist, gives a definition of adaptation that strictly divides two closely related processes “an adaptation signals a relationship with an informing source text or original”, and “on the other hand, appropriation frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain” (26). Although my students took different steps when adapting their works and some took more direct moves away from their source text, the new text was informed by the source text, and therefore was adaptation.

Linda Hutcheon promotes an understanding of these adaptations that views the adaptation and the source-text as equal, instead of viewing the adaptation as “secondary [or] derivative” in relation to the “original” (2). She helped change the focus in adaptation studies towards viewing “adaptations *as adaptations*” in their own right instead of secondhand versions of original works (Hutcheon 4). It is to view the relationship between works as “repetitions, but repetition without replication.” (Hutcheon 7). Instead of replication it is interpretation and critical analysis.

Adaptations are

extensive transposition[s] of a particular work or works. This “transcoding” can involve a shift of mediums (a poem to a film) or a genre (an epic to a novel), or a change of frame and therefore context: telling the same story from a different point of view, for instance, can create a manifestly different interpretation. .. Transposition can also mean a shift in

ontology from the real to the fictional, from a historical account or biography to a fictionalized narrative or drama (Hutcheon 7-8)

Transpositions happen in a variety of ways, and these changes are often used as a way of repackaging, and even preserving previous works so that they will appeal to “a new audience that wouldn’t know it otherwise” (Hutcheon 8). This gives adaptations an air of necessity. The stories must be rewritten; they must be revised in order to become effective for a new audiences and rhetorical situations. They can fulfill a new purpose. The process of adaptation relies on a continued interest (and even an infatuation) with seeing familiar themes and characters in new ways. Leitch argues “that texts remain alive only to the extent that they can be rewritten and that to experience a text in all its power requires each reader to rewrite it.” (12-13). Although he is primarily discussing film adaptations of novels when he says this, these words ring true about most texts and even ideas. All texts remain alive if they can be rewritten. The same can be said of student texts. They must be rewritten and revised and the power these texts have in individuals’ lives is the necessity of them being rewritten. Adapting works in various ways, through revision, encourages students to view essays and other work as something that can constantly be improved.

It is also worth noting that adaptation can simultaneously refer to both the product and the process. Students are already familiar with the process of adapting something (whether used in the context of text, film, or something else) and adaptation as cultural or popular media product, and “adaptation studies capitalizes on students’ informal knowledges to enhance their academic studies” (Cartmell and Wheelehan 10). This is a benefit of the relevancy of adaptations; they are “everywhere today: on the television and movie screen, on the musical and dramatic stage, on the Internet, in novels and comic books, in your nearest theme park and video

arcade...Adaptations are obviously not new to our time” (Hutcheon 2). Whether they notice this process when their favorite book becomes a movie or when they see a podcast on YouTube that is based off a comic book, students are aware of this phenomenon. Adaptations as products and adaptation as a process asks students to see the necessity of revision. In addition to creating adaptations themselves, the very adaptations they are analyzing are a product of a revision process that focuses on the “big” things such as rhetorical situation, audience, and purpose. They are asked to reconsider their stance towards revision and re-writing in a culture that is in many ways obsessed with these processes.

Adaptation is not only a time-consuming process, but it is also a creative process. The “process of creation and revision that leads to a work of art... [is an] ongoing process, one that is never completely finished. What we consider the final product has then become the starting point of another. The reference to this passing of time is then closely associated with the process of artistic creation and recreation, presented here as a sort of cycle.” (Hudelet 46). Through learning about adaptations, students recognize the process, or cycle that writing is. Instead of viewing it as a straightforward trajectory from brainstorming to final draft, students are asked to revisit final drafts to turn them into entirely new items. There is no such thing as a “final text” in adaptation studies.

Adaptations are popular, relevant, and often rooted in visual media forms. Using adaptation, not as a “fun” alternative to “real books,” but as a relevant and useful work in itself gives students something to hold on to as they negotiate new writing situations and mediums. They are comfortable, to varying extents, with adaptations and what they are. Since many adaptations are created from or into visual forms, there is definitely a refreshing aspect to the forms students can read and create. Kathleen Brown, in her book *Teaching Literary Theory*

Using Film Adaptations, describes one of the benefits of teaching adaptations being the fact that teachers can “capitalize on the fact that students enjoy working with imagery” (146). My course expanded this idea to the fact that students not only enjoy working with imagery, some, if not all, students enjoy creating imagery too. This understanding of adaptations from popular culture and an interest in images provided a useful foundation to build my course upon.

Adaptation studies scholarship has grown along with this surge in the popularity of adaptations. Adaptation-based courses and adaptation pedagogy are now present in many Universities and secondary schools. Whether it is a course based on Frankenstein adaptations, an introduction to adaptation studies, or a film or screenwriting course, adaptations are becoming popular pedagogical tools. Adaptation studies and adaptation-based courses have been presented in various ways in the past, but there has been a move towards their becoming viewed as more academically acceptable courses rather than film-based classes being offered because they are “more fun” or offered as a supplement to more “serious” or “high” literature. This shift in the perception of adaptation theory by others in academia makes now an optimal time to stretch the boundaries of the field. Adaptation studies is an interdisciplinary field, and I think it is time for Rhetoric and Composition to become involved.

One area that is undervalued (or at least understudied) is the impact of adaptation-based courses on composition. What happens when students are asked “do adaptation?” I implemented a curriculum that asked students to conceptualize the writing process itself as a sort of adaptation (adapting a first draft into a second, adapting to different rhetorical/writing situations, adapting to college writing), but also that encouraged students to analyze adaptations and create adaptations themselves (either of fiction or their own writing). Students conducted adaptations in various ways throughout the semester based on individual student choice and interest. Some students

adapted their essay one topic (along with the topics of two or three other students) to create a new adaptation of a personal literacy argument. Other students directly created adaptations of fictional texts. I also broadened this idea of adaptation to include non-fiction texts. This means that we do have to suspend Sanders' definition a bit (these individual class texts aren't "recognizable" on a popular culture level, but they are on a class level.) Students were familiar with each other's work, and therefore the adapted work was viewed as an adaptation. Viewing adaptation as a process possible with both fiction and non-fiction school texts educated students on the act of revision and revising that are often needed outside of a school setting. Using both fiction and non-fiction adaptations encouraged a drafting atmosphere where students had a lot of freedom in how they completed adaptations and what they adapted. Using adaptations in these ways worked to ensure that students felt empowered as writers and/or creators through their ability to complete assignments in different mediums, forms, audiences, and genres. This helped them grow personally and academically as their understanding of revision and rewriting expanded.

Why is it so important to "do adaptation?" Thomas Leitch, author of various adaptation-based theory and film books, identified a contrast between adaptation and translation studies in a talk : "translation scholars tend to *do* translation: adaptation scholars tend not to do adaptation...doing adaptation opens insights, interpretations, and concepts inaccessible to conventional modes of theorizing, criticism, and expository writing about adaptations. It also offers new ways to engage the *aesthetics* of adaptation" (qtd. in Elliot 71). This same contrast is true of many adaptation courses. Students are asked to read, analyze, and discuss adaptations, but the course stops short of asking students to *do* adaptation. This type of creativity is a vital skill, and asking students to identify types of adaptations, mediums, or modes they want to create asks

them to consider their interests and adapt the class to them. They learned about the necessity of re-writing using a process that depends on this rewriting- adaptation.

Adaptation as Conceptual Framework

To solidify the concepts of rhetorical situations, audience, revision, and purpose, I asked students to conceptualize the process of revision and re-writing as “adapting” the draft they had into the final product that they wanted to create in order reach their audience and achieve their purpose. I exposed students to adaptation and multimodal theory and terms, and then asked that students apply this knowledge to a new writing situation. This practice in retention and application of the ideas was done with the hopes of creating a microcosm for what we as writing instructors want to happen: we want our students to be successful with the information they learn in our classes after they get their grade at the end of the term. One of the most vital pieces of content that students need to transfer is their understanding of rhetorical situations. The teaching of rhetorical situations is important because with these skills students move from being successful students to becoming successful communicators regardless of location.

Introducing revision as adaption helped students to understand and have something to say about rhetorical situations by providing them with a conceptual framework to use as they negotiated their writing assignments. Introducing the ideas of rhetorical situation, audience, purpose, analysis, and revision within the familiar mode of adaptation encouraged them to think reflexively as they were writing and also gave them a way to talk about the decisions they made as writers. Adaptation is a process consistently interested in change, which will then encourage students to become invested in change also. As they adapt to new writing situations and adapt their own writing to different rhetorical situations, they have a way to talk about the difficulties they are experiencing. Adaptation theory gave them a way to talk and think about what they were

experiencing as they drafted. This was also helpful because of the various definitions of adaptation and things that come to mind for my students. Students talked about adapting to the loss of a loved one or learning about animal adaptation in biology class. They had a multifaceted understanding of what adaptation was and how this related to them. While discussing adaptations, many students wrote in their journals how they viewed themselves as adapters of written work, but also as those who are adapting to a new way of life...college. This way of thinking about writing and living as adaptation became a go-to way of communicating difficulties throughout the course.

Addressing the problem of students valuing revision less than editing or confusing it with editing, adaptation can help students think about “bigger” concerns, because the adaptation process is inherently interested in these issues. The first reason looking at adaptations and adaptation theory can be helpful for teaching revision is that the entire process of adaptation relies on the fact that people want to change texts not in only small ways, but in shifts in time periods, cultures, and mediums. Revision is necessary to the process. By introducing adaptation theory, students were asked to be concerned with rhetorical situations, organization, medium and other “high-level” concerns. They were asked to view their work as making a change and as having a clear purpose and audience. To do this, many of my students had to adapt their original ideas/thoughts into new forms and uses of language in order to make them effective. I am proposing that teaching students to view revision and re-writing as adaptation as well as encouraging them to adapt works into different media forms will help them think of revision as making substantive changes to a text.

Adaptations and adaptation theory can also help students see the necessity of revision by helping them view texts as needing to be revised, and revision as an ongoing process. In many

ways texts are designed to be revised and re-written. This is why adaptations of texts exist. The process of adaptation relies on a continued interest (and even an infatuation) with seeing familiar themes and characters in new ways. The creation of adaptations is a huge industry (just think of all the films based on classic texts or the huge *Walking Dead* franchise.) Adaptation relies on the audience's desire to see familiar things presented in new ways. These works must be rewritten. In a similar way, student texts must be rewritten to stay effective. They must be rewritten and revised and the power these texts have in individuals' lives is the necessity of them being rewritten. Students are asked to reconsider their stance towards revision and re-writing in a culture that is in many ways obsessed with these processes.

Both adaptation and revision are ongoing processes. The "process of creation and revision that leads to a work of art... [is an] ongoing process, one that is never completely finished. What we consider the final product has then become the starting point of another. The reference to this passing of time is then closely associated with the process of artistic creation and recreation, presented here as a sort of cycle." (Hudelet 46). Through learning about adaptations, students recognize the process- or cycle, which writing is. Instead of viewing it as a straightforward trajectory from brainstorming to final draft, students are asked to revisit final drafts to turn them into entirely new items. There is no such thing as a "final text" when discussing adaptations.

Adaptation as Liminal Space

Adaptations are in many ways betwixt-and-between genres and are often places of conflict between an original work and an adapted work. Sometimes students face a similar conflict when they are writing for multiple audiences or are writing new genres and looking at this process can help them see and do revision in new ways. The process of adaptation

acknowledges the complicated nature of writing for different groups, and asks students to think about their audience and purpose as they draft. Viewing re-writing and revision as adaptation will hopefully allow students to see the multiple meanings and ways of writing that are competing as they draft for different media forms and audiences. Sanders talks about the importance of revision in creating adaptations in her book *Adaptation and Appropriation*: students in this class were also asked to create adaptations that were forms of “transpositional practice, casting a specific genre into another generic mode, an act of re-vision in itself” (18). Adaptation is “frequently a specific process involving the transition from one genre to another: novels into film; drama into musical,” or in the case of this class, written work into visual work or memo into short film. (Sanders 19). Source texts must be shortened and/or expanded in order to meet the expectations and requirements of the audience and/or genre. This necessary component of revision and adaptation as re-writing is what makes this theoretical framework of such great use in the composition classroom.

To successfully adapt a work, students must evaluate and experiment with a variety of rhetorical strategies and methods in order to learn to recognize the demands that particular audiences place on written communication. They must determine what mode, genre, and language they should use to effectively reach their audience. How should they change their first essay into their second group essay? What will they have to change as their audience expands from one teacher to teachers in general? What language, form, or medium should they use to reach their audience? This requires students to not only conduct a rhetorical analysis of other works to look for effective rhetorical techniques, but also to use their own rhetorical strategies in the writing and re-writing process as they adapt their own work into another media form or for another audience. In order to create an adaptation, students must be interested in rhetorical

situation, audience, and purpose if it is to be effective. Adaptations are liminal; they are constantly adapting in order to be effective and relevant.

Adaptations can also be very useful in teaching rhetorical situations because there is no limit to the mediums into which texts can be adapted; this can address the problem with students having nothing to say or being uninterested in the topic. When working with adaptations, these revisions and re-writings, these transpositions, are also concerned with medium. Students must choose various mediums to adapt texts into or at least acknowledge how these shifts affect the content and information included or not included in adaptations. They must consider what Gaudreault and Marion's call "technical constraints of different media" which "will inevitably highlight different aspects of that story (Hutcheon 10). With each medium or mode of communication different things must be adapted in new and changing ways. An adapter must consider each mode and the fact that "no one mode is inherently good at doing one thing and not another; but each has at its disposal different means of expression- media and genres- and so can aim at and achieve certain things better than others" (Hutcheon 24). If a student is to adapt something on their own they must pick and choose a medium that they see as appropriate for achieving their purpose and also in reaching their audience. Do they want to explain their topic visually? With text? For an online audience? What do they want to say? They must consider all of these aspects, and in doing so they are interpreting the importance of the text: they are "first interpreters and then creators" (Hutcheon 18).

Adaptations rely on writers/creators/adapters wanting/needing/having to provide commentary on the "source text." There is empowerment in this desire to create. The "having" to say something is what many students lack in other writing assignments or when they think of the revision process as an optional happening instead of a necessary step to adapt the paper they

have into the paper they want to create. This drive, this necessity of writing can be a refreshing step away from the fictionalized audiences and one-size-fits-most writing assignments that many writing courses rely on. I would argue that this reason for writing contributes to increased positive attitudes towards writing and the writing process, but most importantly an increased feeling of empowerment in first-year composition students. Adaptation studies has “facilitated fresh approaches to issues of interpretation, rewriting, and refunctioning, enabling purposeful reflection on our contemporary obsession with reworking culture to suit our needs.” (Cartmell and Wheelehan 1).

Adaptation as Play

Another reason for using adaptation theory, and thinking about the creative process and creative products of adaptations is the “inherent sense of play, produced in part by the activation of our informed sense of similarity and difference between the texts being invoked, and the connected interplay of expectation and surprise, that lies at the heart of the experience of adaptation and appropriation” (Sanders 25). Adaptations are fun, and this pleasure and play must not be forgotten because it is a vital part of their success as teaching tools in classrooms. Yes, it is a new way of thinking about films and multi-media- not as lesser than texts, but as an alternative to texts. Breaking old habits is difficult, but experimenting with different forms and coming up with new ways to think about information is often well-received and exciting after students are used to creating essays and text-only assignments in many other courses. Students can pick what they want to focus on as a way to encourage interest in the assignment, but also to allow students to work on forms and topics that are relevant to them. While we don’t want to give students the impression that talking about adaptations is all fun and games and fall back into

the act of showing films in a course because it is a “fun” or a “free” day, we can still use the appeal of adaptations to promote interest throughout the course.

This act of play can also promote a “more active literacy [...] whose goal is engagement, analysis, and reasoned debate.” (Leitch 12). Students are actively involved in the creation of texts and the purposes as a way of empowering them and helping them see themselves as writers. Students can work through their own views of literacy as they think of new ways to explore and present information to an audience. This active reading and literacy was sustained throughout the course through the reading and creation of adaptations. Students were asked to actively read certain genres or information about certain audiences in order to effectively complete their assignments. Encouraging the creation of visual adaptations ensured that “readers involve their minds with both the visual and narrative content, hopefully resulting in greater comprehension and interest” (Syma and Weiner 5). This interest is vital to addressing the third problem that this study hopes to address.

“Play” can also happen as students are encouraged to explore new ways of learning, new mediums, audiences, and/or computer software. This way of teaching acknowledges the fact that, according to Lawrence Raw, “meta-learning is non-linear: students have different ways of making sense of past experiences as well as opening up new avenues of research for themselves.” (32). Raw takes his argument a step further as he promotes using experimental processes of learning, when he says that these ideas “lie at the heart of innovative pedagogies in adaptation studies that not only reevaluate existing teaching methods, but assume that lifelong learning among our students is of primary significance.” (37). By recognizing how meta-learning occurs and how important it is, teachers can encourage students to learn their own way and approach different mediums, topics, and writing situations that will help them in the future. By

having students ‘do adaptations’ they can pick and choose avenues that they would like to explore. If a student is interested in film, they make a film. If they are interested in writing for online audiences, they write a blog post. Encouraging students to grow in ways they want to (on a person-by-person basis) will result in an individualized curriculum based on students’ needs and academic pursuits. This is an effective way to help students step outside of their comfort zone and expand their knowledge as students and as people. It asks students to determine their interests, and become active participants in their education. This has the potential for students to be much more invested in their projects and their learning.

Students as Critical Readers and Critics

Students need to be exposed to diverse media sources in order to become critical readers of texts. This ability to critically read texts relies on a solid knowledge of rhetorical situations and audience. In this class, students will move from critically reading texts produced by others to creating texts themselves and this emphasis on critically reading and adapting texts will encourage them to move past fidelity discourse and into the process of creating effective communication. Students develop as critical thinkers and readers while engaging in self-reflective reading behaviors. They must look at their essays through the eyes of a different audience, and think about whether or not they fulfill the purpose that they want to. This flexibility and creative competency is important for their later success in academia. They must know how to revise and adapt their work for their audience in order to effectively communicate. Whether this audience is the general public or their History teacher, they can gear their writing towards that specific audience, and ideally produce effective documents or projects.

Because adaptation is a process of critiquing and making commentary on a source-text, students develop their own individual opinions and arguments through how they adapt works and

their use of rhetorical strategies. Students have something to say. A particular interest in this study is how adaptation is “frequently involved in offering commentary on a source text” (Sanders 18). This idea of metacommentary (whether actual comments or not) is a way for me to encourage an awareness of rhetorical choices on behalf of the students as adapters, and also a way for me to encourage self-reflexive reading and writing behaviors. Cartmell and Wheelehan both view “the adaptation and the adaptation critic as engaged in the process of ‘rewriting’ (6). No matter if you are creating the adaptation or analyzing or critiquing the adaptation, the focus is on this idea of “rewriting.” Along with the transposition from one genre to another genre or media format, “many adaptations, of novels and other generic forms, contain further layers of transposition, relocating their source texts not just generically, but in cultural, geographical and temporal terms” (Sanders 20). The adapter, through the choices that he/she makes, offers a different point of view and a commentary on the source text. Students become critics and interpreters of big themes out of necessity. They must be concerned with these issues if they are to complete successful adaptive works. How can this help students? Cartmell and Wheelehan claim that in their experience the learning of adaptations “made [their] students better ‘readers’ of both film and literary texts, and much more adept textual critics” and help[ed] them create “original and challenging projects.” (5). These results stem from the fact that “Adaptation studies blends the experience of consumption with that of academic criticism” (Cartmell and Wheelehan 10). This tying together of criticism and creation will allow students to find their own voice and revise their thoughts and papers and other works to represent this. This process encourages students to become creators and critics of texts. As students become more skilled at critiquing they also feel more empowered as writers and readers of different types of texts. Isn’t this the goal of composition?

The process of adaptation asks the adaptor to interpret the meaning of the text, read for important themes, and decide which changes they want to make to the text. This gets increasingly complicated the more a text has been adapted. There are permanent changes that are made to works as they are adapted, and if one is adapting one such work they must also recognize they are adapting previous adaptations as well as the source text. One cannot watch the 2005 *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* without comparing it with Gene Wilder's *Willie Wonka* from the 1971 film. Adaptations bring up issues of purpose, audience, change, revision/recreation, criticism, and critical reading and interpretation. That is why they are useful in addressing attitudes towards revision and towards rhetorical situations. The process of adaptation is "an activity of literary criticism...a critical essay" that "selects some episodes, excludes others, offers preferred alternatives...In the process, like the best criticism, it can throw new light on the original" (Sinyard 117). Students become critics and re-writers; they can begin to acknowledge the necessity of changing texts. Everything they do, every "movement between forms and media is an act of criticism or theorization 'about' intermedial relations" it is important for students to reflect on this process and be fully aware of the changes and critiques they are making (Elliott 76). This self-reflexivity and acknowledgement of how they are changing texts as they adapt them will help them acknowledge the value and necessity of revision. They will be thinking about how "changes in media adapt and rework cultural conventions and audience desires" as well as change the effectiveness of their work for any given rhetorical situation (Elliott 78).

As explained above, adaptation theory and the teaching of adaptations (both reading and creating) have many potential benefits in terms of solving students' problems with revision. In

the following section, I will outline the specific documents I received and ways I taught adaptation in order to later evaluate their effectiveness.

Chapter Two: Methods

In order to teach students about rhetorical situations and revision, I created a sequence of writing assignments to teach in two sections of first year composition. Section A consisted of 15 students (five men and ten women). Three of these students were sophomore level, and 12 were freshmen. Section B consisted of 17 students (ten women and seven men). Two students were sophomore level students, and the other 15 were freshmen. Both of these courses were taught during the same time of day, and I did my best to maintain consistency between both sections for the sake of this study.

As written, the first year composition curriculum heavily emphasizes that students learn about rhetorical situations, so the emphasis on adaptation was combined with the existing curriculum to further this goal. There were also suggested assignments that I was encouraged to teach in the course in order (Literacy Study, Literacy Critique, and Rhetorical Analysis.) In an attempt to follow the assignments that were provided to me as a teaching assistant, it resulted in some problematic sequencing. I would have preferred to teach rhetorical analysis before I had students create their own adaptation of their works, but as I was following the sequence of assignments provided they seem a bit out of order. Nonetheless, I think that my course intentions and assignments ended up meshing quite well with the already established curriculum. I developed specific teaching methods to challenge students with these ideas of adaptation and collected assignments as a way to receive their feedback and thought process as they worked through these new ideas and ways of thinking about writing and revision. I will outline these methods used to teach and evaluate the effectiveness of using adaptation below.

For this study, I collected written work (both formal assignments and informal reflections and journals) to create a trajectory of how students' opinions and experiences with revision and

adaptation changed as the semester progressed. The primary data was collected from the first three units from my first year composition course. I collected written work from my students in an attempt to see whether or not the proposed solutions that adaptation theory and the creation of adaptations listed in the previous section worked when implemented in a composition classroom.

There were five types of data that I gathered: Peer Review Reflections, Essay Reflections, Editorial Cartoons, Essay Three Annotations, and Adaptation Journal entries. I gathered Peer Review Reflections asking questions about the peer review and revision processes after each of the essay assignments (See APPENDIX B for full list of questions). I chose to do this so that students could directly reflect on their experience for revising and plan for further revising their works a few class periods before the final assignment was due. This allowed me to analyze their changing attitudes towards revision over the semester and from assignment to assignment. It also gave me data regarding how they were defining revision. I also asked students to write one-page Essay Reflections after they completed each of their writing assignments. These consisted of open-ended answers about their experiences with the essay assignment, revision, and overall reactions. These allowed me to gather data regarding their empowerment as writers, attitudes towards writing and revision, and how these attitudes changed over the course of the semester. I was able to receive unforced, raw feedback that I wouldn't have received without this low-risk, low-point assignment. My students kept a "journal" throughout the semester where they answered (in at least one-page) a sequence of questions on a specific topic we discussed in class. I have included my students' answers to the journal regarding adaptation here so that it is clear how they were defining adaptation and how they were interpreting the language of adaptation to talk about revision. This journal allowed me to gauge their understanding of adaptation early on in the class. I have also included sample of student

work: Editorial Cartoons and Essay Three Annotations. I chose a few students from each class (for the sake of space and time for this project.) I tried to choose a wide variety of works from different students to show a fair representation of work that I received. These works allowed me to see how students were adapting work themselves (editorial cartoons,) and how they were re-thinking revision after they turned in final drafts of a work (Essay Three Annotations.) I was able to compare changes that they made to their works as they worked through the adaptation process.

Unit One

I created a standard to measure students' progress through my sequence of assignments by asking students a series of survey questions about writing (See Appendix A). With this data I came up with a list of the three main problems my students had with revision that framed this study. After gathering this data, my students and I began working on unit one. This first collection of assignments revolved around introducing adaptation as a theoretical framework. After having my students read the introduction to *A Theory of Adaptation* by Linda Hutcheon, they brainstormed adaptations that they had encountered and I encouraged them to push the boundaries of what adaptation could be, other than book to film. Through these methods, students were able to have a firm foundation in adaptation as a conceptual framework to set up the rest of the course. In order to tie this idea of adaptation to revision, I asked students to think about revision as "taking the draft you have and adapting it into the final product you want to create." This encouraged a focus on content and bigger-level items. During peer review I encouraged my students to focus on bigger-items such as content, purpose, and whether or not the document achieved what it needed to instead of looking at grammar. In order to further instill this way of thinking about adaptation, I asked students in their peer review reflections (a few questions after peer review for each essay) to plan how they were going to adapt the draft they

currently had into the draft they wanted to turn in as a final draft (See Appendix B for full list of questions). From these responses, I was able to get an insight into their planned revisions.

Essay one was primarily used to introduce students to the course, to their ideas about writing through the identification of a misconception they had, and to begin their thinking of adaptation as revision and the idea of rhetorical situations (See Appendix C). During this unit I introduced the idea of adapting and “Revising” ideas earlier in the writing process. While students were working on Essay one, I asked them to complete an activity asking them to think about their purpose and big-picture revision of their topic. I asked them to create an editorial cartoon drawing their argument and purpose for Essay one. This was both an activity to engage students in adaptation across mediums, getting them to “do adaptation,” and also an activity in recognizing that there are certain genre conventions to some rhetorical situations (as with editorial cartoons). We brainstormed a list of what makes an editorial cartoon effective and used these as guidelines in evaluating their own cartoons. This is another way to ensure I can compare their purposes and main ideas earlier in the writing process as a way to see how this changed into the final essay one. For the sake of time, I looked at 4 students’ work. These were chosen based on readability, and the clarity of their argument.

After introducing adaptation as a lens through which students could view revision and rhetorical situations in my course, I needed a way to evaluate how students were thinking about the topic. To evaluate this understanding of adaptation that will be fundamental to my course, I collected a one-page journal entry asking students to define adaptation. In the following chapter I will analyze these answers as a way to quantify how students began re-thinking adaptation and revision throughout my course. Besides journal entries and peer review reflections after each peer review, I also asked students to complete reflections after they turned in each final draft. I

asked a series of questions that encouraged students to reflect on their experience writing the essay. By analyzing the actual products of these activities, I hope to determine whether or not this way of thinking about revision encouraged students to have a deeper conceptualization of revision (as compared to editing) and a stronger understanding of the process' usefulness than before my course.

Unit Two

The goal of the second unit, culminating in a multi-modal adaptation group project, was to address issues regarding the necessity of revision, confusion with editing, and the issues of students not feeling as if they have anything to say (all three problems identified at the beginning of class concerning revision). To accomplish this, for Essay two students were asked to adapt their individual essay one into a bigger multi-modal project by combining it with other students in the class (See Appendix D), or if needed they could choose a new topic to explore. Essay two was an activity concerned with the necessity of revising and adapting ideas from one audience or medium to another. I asked students to create multimodal projects that would make an argument when used together to complement each other and that was a synthesis of multiple students' arguments from essay one. They were forced to see how revision and adaptation was necessary if they were to make a cohesive argument as a group that could make bigger and stronger claims than an argument from one individual. The essay assignment asked students to think about revision and synthesis as a way to strengthen their own arguments and ideas.

This assignment was designed to empower students and address issues with revision through the emphasis on "doing" adaptations. I placed this emphasis on "doing" adaptation both at a revision level and through the completion of creative adaptations of a given work (whether editorial cartoon or essay assignment) throughout my course. I have previously discussed how

necessary I, and other scholars, deem the action of completing adaptation, so this was the basis of Essay two, as well as in-class activities). One of the most helpful aspects of “doing” adaptation is, as Elliott puts it, that “every movement between forms and media is an act of criticism or theorization ‘about’ intermedial relations” (76). Students did this type of critiquing of their own essays, and the essays for their group members (through the process of combining them together) for this second assignment.

Much of what I wanted to accomplish with my students by having them “do adaptations” themselves is similar to what Elliot says about her “Creative-Critical Work” assignments in the collection *Teaching Adaptations*. She explains that “The kind of creative-critical work I assign my students goes beyond the verbal and rational to nonverbal and nonrational adaptations of all kinds in media, accompanied by a critical essay in which students interpret their own adaptations as criticisms of the works they adapt.” (Elliott 75). This simultaneous emphasis on the creation of adaptations and reflections regarding critical and rhetorical choices that students make is what I hoped to mirror in my teaching, especially with Essay two and the rhetorical analysis essay three. Elliott mentions this benefit saying that viewing

the adaptation as critic allows students to produce their own aesthetics and represent their own values; the critical essay that accompanies the adaptation requires them to set these in dialogue with prior adaptations, criticism, and theory. Instead of teaching students to abstract aesthetic and cultural practices into words, theories, philosophies, and ideologies, the adaptation as critic materializes criticism, while the companion essay reflects abstractly on that materialization and, in the best essays, on the relations between the two, as well as among media, disciplines, and theories (84)

My students were asked to critique their works through the process of adapting them. It is impossible to adapt something into another form without performing some sort of criticism. My students did this in how they changed the format, audience, point of view, and/or purpose in their essays as they adapted them. Many groups picked one written and one visual medium as a way to separate the creative and critical components, while others incorporated both parts throughout the entire multimodal final project.

This type of critical-creative work also asks students to do creative-oriented writing in their composition course. Elliott, using similar assignment goals as I did, remarked that her students have gone beyond filmmaking to produce adaptations in other media: writing, dramatizing, storyboarding, filming, novelizing, graphic-novelizing, drawing, illustrating, painting, sculpting, set designing, costuming, staging, scoring, puppeteering, acting, dancing, singing, editing, directing, casting, choreographing, gaming, video gaming, and producing marketing materials, film posters, book covers, news articles, political pamphlets, magazine spreads, scrapbooks, and multimodal installations (77)

This allows a differentiation in the types of assignments students create, and many students picked medium forms that they wanted to explore in order to use in their professional careers. Whether this meant creating an infographic, business letter, or art project, students were able to take charge of their curriculum through picking mediums and audiences.

The emphasis on multimodality in Essay two was used as a way to encourage students to directly think about the act of “designing multimodal texts” and by doing this they needed “to consider the different roles or functions of each mode included in the text: image, text, sound, etc...” in hopes that “these skills can then be transferred to reading texts in a variety of locations both inside and outside of the University classroom” (Choo 172). The goal for this assignment

was for students to learn the theory and terms related to adaptation and multimodality and then to apply this knowledge to a new writing situation

Students answered peer review reflection for this assignment in their groups, but then answered their reflection questions separately. I asked them the following questions: Who was your audience for the source text? Adapted text? What was your purpose for the source text? Adapted text? How did you negotiate these changes in purpose and audience through your writing and revision? Do you think you were successful? How did you gauge this? For these questions received feedback on the adaptation process and what changes they made. I also wanted to know how they determined whether or not they successfully had met the needs of the audience and purpose. This way I could evaluate the self-reflexivity and awareness related to their understanding of revision and rhetorical situations.

Unit Three

The goal of unit three was similar to that of essay three, as it was also a creative-critical assignment. It was a rhetorical analysis where students were asked to analyze two works (one original, and one adaptation) in reference to a scientific article and mass media adaptation or a fictional adaptation (See Appendix E). In this project students were asked to become critics of rhetorical strategies and many relied on adaptation and rhetorical theory to articulate their arguments, but they were also asked to present their information in a medium of their choice to an audience of incoming freshmen (or another audience they thought would be a better fit). This combined creative-critical assignment was also used as a way for students to develop a self-reflexivity in terms of their own writing and self-awareness as I asked them to annotate their essays a full week after turning them in. With fresh eyes, I asked them to look over the documents for the specific rhetorical strategies they employed when drafting, and to also look for

possible revisions that could have been added. By asking them to do this, I am hoping to receive more information about their adaptation/re-writing/revision process. I encouraged them to explain changes to their writing, or things they kept the same and asked them to explain why they made these choices in terms of the audience and rhetorical situation they had in mind for the project. In this unit we also looked at adaptations in class- a scientific adaptation from report to mass media article, and the 2015 movie *Room*.

By looking at students work in relation to adaptations, their essay assignments, essay reflections, peer review reflections, and journals I was able to provide evidence that their views on revision and rhetorical situations has changed through the use of this teaching method. Through the textual analysis of their reactions to assignments, explanation of rhetorical strategies used, and by comparing their earlier drafts and ideas to final drafts of papers I will discuss the benefits of this approach for solving these problems with revision.

In the following section I analyze the texts that I received and show evidence of empowerment, understanding of adaptation/s, rhetorical situations, audience, changing ideas of revision, and I also be explain reactions regarding my teaching methods and views towards writing in order to explain the benefits of this approach. Besides the analysis of the Editorial Cartoons and Essay three annotations, I included quotations and data from students and organized them under themes that emerged in their responses. I did exclude answers from students who did not answer the question or whose sentiments were portrayed through the words of another student.

Chapter 3: Results and Discussion

Peer Review Reflections

Assessing the ways that students conceived of the term revision was vital for understanding how their understanding of these concepts changed. Students were asked questions about revision after the peer review workshop for each essay. After introducing the idea of adaptation briefly, students answered a series of questions about revision and adaptation after their peer-review workshop for essay one. The first question I asked was “What is Revision?” The responses varied, but all 28 students focused on the idea of change in their definitions.

Out of the 28 students who attended peer review and answered the questions, 17 students vaguely described the process as improving or changing a paper in a positive way to make it better. The next group of students went a step further; eleven students focused on the process that the writer must undergo. Some examples of the specific steps they suggested revision included were “rewording or reconstructing sentences to make it more clear and effective,” “looking over a piece of writing and making changes to improve it, that we should revise to make our writing stronger and more concise,” and “adapting and making changes to a paper in order to better your argument and allow your paper to make more sense.” Other specific suggestions of how to revise were “editing, modifications, adding in new material, etc...,” and that “we should revise our writing to improve ideas or the formation of sentences” or “to reread our writing to find mistakes or something that doesn’t sound right, to fix it.”

A few of the students focused on adaption being important for achieving the overall goal of the work: revision is “going over your work and deciding what could be improved. We should revise to ensure our writing is meeting the needs required from us,” or “adaptation of writing in

order to reach the author's goal for the piece. Revision is key to reaching this goal." "We should revise our writing to make it stronger and to fully get our point across," "we need to revise our writings so that the message you are trying to convey is clear to the reader."

In one of the courses, six out of sixteen students displayed one of the misconceptions surrounding revision that I discussed earlier. An example of using the word editing to talk about revision was that one student said that "revision is the editing," but used looking back at the paper to make sure it achieved the overall goal as an example. Another student did something similar when they said that "revision is changing or editing your writing" as they focused their discussion on looking back at your paper to make sure it is understandable. The other four students showed genuine confusion with the concepts and the connection between the two concepts: "revision...can include editing," "revision is going back to a paper and editing," "revision= to change (in a small amount?)" and "editing and adaptation" are to make sure a paper is perfect."

The students conceptualized and defined change differently. Some gave vague answers about change, other specific types of things to change, or explained the importance of a work fulfilling its rhetorical purpose or goal. The focus on revision as "making change" reflected a basic understanding of revision. This understanding of change is one of the key factors that tie the processes of revision and adaptation together. This act of making specific references to what they should/could do when they revise showed that they were beginning to think about revision as something that is beneficial to the writing process. The number of students who specifically described the revision process is proof that they were taking the concepts from the course and thinking about how they could actually apply and develop them in their own writing.

Although it was a smaller number compared to the students who recognized revision as change or gave specific steps to making revision, there were some students who went the step further and thought about their projects as achieving a specific overall goal. These students were thinking about the documents that they were writing as making a change and achieving a purpose for their specific audience. Their language reflects a concern with “goals,” “points,” and “messages.” Even at the end of this first essay assignment, students were thinking about the importance and power of their work in my course. They were also thinking about their work as having readers, an audience, to whom they should appeal in order for the paper to accomplish what they wanted it to. As far as addressing the problems with revision that this study is based around, students were beginning to understand what revision was, and how to go about actually revising work in terms of rhetorical situation, purpose, and overall goal. This was a step in the right direction. The use of language associated with adaptations was helping them articulate the process of revision. These responses were vastly different from the responses I received toward the beginning of class when I asked them to define revision. Their focus was on making substantial changes and revision; they were already thinking about revision as a process. This focus on change and “looking over” and “going over” work really reflects the on-going process of revision instead of a one-and-done mentality when writing papers.

Even though all of the students focused on change and most reflected the importance of bigger more global concerns, one of the “problems” or misconceptions that was founding this study- that students confuse editing with revision and/or value revision less than editing- became evident in the data collected from this assignment in class A. Two different types of confusion occurred: 1) students were using the word editing when actually talking about revision, and 2) students were defining editing when asked to define revision. The students who were using the

word editing, but actually talking about revision reflect a confusion with terms, but not necessarily a confusion with concepts. This misuse of the terms was not surprising for me, as it is something I have experienced every semester of teaching first year writing. It is the students who defined editing when asked to define revision who reflected a more deeply rooted confusion regarding the concepts. Of these students who showed genuine confusion, some were hesitant, and recognized they were struggling with the topics (as seen with the student who included a question mark in their answer.) They were beginning to question their own definitions, but were still unsure. Even with this confusion with editing and revision, these answers show that students were beginning to question their ideas and think about revision in different ways.

The next question asked students: “How can you “adapt” the draft you have into the draft you want to create?” I did not include answers that did not address the question as these answers were repeated from the question above and did not include specific steps and/or discussion regarding revision. There were two students who misread the question, so their answers are not included here. Please note that one student focused on both addressing their audience and taking into account their peers’ advice, so they are counted twice in the following totals.

Ten students focused on implementing the advice they received and “using the comments made by [their] peers to change and improve” the paper. 13 other students gave specific things to change, they would “write more efficiently,” “make suggestions and simple changes,” “make personal connections and use “I,”” or explained that to do this you “make the changes to your paper’s ideas and topics and change your wording to make your ideas come across clearly.” Many focused on elaborating, that they would focus on “adapting [their] rough draft into a little longer piece that has more support,” “adding more info,” “expand on some topic,” “turn it into a

comprehensible paper from just ideas,” or work on the parts that “allow for a lot of expansion.” Two students said they needed to do “more research.”

What interested me the most were the five students that focused on audience and rhetorical strategies. Two students wrote that “you need to think about where it is now and have a clear idea of what you want to create and change your language and tone to your new audience, just make small changes to make it into the topic you want,” and “I can change my wording- which I understand- to make my writing easier to follow by my audience.” One student went as far to recognize that as she was aiming her project towards students her peers “were technically an audience so [she] was able to see how [her] writing came across.” Two students already adopted the language of adaptation to talk about the revision process: “You can “adapt” the draft through acknowledging who the audience is and how you need to interact with them. It is also important to ensure the format suits the style of writing, e.g. email, letter, etc...” and “depending on the audience, Authors can “Adapt” their papers to direct their thoughts towards the reader.”

In the second peer review reflection, the answers reflected that the problems of students not understanding why revision is necessary and/or students confusing editing with revision or valuing editing more than revision were beginning to decline. It is important to note that since this was a group paper, each group filled out a peer review reflection, so instead of 28 individual responses, there were 12 group responses that all members helped to write. Their answers to the second question “how can you “adapt” the draft you have...?” did change by this time in the semester.

Two out of 12 groups misread the question and talked about what they learned from the peer review instead of talking about how they can “adapt” their draft. One student focused on implementing peer review comments, the other nine students gave specific things they would do

to “adapt” their draft. Of these nine students, four (33.3% of the groups) focused their specific steps on appealing to their audience. This is up from five out of 28 students (18% of the students) on the first peer review reflection.

The one group who focused on peer help explained that they “had an outline of what [they] were planning to do” and their peer “suggested some ways on creating the website and giving formatting help.” Since they chose a very specific medium that was tricky to figure it out, they benefited from this type of feedback for revisions and planning. Many of the other students who focused on specific things that they would to complete their drafts focused on expanding what they had and elaborating. They made plans such as “We will finalize our script and begin filming scenes for our video,” “We need to add more to the info graphic and fully write the article for the teachers. Add data to info graphic,” we “Need to keep the point. Finish it with 6 paragraphs[s],” and “We can adapt our draft by exploring deeper into the points we have made in our draft.” Some focused on time management: “By completing more work. Having the script figured out and having the handouts completed so we have more time to work on the video.”

With the aim of this study, I am most concerned with how students are valuing and describing their essays, their “adaptations,” in terms of their specific rhetorical situations and audience(s). The students who focused their plans to “adapt” their work suggested that they “Include more of our survey research from our individual essays from Essay one. Have a more visual PowerPoint rather than a lot of text.” Another group explained that they would “adapt [their project] to fit a broader audience such as a whole room of teachers.” They would be “Adapting to [their] audience” by “using funny videos” and “Interviewing [their] friends plus random people.” One group focused even more on revision as a recursive process when they acknowledged after peer review that they needed to “Formulate [their] outline and ideas into a

written article that effectively executes [their] purpose.” They needed to go back and address their outline and overall ideas in terms of their purpose so that their project achieved what they wanted it to.

The increasing percentage of students who were directly concerned with rhetorical situations and audience in the specific steps they wanted to take to revise, (in answering a question that did not blatantly ask for this type of response), positively correlates with the increased focus on adaptation and revision for essay two. This also reflects an understanding of rhetorical situations and expectations of their medium, because they acknowledged that *how* they presented their information to their audience, by using a certain medium, was also important to achieving their purpose. Content wasn't their only concern. They also focused on including more of their original works from essay one in their adaptation for essay two. They went back to the source-text as a basis for their new project.

One group in particular tied together this idea of adaptation, revision, and audience in their answer. They realized, after peer review, that their project wasn't quite meeting the expectations of their audience. They realized that they needed to go back and make some changes to make the project more effective. This audience awareness was also evident in the group that said they could improve their project by including a “visual powerpoint.” They were thinking of ways they could appeal to their audience, and also ways they could conform or challenge genre and medium expectation. One group used “funny videos” in order to appeal to their audience and show that they were taking the assignment and the idea of their audience and rhetorical situation seriously and chose to focus their revisions on meeting their expectations. The answers to this question progressed from essay one to essay two as more students provided specific aspects of their project that they needed to change, and many of the

groups focused on their audience and purpose in these plans for adapting. They more smoothly adopted the language of adaptation when writing about their projects, and this reflects an increasing comfort with both the content and theoretical framework that this study presented to them regarding revision.

The following question asked students to give specific goals. Most students repeated or gave slightly more specific answers than the previous question, but one student described that the “Main goal is to adapt your language and tone so it is fitting to the audience. To have a clear goal is the biggest step to completing your adaptation. The goal can be different depending on the writing.” A similar sentiment was expressed by another student who simply said they wanted to “Make sure the audience can read this. “There were also students who were using the term revision as referring to a process or cycle. This was shown when one student said they would “make revision. Have others look at it. Make final revision.” These recursive steps regarding revision were different from the view of revision as editing that many of them showed earlier in the semester. Two students even said that it would be beneficial to them to go back and outline (we were on rough drafts in class).

After essay two peer review, many students portrayed similar sentiments to their answers to the previous question, but with more focus on steps to follow to complete their project. There were some students that added in goals that were more broad and audience-oriented than their answers to the first question. These groups talked about making their paper “relatable to teachers and students and making the differences clear” and achieving their goal of raising “awareness about teachers diminishing child creativity.” These plans were largely focused on making sure that their audience understood their purpose, whether this was by providing “3 defined examples of why 5 body paragraph essay is not enough to succeed in college” or making sure they “1.

Grasp [their] audience's attention. 2. Prove to [their] audience that not all folks with southern accents are stupid but some use them to their advantage." There was also rhetorical awareness evident in the two groups who explained that they needed to make some adjustments to their mediums, they needed to "make a PowerPoint and do some kind of blog post or journal or maybe an academic essay," or needed to "have several points of interest that [they] have extensively written on" so that they could then use "that to branch into our two mediums."

In the essay three reflection eight out of the 28 students who completed this assignment focused on peers' advice. Most of these comments that students made revolved around their desire to implement the advice that their peers gave them in order to make their paper better. Some students mentioned specific feedback they received to "synthesize the articles more," "incorporate my feedback into a cohesive discussion of the reasoning behind each article." This positive feedback that they received was taken a step further when one student wrote that they would "take their advice by working on my audience and going more in depth with my sources." This students' peer review group focused on how this student could focus on defining their audience and appealing to them.

In addition to taking their peers' suggestion into consideration, many students gave me a list of the specific steps they would take to "adapt" the draft they have into the draft they want (20/28 students). Many students focused on elaborating in their ideas by "adding more information and defining more of a clear topic," by taking steps to "add more to [their] draft," by realizing that they "need to add a lot more... [and] figure out which actual examples" to use. They also reacted with specific steps of what they need to do "I can add in the discourse communities and better organize the paper," "I need to elaborate on my details given/the ideas and differences of the movie and book, then need to tie together why those differences were

made and explain how that relates to discourse!,” “I will extend upon the rough outline I’ve made and add more points of analysis to my essay,” “make longer and fill in blanks ask why? more,” and “add info and support.”

Another specific step they focused on was organization: “I need to break apart the paragraphs into three main parts, while discussing both articles within the paragraphs;” “I originally formatted my essay wrong so now I know how to split up my paragraphs;” “I need to add a small summary to the introduction,” or “by comparing something about both sources in the same paragraph instead of having a paragraph about each” they could make their draft more effective. Similarly, many students focused on the goals they needed to achieve with their writing, they needed to explain content more, add in more rhetorical strategies, use certain sources more, or add in synthesis and support.

There were also three students other students who focused on their audience: “I have most of the info I want to have in my paper. I just need to make sure that I include the differences in the articles and what they mean to the audience,” “I am going to create a presentation where I share all of my finding because it’s interesting to see the evolution of the issue,” or on student who explained she needed to “summarize more of the story in the intro for people who don’t know the story.”

This number concerned with their audience/rhetorical situation increased in the students’ answers for the next question asking them to provide specific examples (Seven out of 28). Students explained that they needed to have a “clearer purpose,” or focused on “including more detail to better explain myself so my audience can follow along and understand my purpose.” This focus on achieving purpose shows that students were viewing their work as accomplishing something, instead of just fulfilling requirements. One student gave a list of what he needed to

do: “1. Break apart into 3 main body paragraphs. 2. Begin to discuss both articles within the paragraph. 3. Revise make sure appealing to my audience. 4. End with a better conclusion. 5. Enhance my introduction.” Number three focuses on revising in order to make sure he is appealing to his audience. The others focused on their audience and how they could specifically address them: “my goal is to expand on the rhetorical analysis/synthesis more but in a way that will keep in interesting to freshmen,” I want “to have my audience be able to easily tell the arguments and main points of my paper,” “I want to focus on my main points to recognize between the article and the movie. I want to make it interesting, but still full of knowledge.” This last student didn’t write a full sentence, she just wrote “AUDIENCE AND FORMAT” in all caps after the other part of their answer to this question.

There was an obvious increase in the number of students who listed specific steps that they should follow when adapting their draft into their final work, and also an increase in the number of students who showed concern or awareness of their audience and purpose. There was self-awareness as far as what part of the revision process the student said they needed to address. They knew they needed to do more research, add support, and make changes. This awareness is a vital step in students actually revising their work. These students really focused on higher-order concerns, and many of them implemented these changes in their writing. They made plans that revolved around enhancing their meaning and making their writing more effective as a document that was to make a change (in this case persuade). The individual who went back and included “I” in their blog-post improved the persuasiveness of her document. The student working on adapting his rough draft into a longer piece with more support turned in a draft with more support. They also displayed a new awareness of what an appropriate length was for that form (in their case an e-mail). This self-awareness and focus on language use really showed these

students viewing their work as accomplishing a goal and achieving a purpose for their audience. The fact that students were focusing on format, tone, language, and defining their audience as important concerns with revision shows that they were thinking of their projects as persuasive documents. In such work these specific things to look for are very high-level concerns if they are to accomplish their goal and reach audience with their purpose. This focus on how their writing “came across,” and concerns about whether or not their writing was easy to follow by their audience, reflected changing definitions of revision, and an increased recognition of why revision is necessary.

This acknowledgement that they may need to go back and outline their paper, even at this later stage in the drafting process, is very promising for showing that students view revision as something that is a process and a cycle, much like adaptation. This way of thinking about revision and about documents- as pieces that can make change- really encouraged students to revise more. I found that students implemented these plans and focused on “bigger” problems instead of grammatical things much more than in previous Composition classes I have taught. Some students (in the first two units of the course) already began using adaptation terminology to think about the process and applied it to thinking about their audience and rhetorical situations, such as the student who described that “to have a clear goal is the biggest step to completing your adaptation.”

In addition to these changes in their reactions from essay one to essay two, as previously shown in the results, the number of students who were blatantly concerned with their audience and rhetorical situation in their answers to this question increased again in the essay three responses. Some students went a step further when they began teaching the ideas of rhetoric, audience, and purpose to their audience of incoming freshmen. Some students gave step by step

instructions of how someone adapts their rough draft into a final draft, and in their answers tied together the main concepts in this class: revision and adaptation. They were beginning to develop how-to guides and small steps to help others understand these concepts. This is in addition to the students who decided to implement their peers' advice to think more about their audience, purpose, and overall goal. This shows that some students in the course not only understood the importance of revision and rhetorical situations, but they also understood it enough to teach their peers. This is the culminating action that lets me know as a teacher that my students understand the concepts and are able to implement them in my course, and after my course ends. Their ability at this point in the semester to teach these concepts correctly to others, the same concepts that they themselves misunderstood at the beginning of the course, reflects an increased rhetorical awareness and understanding of revision. As with the other reflections, a large number of students were concerned with organization, and this shows that they were focusing on bigger-level revision ideas, not editing. They weren't afraid to go back to the planning/outlining stage, even though they already had a rough draft for class that day. Arguably, from a student's perspective, bigger level revision creates "more work" for them on an essay they could have just turned in. Students were choosing to take more time and effort in writing their paper to achieve the goal of the work and to hopefully receive a better grade and produce a more effective project or document.

On the other end of the spectrum, some students were still working through their thoughts about how to implement revisions in their writing. Some of these students didn't know exactly how they could address any issues they had with their audience and format at that moment in time, but many acknowledged that they needed to be thinking about these concepts as they revised their draft. Even if they didn't know *how* to specifically address the "problem" they were

experiencing, this acknowledgement that there was a disconnect between what they wanted to portray and what the work was actually doing, is very promising in reaching the overarching goals of students seeing the necessity of revision. Overall, by looking at the answers from the first peer review reflection, to the last, students 1) had an increasing focus on rhetorical situations, 2) provided increasingly specific steps for completing the adaptations of their drafts, and 3) appropriated the language of revision, rhetoric, audience, and adaptation to describe the steps they wanted to take with their essays after peer review.

In addition to these questions that stayed consistent over time, for essay two I added in a new question to receive feedback on students' understanding of multi-modal projects and purpose/medium/genre awareness: How do you envision all of your pieces working together to tell a cohesive story or make a cohesive argument? Explain what you see each piece accomplishing. This question asked students to think about their project, made up of two different pieces, as something making a cohesive argument, a multimodal project. This question was devised to look at students' medium and genre awareness in terms of their audience. Also, as a creative-critical work, I was interested in how students would use their different mediums to achieve their purpose(s).

Overall students had a clear understanding of how their purposes would differ for their different mediums. It may make sense for a research article to be content heavy and a powerpoint to consist of more graphs and visual components. One group described their video as bringing "a funny and satirical argument," and their blog as being a "more serious argument about why we disagree with those writing rules." There was an awareness of what a certain genre or media form may be better at (providing an outline, providing a handout to take home, being funny.) There was also an awareness of how the two pieces would work together to strengthen their

overall argument (for example a powerpoint and a handout would give teachers information and explanation in person and to take home.)

Students had to really think about their purpose and what medium(s) they could use to get their point across to their audience effectively. By focusing on the purpose of each medium (and the mediums together for those who addressed this part of the question), students had a clear increase in their understanding of rhetorical situations and audience. Whether this is when they chose to create artwork to show their personal connections with the work that they were analyzing, writing a pamphlet to raise awareness of children's literacy needs, making a funny satirical video (Saturday Night Style) to appeal to their student audience, or writing a formal research article to make their argument, students were thinking about the argument they wanted to have and their purpose, and then looking for a medium that would enable them to fulfill this in a way effective for their chosen audience. By the second peer review reflection, students increased their rhetorical awareness, which is particularly evident in the specific nature of their steps to "adapt" their essays, and their focus on their peer review comments. Students were thinking about medium, purpose, audience, and content so that their projects would achieve something besides fulfilling requirements. They thought out what mediums they would like to use whether it was something that sounded fun or a media form they wanted to experiment with, and then brainstormed ways they could portray their purpose using those mediums effectively. Students "doing adaptation," put a clear emphasis on purpose and audience in a way that the other reflections couldn't. Students *had* to think about these things to answer my questions and to develop an effective essay two project. The synthesis and implementation of the course ideas into essay two was an important step for students understanding these concepts enough to teach them to their peers in essay three.

Adaptation Journal

To evaluate how students were thinking about adaptation and revision in the early stages of the course, I asked students to respond to questions about these topics for a journal entry. The first question asked students to define adaptation. After looking through all of the students' answers for common themes and connections the main moves that students' made in their definitions were connecting adaptation to other types of adaptation, to the idea of something having similarities and differences to the "original," and to the importance of the rhetorical situation and audience of the work.

Students discussed adaptation as "adjusting to any given circumstance. This can include people adjusting to the cold, chameleons changing colors to blend in with leaves, or in this case, changing writing to fit different styles," that "Adapting is used in science for when animals change to better fit their environment," that "Adaptation is most commonly used in respect to plants and animals," and "To me, adapting is the ability to conform to an environment or habitat. Adapting can be aimed to anything such as a new house, school, environment, culture, fashion, and many more." Some took this idea of adapting to new situations a step further and said "Anything can adapt, from a person adapting to a new job, to a computer adapting to a new program," and used "adapting to college... and learning how to live without my mother, in addition to adapting to college" as processes they were currently going through.

In a way very similar to how students defined revision, many of the students focused on the idea of authors changing things, while also keeping things the same, as they defined adaptation. There was a focus on the necessity that "the new text or form will have new ideas and new content, yet will still show a definite contrast between the new and the original form," "To me, adaptation is taking one thing and transforming it into another, still similar, but also

different thing.” Some defined adaptation as “the idea instead of redoing a form of media the exact same way, it's redoing differently. Though that sounds kind of confusing, it's not. It's the same outline with the same major concepts but with differing details” or said that “Adaptions should not be a replication of one medium to another, they should be reflection and appreciation of that work with a different outlook,” it is “when an original piece is taken and then changed in some way.”

Other students focused on changes specific to medium, point of view, or genre. An “adaptation is the adjustment of a work that will be translated into another medium,” “is the adapting of a literary source to another genre or medium, such as film, stage play, or video game” “is the transition from one medium to another,” or “taking something from one form and turning it into another.” Adaptation “is the change or transition between two things. Adaptation can be a change between mediums, a change in genres, or a different kind of change,” “this could be changing the genre, taking some things out, putting new things in, or changing the way it is presented like making a book into a film.” This focus on medium was interesting, as this is often what we think of when we think of adaptations, but they had already begun expanding this out to genre, and “different kinds of change.” This view of adaptation is what I was trying to promote, and they were viewing adaptation in complicated ways after reading Linda Hutcheon’s introductory chapter.

When I was formulating this curriculum, I was worried that students would think about adaptations in terms of fidelity and be disappointed when the “original” and the “adaptation” were different. This worry was dispelled when students argued that it is important to acknowledge that “when anything is adapted into something new, the views and stories can be altered a little, “It is understood that adaptations will not be exactly like the book.” They

addressed that fact that “Many people are annoyed by this because when they read the book and then see the movie they’re irritated because the storyline isn’t always exact. This is understandable from the viewpoint of an audience member, but when adapting something, changes are okay to make.” This is not an easy thing to understand, especially for a student who absolutely loved a book and had negative things to say about the film: “I was expecting the movie to be exactly like the one that played in my head as I was reading the book. If that were true, then the movie would have been about two days long (which I would not have been opposed to).” She acknowledges that she would have loved a two days long film, but she also recognized that this would be inappropriate for a film. This genre and medium awareness in spite of personal preferences is a hard part of understanding adaptation. Not only are they okay to make, but another student also said that “Many different adaptations are universal and constantly changing, for example, adaptations can be made from other adaptations.”

One student explained that knowing how your writing may be interpreted and “Being able to keep these influences in mind is the defining point of being able to produce a well-established and successful piece of writing.” The same student went a step further and explained that “Although most students have experience with drafting essays, they have not given much thought into adapting their writing to better fit the environment or audience of which the writing is intended” and that adapting your work to fit your audience “is what makes your essay stand out, [and] become more appropriate for that audience to read and understand.” This student, who grasped these concepts of audience, revision, and adaptation very quickly, was already moving on to explaining the importance of the class concepts in the first couple weeks of learning these themes. These changes could be important for understanding: “adaptation creates a stronger message towards the reader or listener because the tone, diction and level of writing fit the genre

or demographic.” These students primarily viewed adaptation as concerned with keeping the audience interested and/or relating to them. This is vital to understanding effective writing and argumentation. Other aspects of writing students addressed as important to consider in terms of audience are “way of delivery,” “style,” point of view, “environment, audience, or medium,” and “surrounding or format.”

After asking them to define adaptations, I asked them answer the question: How do you think viewing revising/re-writing/and/or drafting as “adaptation” could help you with writing? I was interested in seeing how students were conceptualizing the connections between revision, adaptation, and their own writing processes. Their answers to these questions listed many benefits. Students argued that viewing writing in this way can help them adapt to teachers and prompt requirements, adapt to different mediums, adapt their sources into their papers, adapt their rough draft into their final draft, adapt to different rhetorical situations/audiences, and adapt to creating creative work.

Students used the language of adaptation to discuss how “the writer has to adapt to his or her writing style to comply with the teacher’s requirements.” They also stated that, in “certain cases, different prompts ask for different things, and what is most important to writing a paper is being able to satisfy a prompt,” they “would be “adapting” [their] paper to fit the rubric of the assignment.” This idea of teacher and prompt expectations showed that students were concerned with fulfilling the requirements of their assignment, and were viewing revision, and “adapting” as a way to double check and make sure that they were fulfilling those requirements.

Besides focusing on adapting (in terms of writing) as a way to ensure they are fulfilling their requirements, other students focused their comments on adapting to specific medium or adapting sources into their paper. One student made an argument that “Being able to rewrite a

work and creating an adaptation would definitely improve my writing skills...I would have the opportunity to use take a work and adapt it into a new medium.” Students also made arguments about how “[Adaptation] provides a sort of baseline or source to compare off of. For instance, my memory of other work resonates through my mind when I read or write, and then I use those other sources to better my own work or to come up with new ideas or variations to aim toward instead of repeating what has already been said,” “I use other pieces of literature and the information contained in them to help support my idea. Adapting other works to further back mine took practice, and eventually I became better at it.” This connection between sources and incorporating, or adapting, the sources into their paper were prevalent, students say how “Revising...is actually a form of adaptation itself... I saw how I could adapt both a survey and a research paper into a formal essay.”

The most significant responses were the students who were explaining that adaptation can help them in their writing as they adapt a rough draft into a final draft. This was not surprising, as this is how I introduced the topic in my course. One student gave a step-by-step how-to of this process: “First, in the early stages of writing an essay you develop a rough draft. This is the first step in writing an essay. As you revise and edit this draft, without noticing you are adapting the original essay into a well written paper. This shows that new ideas could be introduced, but the new draft shows lots of structure resemblance to the original rough draft.” This understanding of the “process” of revision was particularly eloquent and well-stated. This student was thinking about the ways they could implement these ideas into their own individual writing process. One student even appropriated an analogy of process when they explained that using adaptation helps them to “re-develop and re-process [their] ideas.” Another student gave a step-by-step explanation of the potential implications of thinking about revision as adaptation:

“Then I would rewrite sentences or paragraphs, and reorganize ideas and the outline of the essay...When I have finished my second draft of an essay, I would then send it off to a friend who is familiar with the topic and ask them to proof read it and make any corrections or suggestions. Then I would visit the reworking, or adaptation, process once more.”

Many focused on change: “the writer almost always has to change some part of ... their draft before having a complete final draft,” “I’m taking the first draft of my paper and turning it into a better, new, and most importantly, different form from what I first had.” This “change” can be in terms of adding and/or transforming what they have, on student explained: “But also when I revise, I can change some things I don’t necessarily want in my paper anymore. I can have the same idea but adapt it, or transform it into something better. I can take my main idea and change the way I approach it. By re-writing I am able to throw in new things I didn’t have to begin with,” “adaptation...will help you create a better written paper.” “Basically, your final paper is an adaptation of your rough draft, because it has been revised and it is different than your draft. The final draft evolved from the rough draft.”

Six of the students focused more on writing as adaptation, and as a way to address audience and overall purpose related changes. Students had strong arguments for the benefits of adaptation with writing: “I have never thought of viewing editing as an “adaptation”. If I look at my paper as a piece that needs to be adapted to convey a certain message or to answer a certain question, it would help me to write better papers.” They were explaining benefits of revision and adapting their papers in a very clear way. One student explained that:

I think drafting and revising as “adaptation” would be more effective in getting a clear message across. It would give the reader a language, diction, and story line that fit their reading level and current situation in life. Adaptation while revising would make sure that

the essay is consistent and understanding of the audience or reader...Adaptation in writing is hard to interpret because all audiences have different views, reading levels, vocabulary, reading patterns, and reading paces. Adaptation may be one of the most important components of writing because before doing anything else you have to make sure you are writing about something that appeals to the reader.

This example, of thinking about who your audience is and appealing to your reader, is deeply rooted in the concepts that I was trying to promote in this course. Even this early in the semester, students were clearly seeing how these concepts could actually be enacted. They went as far as saying: “By changing how you look and write about a topic it allow[s] you to get a better idea of other people's view and feeling on the subject at hand,” “By revising a piece of writing, there is a greater chance that the writer can bring out more information or replace other parts to make it exactly how the individual wants it. In some cases, re-writing is necessary for things to make sense in a paper.” They weren’t limiting the scope of potential revisions, but expanding it out to say that “Any type of rewriting within your paper, whether it be rough or final draft, is an alteration of your paper to help the audience understand you. I think this helps improve writing because you're learning how to share your thoughts and feelings accurately through writing, so that everybody can comprehend what you're saying.” This idea that all re-writing is essentially focused on making sure that your audience comprehends you, blatantly ties the idea of adaptation with revision and rhetorical situations. In a particularly interesting response, one student argued “When I think with an “adaptation mindset” I often am able to be less attached to my original piece and more focused on making it into something better.”

The last theme or idea that students really focused on in their answers to this question was the idea that viewing writing as adaptation will increase their creativity. One student said

that they thought that “revising/rewriting/and/or drafting as “adaptation” could help with writing by opening up your creative side and helping one learn how to create something out of something that isn't originally theirs.” This is a similar sentiment to students adapting sources into their final drafts as a way to gain confidence in what they're saying. It is a way to “play” with sources and adapt new things. Students also used this journal to address misunderstandings about adaptations: “Adaptations make writing more interesting and more enjoyable to read...I never thought of an adaptation being anything but a transition from a novel to a book. There are so many possibilities of adaptations that it blows my mind.”

Connecting the idea of adaptation that I presented in my course to other definitions and explanations of adaptation encouraged students to become interested in their writing and promoted self-awareness. I didn't anticipate students' connecting so much with the word adaptation and the multiple definitions behind it. They used the idea of adaptation as a scientific process as they began grasping the idea of revision as adaptation. This defining of adaptation by using other adaptation processes that they were more familiar with or situations they were currently going through really shows that they were interested and invested in adaptation. There is an empowerment in discussing topics that let us talk about literary adaptations and adapting to college/new situations in similar ways. The students found ways to connect a new idea or an idea that was different than they had previously been taught about revision and in English classes and relate it to themselves. This self-awareness is a big step towards students feeling as if they have something to say/write and are empowered as students. This empowerment and interest was also shown in the students who thought it was important to discuss relevance in their definitions. In addition, some students defined adaptation, by focusing on change, and often these definitions

could be substituted for broad definitions of revision. Students were making links between these two processes.

These definitions, paired with their understanding of revision, reflect a change in their understanding of revision and their view of whether or not it is necessary. They were seeing the purposes and necessity of adaptation and revision. This understanding of the varying purposes behind adaptation and a call for viewers/readers of adaptations to think about the process of adaptation and understand that it relies on change really shows that students were 1) understanding adaptation, and 2) relating the process of adaptation to audience and rhetorical situations. The acknowledgement behind the fact that adaptations are “made from other adaptations” reflects the necessity of adaptation and the recursive process that define both adaptation and revision.

These answers are evidence of changes in students’ views on revision and their understanding of it as a process. This focus on change, and evolving drafts, is further evidence of students viewing revision as a process focused on bigger-level changes, not as editing. This idea of a text being malleable and being more open to change, instead of dedication to the original, shows a direct correlation between the characteristics of adaptations(s) and the view of texts as constantly changing, as needing to be changed. Many students explained adaptation as using sources and this reflects positively on my goal of encouraging students to feel empowered and as if they had something to say in my course. They used the ideas of others, and combined them with their own ideas to create an overall argument. There were also a number of responses discussing adaptation and creativity. This creativity and acknowledgement that they could choose a variety forms for their papers, and that they weren’t limited to formal papers, directly

ties into their feeling empowered and interested in their assignments. I will discuss this in detail in reference to their essay reflections later.

Editorial Cartoons

In order to evaluate whether or not students were revising, I compared students' responses to the editorial cartoon activity described in the previous chapter to their thesis in their final copy of their essay. I chose a variety of students' work to analyze. Legibility of the drawing was a factor in choosing the examples to include. I chose to look at a small sample size (four students; one from Class A, and three from Class B) to analyze for this portion. Comparing the editorial cartoons that students created as reflections of their thesis/main argument to their overall argument/thesis in their final draft will show how revisions across forms created change. Although editorial cartoons are meant to be short and not fully developed, I asked students to boil their main arguments down as they created their cartoon. Many students made their arguments much more straightforward when drawing the cartoon, but upon realizing this made the arguments much more developed by the time they wrote the paper.

From looking at this students' editorial cartoon (Fig. 5), we could arguably say that her thesis was about the amount of teachers' feedback, the importance of a thesis, the negative use of fluff, and how the concepts of these bad grades results in the second frame where the students cannot write and instead are pleading for help. As her paper progressed, this argument became more nuanced. She looked at the "subtle flaws and misconceptions [she] was taught about writing in a paper written to her past English teachers" and how her struggles with writing were "built upon this forced structure of rules that apply to writing." Now this has similarities to the argument in the editorial cartoon, but has a clearer focus as she says: "There are a few things I can agree with when it comes to writing "rules": keep it simple and short to the point, don't be

too repetitive so the piece doesn't get too boring and that way you can keep the reader intrigued, hit the main points in your paper. These are all great suggestions and they can work for just about any piece of writing, but there are always exceptions." She goes past saying that more rules equal writers block, and says that some rules are necessary, but that "everyone be taught multiple ways in which they can write."

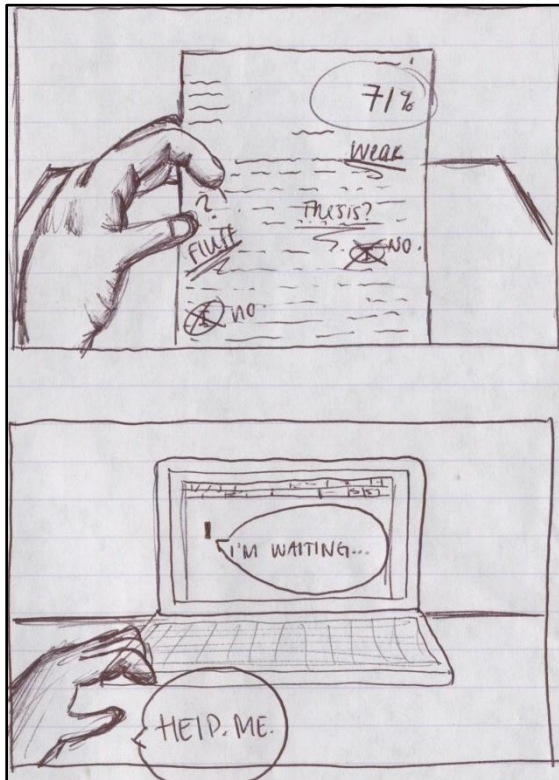


Fig. 5

The next student had similar results. By looking at their editorial cartoon (See Fig. 6), her argument appears to be that teachers only care about essay length, but that students are struggling to keep up and feel like they've already made their point. In the final version of this paper, this student wrote that: "Among many rules and writing techniques that have been taught to me throughout years of education, the one that always seemed to inhibit my writing skills was the constant pressure to meet essay length requirements," and that "Society believes that excessive words and excessive details create a better essay, but the reality is that people want to read a

well-worded and efficient essay.” She then ties this into another idea when she says that reducing length requirements would “allow students to not experience writers block as often, and use their time and words efficiently in order to get their point across. Students should prioritize essay quality over essay length because that is what makes writing freeing and a personal experience.” This incorporation of the ideas of writer’s block and personal and freeing writing experiences was not present in her editorial cartoon, but added depth to her argument in her paper.



Fig. 6.

The third student, who was writing to the administrators of his past high school, wrote/drew an editorial cartoon that was very sarcastic. He has the teacher saying “here’s your “new” reading material” as he points to a desk of dust and spider covered books (See Fig. 7). The main argument of this editorial cartoon is that teachers’ new reading material is actually very old, and there are better options. Although this student kept his overall argument very similar, the argument that this topic developed into was even stronger. His main argument was that:

Since times are changing and so are we, it seems only appropriate that the material that we cover should change as well to ensure they remain up to date and relevant to today’s agenda...By having material that students are actually interested in reading and analyzing, it would greatly encourage an improvement in reading and writing skill

development, as the daunting stigma that generally surrounds this area of studies would begin to fade.

This is a much stronger plea for newer reading material and had a clear goal of decreasing negative stigmas against reading and writing. He conducted some of his own research to prove his point, an argued against a counterargument regarding his purpose: “I hope you are able to take the time to think over my proposal and information I have presented in order to greater benefit the students, faculty and academic program for future generations. By doing so it will help students establish the critical reading and writing skills required for the students and wherever their lives take them.”

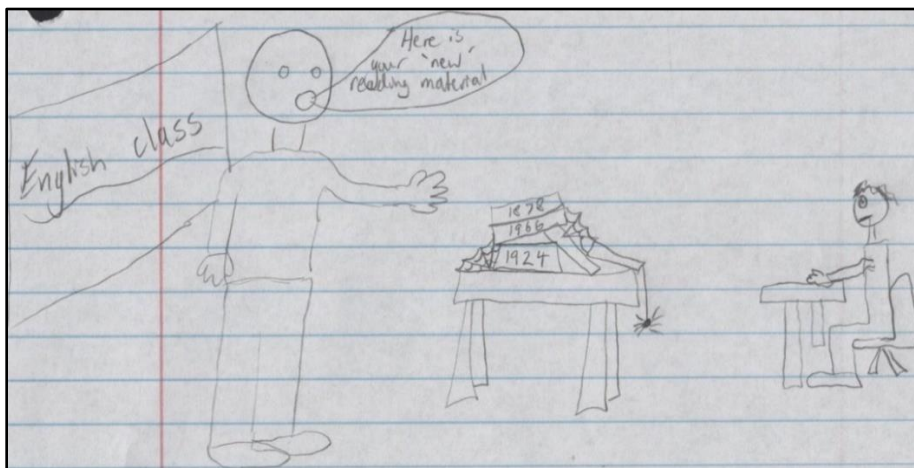


Fig. 7.

The last student that I would like to discuss for this portion was writing to parents of elementary schoolers. In her editorial cartoon (Fig. 8), she says “invest in your kids’ academic life, they’ll sound and be smarter.” This is slightly different than the argument that the image suggests (that parents should play scrabble or do something educational instead of feeding their kids chicken nuggets over the weekend). She worked through her main idea many times, and after creating this cartoon made a few more changes. She appeals to her audience and tells them “I have noticed that you, as a parent, are putting far too much trust in your children’s teachers,”

and that she is “here to tell [them] that [their] children deserve more from the teaching environment than they are getting today. They deserve teachers who will invest in them, but they also deserve parents that will put the time and effort into making sure they are being taught the necessary things an elementary schooler should be being taught.” Instead of stopping here at calling parents out, she took this a step further and gave suggestions: “Investing in your children’s academia can be as simple as reading books to them every night, helping them with their homework, or even something as basic as making flashcards with different site words on them and going over those every night.” She ends with an even stronger plea when she writes that “Students deserve good teachers, but more importantly they deserve you, as parents investing time and effort in their academic lives.”

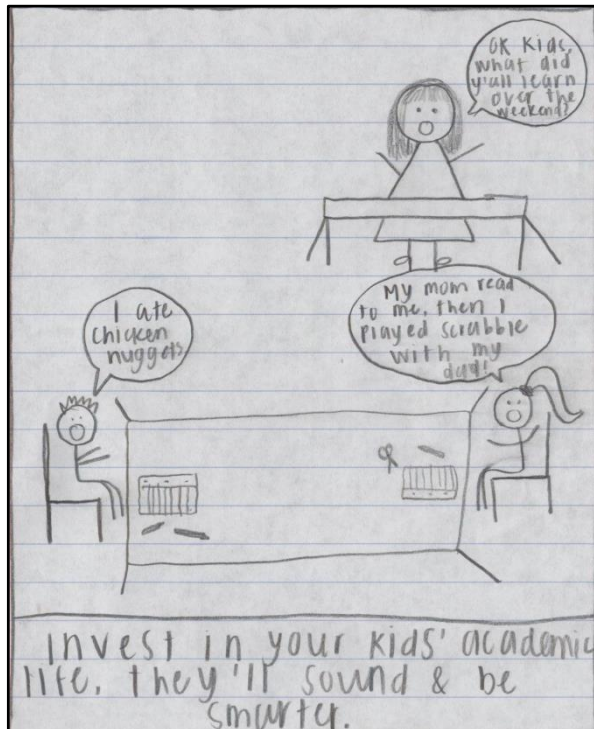


Fig. 8.

Granted students were adapting their works into new mediums, and it is difficult to compare a visual argument to a written one, it is clear that students used their editorial cartoons to revise their overall essay ideas. This is evident through the clear changes in tone, specificity, and changes in the overall content of the argument. The first two students complicated their argument with the addition of more nuanced arguments and through the inclusion of the counterargument. By boiling their argument down to an editorial cartoon and then expanding it back out to a thesis for a longer document, these students were able to see if the foundational argument was clear and then add in the additional details necessary for a complex and well thought out thesis. The last two students made significant changes in their tone and overall presentation of their information. These two students had very strong opinions on their topic, and struggled with being too informal or even “mean” in their writing. This was partially clear in their sarcastic and over exaggerated editorial cartoons (a very effective editorial cartoon strategy), and then they were able to go back and temper their arguments with their audience in mind for their final projects. They developed ways to portray their strong arguments and feelings about their topics by shifting their tone to be less offensive. These changes that students made through the adaptation of their topic to a new form and back showed that they benefitted from the action of taking a step back from their topic and seeing it in a new way.

Essay Three Annotation Activity

The culminating text that I gathered from my students to gauge rhetorical awareness was their personal annotations of their submitted essay three. Most students wrote their essays with an incoming freshman in college audience in mind. I went through the annotations and for the sake of scope picked three from each class that focused on rhetorical strategies (some misread the

assignment). The students' responses reflected an increased rhetorical awareness compared to earlier in the semester.

Student one made comments on their digital submission of essay three describing the differences between a scientific report and an article in *The Huffington Post*. Her thesis statement was “the two works are focused towards two different discourse communities, mass media audiences, and scientists of happiness. Through exploring the differences of length, color, tables and graphs, and content, one can see how the rhetoric of these aspects changes for the intended audience.” In her annotation of this section of her paper she said “compared discourse communities to audiences to give a simpler view of what they are to incoming freshmen. Even though it is not exactly what it is, it relates and this is how I started thinking about it when we first learned it.” This self-awareness as she explained discourse community like she knew how, but that she would define it differently now showed that she had revised her thoughts about the topics and the paper in the week since she had turned in the assignment. She also made a note for the last sentence that she should have “explained rhetoric.” This would make sense, as she was writing to an audience unfamiliar with the term. In addition to making comments on her thesis, she also referenced a section where she described the imagery that the *Huffington Post* article used. She qualified the rhetorical device she used by stating that “the detailed description of the picture gives the reader a mental picture of the picture that is described. This gives the reader a clear understanding of the contrast in color between the two works.” There were also places that she references where she could have “gone more in detail” about various topics. These comments explaining her rhetorical choices is evidence that she was 1) understanding revision and the changes she could go back and make after finishing a paper draft, and 2) focusing her revision on more than word-level issues (although she did mention a few word-level revisions).

Student two focused his comments mostly on the content he included. In a rhetorical choice that only a few students made, this student incorporated a figure from the article into his essay to show the audience what the graph looked like. Writing on this, he said he “used images to appeal to [his] audience of incoming freshmen.” This choice to incorporate the pictures from the actual articles really shows that he thought about his audience and the fact that they wouldn’t be familiar with these two particular articles. He also catered the actual subtopics (rhetorical devices) that he chose to his audience. He “chose to discuss format because it is an aspect that all incoming freshmen would be able to understand without taking a comp class.” The fact that he geared his choice for content based around his audience’s unfamiliarity with rhetoric really shows that he was taking his audience seriously and made conscious choices to meet their expectations and write an effective paper. This actual implementation of rhetorical strategies to reach their audience is a very clear way to see that students were beginning to understand and apply the concepts.

The third student picked a different format for their essay and wrote a magazine-type article complete with images, headings, and an appealing font. One comment that she made regarding the section of her paper that said “You decide you want to finish the research as quickly as possible so you can focus on the impending finals’ week. Immediately you turn to a student’s best friend, Google. You open up every link on the first page and painstakingly close all the tabs out. One article was thirty pages too long, the other was in old English where every other word was incomprehensible, and another was so incredibly dreadful you would rather scratch your eyes out than read it” was that “This second point can be condensed. I wrote in this tone because it is how students my age and my audience speak on a day-to-day basis. It is easier for the audience to read because it is a tone that we all recognize and [are] familiar with.” The

way that she talked to her audience and gave a narration of what it was like looking for an article, really appealed to her audience and helped her relate to them. This rhetorical strategy shows that she was thinking about how she could appeal to her audience as she revised her paper. She also included images (one from the article, and one cartoon) within the text of her article. Figure one, shows a group of animals lined up in a safari with a man saying “For a fair selection everybody has to take the same exam: Please climb that tree.” In her reasoning for the picture the student said “I included figure 1 for a couple of reasons. One, it corresponds perfectly with what I am trying to explain for discourse. Two, it provides a visual to the reader that makes the paper easier to read. Especially to my audience of incoming freshman.” This explanation of why she included the figure really shows that she went and found an image that, although not directly related to discourse, allowed her to creatively explain to her audience that each work has to be judged on its own terms, its audience.

Student four’s thesis statement is as follow: “all in all, the two reports cover a wide variety of information concerning global warming, but some of the main examples of rhetoric used in these reports include the scientific information used, the formatting, and the actual content on the topic of global warming.” In response to this thesis, he put an annotation out to the side: “I made this thesis statement to get my points across of what I plan to elaborate on in my paper. Also, I made sure to include the word “rhetoric” so I can fully make sure I’m following the prompt, and the reader knows that this isn’t just an informative paper.” This idea that he included a thesis so that his reader knows what genre of paper it is, so that they will have appropriate expectations, confirms that he understands conventions about academic writing. This annotation is also particularly interesting because it reflects that he was actually writing his paper

for a dual audience (me, the teacher, and college freshmen). He needed to fulfill the requirements of the rubric, and also fulfill the expectation of his audience.

Student five made quite a few comments, and focused on different rhetorical strategies that they used. The first annotation, in reference to their introduction, explained that they used an “inviting tone, sounds educated on the topic making readers want to continue reading.” They used a friendly tone. For example, “it’s not new news that people often want to try society’s latest and greatest trends. In recent years, the new health kick has been a popular trend.” She used words to relate to her audience and to come across as relatable. She went on to explain that the “1st paragraph clearly discusses the topic at hand and fully explains why it’s important.” She compares this to later in her paper when she made revisionary comments that a “paragraph lacks in explanation,” and another paragraph “could use more explanation or examples of why what the authors did works.” These annotations showed that she was not only concerned with the rhetorical choices that she made, but also the content she included. She needed to explain a little bit more to make the audience understand her argument.

The last student chose the non-scientific option and looked at a play and film adaptation/appropriation. He made a few different comments, and focused the second annotation on his idea to start his body paragraphs off with a scene from the play and film that was quite sad. He says he used “a play on emotion discussing the characters sadness and struggle. This captures the reader’s emotion/attention.” He purposefully organized his paper so that he would discuss the differences and similarities of the adaptations by starting off with scenes that would gain an emotional response from his audience. The final annotation, in reference to his conclusion, explains the importance of the audience for his paper, and also helps his own audience understand the purpose of his essay. He wanted “to emphasize that older stories

sometimes need to be adapted to better appeal to a different audience,” in this case from a play to a children’s film.

Whether their papers focused on scientific or fictional adaptations, Essay 3 asked students to take what they learned throughout the semester and apply their knowledge or rhetorical situations to identify rhetorical strategies in other works and explain the importance of the differences, and in this annotation activity, transfer these skills to evaluating their own writing. This activity allowed students to show just how much their ideas about revision and adaptation changed and culminated in them not only recognizing rhetorical situations, but adapting their argument for their specific adaptation: “doing adaptation” and revision.

The overall implications of students recognizing and commenting on their own use of rhetorical strategies are important as these are the types of skills that students need to transfer to other classes, jobs, and situations. This self-awareness is vital if students are to succeed in revising their own writing without me asking them to revise in class and giving them a grade for the annotations. Training students to recognize revisions that they could have made and how they are using or not using rhetorical strategies to their advantage in their writing was beginning to happen in this assignment, and I would like to research the benefits of this sort of activity more in the future.

Reflections

Much of this discussion is based upon students’ changing understanding of revision and rhetorical situations, but the third problem that was identified to be addressed in this study is that students are uninterested in their writing assignments or feel as if they have nothing to say. This is difficult to measure, but I want to rely on their responses to reflection questions after Essay

one and three to determine how this aspect changed; I have looked through these for evidence of interest and empowerment.

I asked rather open ended questions for these reflections so that I could see how students were relating to the essay and the overall experience. I was surprised by the number of students who explained their interest in the topic and/or the value of the assignment. Out of the responses that I received for the essay one reflection, student answers could be divided into three categories: comments regarding assignment content (and the content's relationship to themselves), comments related to future careers and/or writing skills, and comments related to the assignment as a positive writing experience. The answers to the overall experience were overwhelmingly positive (there were no blatantly negative responses).

An obvious interest in the writing assignment and a sense of empowerment was evident in reading the essay one reflections. Some students connected to the content because they "struggled in the past with writing [and] ... know exactly what it is like to feel discouraged," and could "relate to it a lot." One student explained: "our first essay was a topic very dear to my heart." Others explained; "I wanted to talk about child creativity being hindered by grades, because it was an experience that I went through as a child...As a child, it hurt my confidence as a writer," "I pick[ed] what I did because I have some personal experience with not liking what we were reading in class," and "Due to my own personal experience, my confrontation with college English courses was not a pleasant one. I felt like I was unprepared and had to dust off my brain to engage in composition one." They needed to write to work through past writing problems.

Two students used the assignment to work through specific past situations: "I chose this topic because in my senior year English class of high school, my teacher made me rewrite a

paper because a computer program said it was too plagiarized... Ever since then, I have still been pretty bitter about the situation,” and “I picked this topic because by growing up in the south I was surrounded by people with southern accents and I grew up knowing that they were not less educated just because of the way they talked. As I got older I realized many people believed that people with southern accents were less educated and I was raised with that though never crossing my mind.” Giving them an arena into which they could argue and write their thoughts within a creative environment really encouraged students to write what they needed to write, instead of being given a standard prompt. Other students related the assignment to their current writing desires or needs: “Writing a blog is something that I have wanted to start doing for a while. I wanted to tell my story and help others around me that might a similar story to mine.”

This wasn't only evident in the blog-writing. One student explained that the assignment was helping him fulfill learning goals for his future career: “This project allowed me to learn the proper way to write an email proposal, which will be something that I can use later in life. Overall, this allowed me to enjoyed writing and taught me many new things that I didn't know about format and styles of an email.” This is particularly interesting, because they were given relatively free reign as to what medium they chose. This student chose to write an e-mail and conduct research into what a business e-mail should contain (I did not provide these materials).

A few other students focused their comments on the writing skills they gained: “My overall experience was good because it caused me to think about someone else and put myself in their shoes. Usually when I'm just writing an essay, I feel as though I am just talking to one person but for this project I wrote a letter. By writing a letter, I often thought about what I would want to be reading if I were in the audience. This caused me to put myself aside and think of others first,” or “This paper helped me realize all the aspects that I don't notice when writing, reading,

or learning, and how each aspect can help improve your understanding, comprehension, and literature.” One student went as far as comparing the writing skills gained to past writing assignments: “Overall, I found that adapting the data I collected and my analysis of this data into the genre I chose required more attention to my tone and diction than some of my previous essays that may be categorized into academic research essays, book reports, and critiques.”

Many of the positive responses focused on the change in medium and the idea of “play” or fun in their reflections when discussing their overall experience. Whether they said it was “an enjoyable one as writing an essay in the format of an email was something I had never done or considered doing... Sometimes just writing the standard academic essay can become mundane. Using a different genre helped to bring positive energy to the task as trying something new can be refreshing,” “Overall, I enjoyed writing this essay. It is nice to have a change every once in a while. The process was definitely more interesting and engaging. I also like how we could choose our own topic. I wrote with more passion than normal,” or “Overall I enjoyed writing this paper, or “letter” have you. It was easier to adapt my writing to fit a more-or-less informal argument because I was able to easily voice my opinion without wondering if that would affect my grade,” the responses were overwhelmingly positive. This enjoyment was often linked to medium “Overall, I feel like the experience at attempting to adapt into my genre and audience went well. I thoroughly enjoyed being able to make my own choice through the options that you gave us, and I felt more inspired to write,” “I liked all the options we had for topics and forms of writing,” “I like the challenge of adapting my writing style to fit a different media, yet still portraying the argument effectively to my audience..” This enjoyment was explained by a student: “because there was so much freedom while writing this. I got to voice my opinion and survey other people for their opinions also.” “I enjoyed being able to be creative with the

assignment while still addressing the prompt. I found it to be a learning experience when trying to plan and configure what I wanted to say into my letter,” or simply “I had fun with this adaption.”

Some of the interest stemmed more from the original curriculum of paper assignments and focus on personal writing experiences, and it really set the tone for the rest of the course. The additional freedom with adaptation and medium that this course provided encouraged students to take charge of their learning experience. The self-motivation to take hold of their education and identify personal interests was evident in the students who sought out additional resources and information besides what I provided in class. Whether this was learning how to make an infographic or researching how to write a business e-mail, students were practicing gathering information and resources, something they will have to do throughout their academic and professional careers. Students really took this aspect of the course seriously and many finished this first essay feeling more empowered in their writing and ideas. Because they were writing to an audience that was plausible, they were able to put themselves in the situation of the audience and fulfill the requirements more easily. It wasn't just one student; *all* students had significantly positive responses to the medium and the process of adapting to their new audience.

To determine how this aspect of the study changed over the course of the class, I asked the same question after essay three. Eight weeks later, how would students feel in response to the rhetorical analysis, a notoriously hated assignment when I have taught it in the past?

I will discuss the essay three responses using the same three theme categories to see how students' opinions changed over time. More students discussed the particular reasons they chose the assignment option they did for this essay (scientific or creative work), and explained their interest in terms of themselves. A few students chose the scientific article because of its

relevance to them: “I had an overall positive experience with analyzing the adaptation and the original source. I think that comparing the two articles helped me to improve both my analytical skills and ability to write. I picked the scientific option because I felt that it would better apply to things I need to do in the future and help me learn,” or “It is really good to know the differences between popular articles and scholarly works because we as future professional need to write different kinds of essay and scholarly one is one of those.” These students picked their essay topics in a way that would give them the knowledge they needed to be successful in their future careers. One student explained this in detail when he said:

My overall experiences with writing essay three was great. I learned a key tool that I will be using the rest of my life I proceed down the field of engineering. Engineers have to synthesis data and experiments all the time, as well as communicate findings. This essay has taught me how to look at a certain piece of text and be able to adapt it into something others can understand and comprehend without the background knowledge needed to truly understand all aspects of the field or subject. I truly learned a lot from this essay and hope to carry this tool into the years to come.

A few other students described their experience with the essay in terms of being relevant and/or fun content for them to explore. Some pointed out that the “loved the movie, so getting to read the original article and compare the two was actually enjoyable,” “I’ve always been interested in James Bond anyways so it was cool to learn about the history behind him,” or ““I very much enjoyed writing this essay due to the fact that I really enjoyed the material, so the entire essay seemed to flow with no problems. I learned about how to detail specific aspects of the film and book, being able to look at the film much more critically.” These strong responses about “fun,” “enthusiasm,” and “interest” were students who picked the creative adaptation

option. There was a very positive response that these students' gave in their reflections. Another student, although she picked a rather dreary topic, used this assignment to explore something relevant to her. She "chose both a news article and a scientific article on the topic of Tuberculosis. I got this idea because I was just in Honduras and actually met a man who had Tuberculosis and was not being treated for it so I thought it was cool that this was a recent news article and that's why I decided to choose it." She came back from her Spring Break mission trip to use this topic for her third essay.

A large amount of students directly related their positive essay experience to what they learned: "I learned to look at mediums differently that's for sure... Most mediums are to reach different areas of discourse so it only makes sense to adapt things to where they appeal to the audience that is trying to be reached," "I got a better understanding on how to combine and compare two articles," "I feel like I learned a lot from writing this essay because I've never been super observational when writing and now I can pick out certain things from articles or movies." Some "learned a new way to compare two different works not based on content," "I enjoyed doing the rhetorical analysis because it is interesting to see the different ways in which the same message can be spread through a different medium by changing certain words and using the same strategies but for different audiences." "I learned that a lot of differences made in adaptations...any differences, even if they're subtle, usually have an underlying purpose behind them."

Many had a strong understanding of medium and adaptation/revision after this essay, "I learned a lot about why a director leaves out certain key points of a story, so that they can create a more popular movie. It revealed what authors and directors prioritize while adapting stories," "After finishing this essay I have grasped the main reasons why the two different genres use a

different approach to the plot along with a different character analysis. They do this to reach their target audience and attract people that may be interested in this form of discourse,” “I learnt that in order for a story to be told to an audience other than the one it was originally designed for there must be adaptations made to make it appropriate and understandable for the new audience. If this is not done correctly the story may not be understood or appreciated as it originally was.” Others felt successful after completing the essay: “this assignment helped me to understand what a discourse community is,” and “I figured out a way to make the document appealing to freshmen. In the end I learned that the audience and convenience are the most important factors of an adaptation.”

Many others found a new appreciation and understanding of adaptation “Overall I saw things I never did before in watching the movie because I was looking for them and how these adaptations go so unnoticed to the normal person,” “Overall, I just learned to appreciate all adaptations. Whether you understand the underlying reason, or whether you prefer the book over the movie. Just appreciating each adaptation as its own rather than being a part of something else,” “The overall experience was great as this was something new to me and it became interesting to analyze texts and their adaptations.”

Similar to the other reflection, many students really enjoyed this essay. One student explained: “my overall experience was great. This was my favorite essay from your class and probably my favorite essay I’ve written all year. I got to learn about one of my favorite books and movies which is always fun. It was very interesting compare the book and movie and understand why they made the changes they did.” Or, “For once, I was actually able to be creative for an essay. It was kind of tricky to turn away from a signature five-paragraph essay, but I got the hang of making a blog post pretty quick. I struggled with making sure I got my

point across...I think I did well on my blog post, and am very pleased with how it turned out.” Students experimented with mediums and/or content, and this resulted in a very positive experience where instead of complaining about the content, students were finding ways to make it relevant to them. They really enjoyed the options to choose from, and “It is much easier to write about papers when you are given limited guidelines and freedom of expression. I learned all about the process of adaption and how it causes the original source to change. During an adaption, an original source can have a completely different discourse community, rhetorical devices, and plotline than the adapted source.” Even though a couple students discussed their troubles with the paper, they both said they learned something. One said “I learned how one can adapt an article that was intended to do one thing and make fulfill a whole new purpose while still keeping the same idea and concepts,” and the other said: I learned that every author has different ways of getting their point across, whether it is format, layout, font size, or word choice.”

In their responses from essay one to essay three, students increased their reactions regarding the act of tying the essay into the “real world” or planning how they will transfer these specific skills. The number of students who discussed the relevance of their topic and/or medium for their future reflects a deep understanding of the importance of rhetorical situations and an understanding and desire to transfer these skills to other courses and/or professions. One student used the freedom in the course to analyze articles from her future profession: “I really want to work in the medical field when I get older and I love chocolate, so I thought it would be cool to read about it.” This choosing of interesting topics was a strong factor in this assignment having such positive reflections with even more students relating the positive experience with the actual content. Whether it was professional interests (as with the example above) or a personal interest

in tuberculosis after returning from a mission trip, students used the freedom this course provided to develop their own individualized curriculum around the assignments. In comparison with the essay one reflection, students by this time in the semester were confident in their understanding of key terms and were becoming invested in the overall idea of adaptation, audience, and rhetorical situation. Even more so than with essay one, students positively reacted to the aspect of choice in adapting (in terms of content, form, and audience.) Despite the complexities of the assignment, students were reacting in positive ways, often in spite of difficulties drafting.

Essay two was the biggest example of “doing adaptation” and drafting a creative-critical work in my course. Because of this, I asked my students to reflect on the process of adapting their works into new works (and multimodal projects) in order to receive their thoughts at the concept. There were 12 groups all together that completed the project, so I will discuss individual students’ answers within their group (ranging in size from two to five).

The first group explained their process of adapting as going smoothly because: “Our purpose and audience wasn’t altered too much since our ideas of addressing staff in the education system and students remained relatively the same from essay one to essay two. The only aspect of the audience that changed was instead of directing the project at an individual (The Principal) it was aimed at the teachers. We were able to come up with a topic fairly easy, we did however struggle to narrow the topic down since our topic was broad at first. After having our topic it was easy to find out purpose and audience we wanted to target.” They took their topics and combined them together into a more broadly stated argument about multiple things that needed to be changed about the education system. They may have not had to change the purpose, but they did have to make their audience overall teachers/staff instead of specific

staff members at their specific schools as they did for essay one. Out of all the groups, they probably had the adaptation that was most faithful to the “original.” Another group that had a fairly easy time adapting their essay one into a new topic explained “It was not difficult coming up with a new topic and purpose from essay one. Both of our first essays went together really well with mine being personal connections and hers being culture it was easy to put them together to have it be incorporating culture into writing. We did change the audience from essay one, adding students as an audience instead of just teachers like mine was.” This, in addition to changing their essays into new media forms, resulted in quite a lot of change from the original works, but at the same time included a lot of the support and structure from essay one.

Understandably, the groups that had similar topics had a much easier time adapting their works into a new two-part multimodal project. Two students from the same group explained, “It wasn't difficult coming up with a topic because everyone in my group had a similar response to essay one. I found it easy to adapt our essays into our blog and video;” “[we] had similar essay one topics so we used their topics and branched it off a bit. We didn’t change the purpose or audience because that is what their audience was in their essay one.”

A total of four groups found that they wanted to primarily use one of the group member’s essay one and then adapt it into the multimodal project. One group said his group used his essay one “and adapted it to meet the needs of this assignment. We changed the audience from my 10th grade English teacher to all of the English teachers of America,” “The audience essentially remained the same it just broadened. We went from directing our project to only [one] English teacher to English teacher all throughout the country.” Another group explained that they “took the ideas from [other students’] essay one and formulated them to better get our message across. We took the research from his paper and formulated our own research to formulate a better

understanding of the issues surrounding social media use. From there we developed an article that would argue a point rather than just discuss the issues,” “We changed the format from similarities of our first essay to a more formal perspective.” Students adapting one student’s work into a new project really focused on both the creative and critical aspects of the project that I was trying to create. They critiqued the essay one they were using by making it more argumentative, and giving it a more formal perspective. They found things about the original that could be strengthened by putting all of their ideas together, and used this project to make this critique into a creative adaptation project.

For the third group that did this, the student whose essay one was chosen to be adapted explained: “For me, I didn’t have to change my purpose at all. My group used the topic of my essay one for our essay two! I liked it a lot and so did my group.” All the group members went along with this topic in order to “sway [their] audience’s view of southern accents to make them believe that accents and intelligence are not linked together.” For their essay, they “created a PowerPoint with videos integrated into the PowerPoint. This was an effective combination of sources because the PowerPoint displayed information in a more creative way and the videos were funny and they helped tie together the information in our PowerPoint.” They spent their time adapting the work into completely new forms instead of synthesizing more than one project. The last group took one group’s blog post and looked at it in a “completely different way, so it was easy to sort of switch it around.”

Since groups were chosen by students, sometimes the students faced a trickier task of adapting their works. For example, one student explains “I started with the topic of improving writing by being able to use first person in academic essays. My partner had the topic of how the quality of a paper could be affected by the writer listening to music while writing. Both of these

deal with the quality of writing, specifically with college students. Then we simply had to decide what group of people could use this information to make a difference.” Since these two topics were related, but still quite different, this group did face some difficulty, but in the words of one member: “after we got a good game plan in started rolling on the paper it wasn’t that bad.”

Another group had a similar experience, one group member discusses their experience: “I found it pretty difficult to adapt to new modes of media because I am not used to it. My group made a video, which is much harder than we thought it was going to be. However, I know that I enjoyed the change, and I actually was more interested in constructing an essay than I have ever been.”

The process, although difficult, was not completely different from their first essays, “The audience changed in the way that in my first essay, I was trying to help a student by letting go of those ideas while my seconds essay audience was us trying to tell the teachers why they need to let go of the process of too many qualifications,” “It was fairly easy to come up with a topic because our group just decided to combine all of our separate essay one topics into one giant one.” They not only adapted their purpose and argument, they also described essay two: “This composition was more professional and spoke to a larger audience of teachers.”

Interestingly, I had two separate groups tell me that they did not like their original topic, and that they wanted to find a new topic. Both of these groups ended up asking permission to analyze adaptations (and create adaptations) instead. As this fit in with the purpose of this study and the assignment, this change to the assignment was accepted. The first group explained: “We wanted to use a different idea for this essay because almost everyone had the same topic. So that’s what took us to adaptation. At first we were focused on comparing and contrasting but then realized that it’s not really fair to the two mediums to do this because they needed to be different to fit their audience and time period.” These students chose to “present [their] thoughts

on comparing original pieces and adaptation through a collaborative essay,” and later added in their visual aspect (artistic drawings of characters from the short story and film). They adapted their views of characters into drawings, and really ran with the idea of adaptation for this essay. They were interested in the idea, and wanted to “do adaptation” in a slightly more creative way than the assignment required. The other group took this a step further and analyzed “how adaptation took place within the same short story. I think the movie review composition was efficient because it had all three stages of the adaptation in one location... Then, we created our own adaptation from the prince’s point of view.” Their two final projects (based around the movie *Maleficent* and the original fairy tale, culminated in an actual short story adaptation written from the Prince’s perspective. This piece of creative writing, by picking up on fairy tale and movie tropes, worked quite well as a creative and critical adaptation.

The importance of students’ adapting their essay one topics into an essay two topic was to determine how “doing adaptation” affected students’ comprehension of rhetorical situations and their interest and empowerment. Through looking at their responses and explanations for the choices that they made, it is clear that they really focused on what they wanted to accomplish with their work, and how they could maintain their interest and the interest of their audience through their topic. Implementing these teaching strategies of using adaptation theory and adaptations to teach revision, as well as asking students to complete adaptations, promoted a deep understanding of revision and rhetorical strategies and created a positive classroom environment where every student had something positive to say about the essay writing assignments when asked to give overall feedback.

Chapter 4: Conclusions and Implications

In order to gain responses regarding students' own understanding of revision I conducted a writing attitudes survey at the beginning and end of the course (see Appendix A). The survey had a number of questions, but I was particularly interested in the responses to three questions about revision. The other questions were more for my benefit as the teacher to see what my students' attitudes were about writing overall. To gauge the overall effectiveness of addressing students' problems with revision, I gave my students the writing attitudes survey again at the end of the semester to compare these answers with their answers at the beginning of my course. Since I received 30 student responses the first time, and 28 the second, I will compare percentages instead of numbers. First, students' answers of false or somewhat false to the question "I usually don't like to reread something I've written" went from 43% to 46%. This suggests no significant changes in the answers to this question, but that on some level students were rereading their work in my course.

When confronted with the statement "being a good writer primarily involves knowing the rules of spelling, punctuation, and grammar," students' answers significantly changed. 12/28 students disagreed or somewhat disagreed to the statement. This jumped from ten out of 30 at the beginning of the course. That is a shift from 33% disagreeing or somewhat disagreeing to 43%. This reflects that students were thinking about "good writing," in different ways than when they first took the survey.

The most important statement that I asked them to respond to was "If I have enough time I usually rewrite a paper (sometimes several times) until I'm satisfied with it." At the beginning of the class only four out of 30 students (13%) responded with a true or somewhat true answer to this statement. At the end of my course 12/28 students (43%) said that this statement was true or

somewhat true. Students were revising. Now, not every student responded positively and there were still quite a few students who answered false or somewhat false, but this increased positive response (8 more students) may lead us to infer that this way of introducing revision, through the use of adaptation theory, did work to some extent. This, paired with student responses regarding empowerment in their essay reflections discussed in the previous section, reflect positively on this way of teaching revision. This course began to address the problems with revision that students had.

The overall implications for this research are that using adaptation as a way to think about revision, and by analyzing and creating adaptations themselves; students may develop a deeper understanding of rhetorical situations: a skill they can transfer to any writing assignment in the future. This skill will be useful to them throughout their life. They learned new theoretical approaches to composition and were encouraged to think about composition as an adaptation process. This gave students who were reluctant to revise and re-write an alternate way of conceptualizing the essay-writing process. By students viewing themselves as adapters of their own story (through the adaptation of a literacy narrative source-text) they felt more empowered as writers and also developed composition skills that will be useful in a variety of rhetorical situations. Many students said that this class allowed them to be creative and enjoy (or at least tolerate) writing again. Students who said they were bad writers, and had been told this countless times before, almost cried when they got their assignment back with a high “B.” This teaching approach can teach students vital skills, promote an encouraging and fun drafting environment, and give students the confidence they need to tackle the rest of college and their future career.

Through the reading and writing of complicated texts, and the difficult task of analyzing adaptations and appropriations, students were asked to continuously question their own

situatedness in relation to the texts and the audience. In addition, they were being asked throughout the sequence of assignments to evaluate the rhetorical situation of various types of texts. They read and created texts in a variety of media forms. This freedom of expression fostered creativity and innovative thinking in a generation where these skills are invaluable and where the critical reading of visual and written texts is a necessity. Whether it was the group who learned how to use infographic software to develop a handout for their audience of teachers, or the group who made a Saturday Night Live spoof, students experimented with multiple media forms and developed skills in areas they deemed important for their future.

I am very interested in pursuing these ideas and methods further, whether in the first year composition classroom at a college level, or in a high-school classroom. I would like to gather more data, and more data from different steps of the revisions that students make throughout the trajectory of an essay assignment, in order to specifically evaluate what types of changes actually occurred and how drafts changed. I also would like to implement these ideas within other classes, outside of the English classroom. Adaptations could help students in their drafting and revision processes in any subject, and with the plethora of adaptations that have been created, finding source texts would be possible. The positive feedback from this course is encouraging, and I would like to further my research to quantify the findings and analyze the data differently. This methodology and concept is worth pursuing further, and I hope the opportunity to further this research presents itself.

The biggest next step for this project would be to design and teach a course completely free of the current composition curriculum. As previously stated, because I was adding this content into an existing assignment sequence and curriculum framework, there were some issues that came about. By creating a new course where the culminating project at the end of the

semester would be an adaptation of a non-fiction or fiction work (after students have done smaller level adaptations and rhetorical analysis), I could determine how exactly this method could work on its own. This could be done on a secondary or post-secondary level, and new readings and adaptations could be brought in to make it relevant to a certain age group of students with specific interests. I look forward to working on this project further and developing a new curriculum for teaching revision as adaptation.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

I asked them to respond to the first 15 questions with an answer from 1-5 with (5 being true, 4 being somewhat true, 3 being neither true nor false, 2 being somewhat false, and 1 being false.).

The items relevant for this study include:

8. I usually don't like to reread something I've written.

12. If I have enough time, I usually rewrite a paper (sometimes several times) until I'm satisfied with it.

For items 16-26 I asked students to respond with an answer from 1-5 with (5 being agree, 4 being somewhat agree, 3 being neither agree nor disagree, 2 being somewhat disagree, and 1 being disagree). These items are as follow:

23. Being a good writer primarily involves knowing the rules of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Appendix B: Peer Review Reflections

Post-Workshop Questionnaire One

1. What is Revision? Why should we revise our writing?
2. How can you “adapt” the draft you have into the draft you want to create?
3. What are your specific goals/steps for completing this adaptation?

Post-Workshop Questionnaire Two

1. How can you “adapt” the draft you have into the draft you want to create based on peer feedback?
2. What are your specific goals/steps for completing this adaptation?
3. How do you envision all of your pieces working together to tell a cohesive story or make a cohesive argument? Explain what you see each piece accomplishing.

Post-Workshop Questionnaire Three

1. How can you “adapt” the draft you have into the draft you want to create based on peer feedback?
2. What are your specific goals/steps for revising?

Appendix C

Essay Assignment One: Literacy Critique (This is an adaptation of the assignment titled “Considering Constructs about Writing” in *Writing About Writing*, 1st ed., pp. 167-169.)

For this assignment, you will identify a construct or conception about writing, reading, or literacy and analyze it. For this assignment students conducted outside research and analyzed conceptions/misconceptions towards writing. They were asked to pick their own medium and audience. They were asked to consider that the project was meant to be an informative text that they could give to a friend, parent, or teacher in order to help them see a writing-related concept as a construct and understand it in a new way. They were being asked to get people to reexamine something that they may not believe can or should be reexamined.

Appendix D

Essay Assignment Two: Literacy Study (This is an adaptation of the assignment titled “Group Analysis of Literacy History” in *Writing About Writing*, 1st ed., pp. 460-462.)

You and one or two classmates will be “adapting” your first essay or an idea in it in order to make it meet the requirements of essay two. By synthesizing your experiences, you will be able to make larger points than you could make with essay one.

STAGE I:

In your group discuss your essay one topics. Look together for recurring trends to determine which of these might be most interesting to further research and write about. Think Big. Find broad topics to look at. Your goal is to combine your ideas in essay one together to make a new topic.

STAGE II: Planning and Drafting

Before beginning to write, the group of authors as a whole should consider audience and genre appropriate for this paper. For this essay I expect at least two of the following types of media: text or online text, still images, 3-D, performance or video. Think about whom should be the audience for what you write? How can you best reach them? How would you like to present your findings? In a somewhat formal, scholarly way? In a more storytelling, narrative way? What content/format would make this most effective?

Appendix E

Essay Assignment Three: Rhetorical Analysis

When an article, a scientific report, or a story is transformed into a mass media report, a documentary, or a movie, what types of alterations have occurred? The purpose of this assignment is to analyze the differences between two types of discourse communities and their genres by comparing an original to an adaptation. This assignment asks you to either:

- (1) Find an interesting mass media report or discussion about science (e.g., a CNN headline, a blog entry, etc.). Trace the information back to the original research report from which it was taken. This is open to any scientific or social-scientific field.
- (2) Find a mass media adaptation of another work (this must be approved by me). Examples
(For example, *Maleficent*, *The Fault in Our Stars*, *The Walking Dead*)

Invention: One purpose of this assignment is to examine differences in discourse communities and their genres, with particular focus on how rhetoric changes with each situation. You will analyze the differences and similarities between the two discourses used for the different rhetorical situations and make some initial observations. Begin speculating about the reasons for those similarities and differences.

Organization: Now plan a paper in which you outline how these two discourses differ and why. In this paper, you should note various levels of difference, from values to length to tone to sources used. It might be helpful to think in terms of the values, conventions, and purposes of different discourse communities. *Why* and *how* is language used differently between the two texts? You are not only considering *what* the differences are but you are also speculating and researching as to *why* they occur.

Audience: You also have a specific audience for this paper. You will be writing to incoming college freshman. Explain the concept of discourse communities, and use your chosen original source and adaptation to highlight differences among communities, genres, and rhetorical styles while detailing why those differences exist. What do you need to write so your paper will be understood?

What Makes It Effective? Once you know the differences between the source and its adaptation, your job is to educate others about what you have learned. You should be able to explain to them *how* academic, scientific, creative, or journalistic writing differs from each other (or perhaps from more popular and/or visual forms), and you should also be able to help them understand *why* these two kinds of writing are so different. To reiterate: a really good analysis will not just explain what is different but why those differences exist and what they mean. Rather than interviews or surveys, this paper involves extensive research based on the texts with which you are working.

Appendix F



Office of Research Compliance
Institutional Review Board

December 2, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Alicia Troby
David Jolliffe

FROM: Ro Windwalker
IRB Coordinator

RE: New Protocol Approval

IRB Protocol #: 15-11-366

Protocol Title: *Revision and Re-Writing as Adaptation: Using Adaptation Theory to Conceptualize Audience and Rhetorical Situations*

Review Type: EXEMPT EXPEDITED FULL IRB

Approved Project Period: Start Date: 12/02/2015 Expiration Date: 12/01/2016

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 (<https://vpred.uark.edu/units/rscp/index.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 38 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 109 MLKG Building, 5-2208, or irb@uark.edu.