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Using Orality to Improve Student Writing

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USING ORALITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT WRITING

A Master's Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts, English

By

B. Webster Freeman

December 2019

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USING ORALITY TO IMPROVE STUDENT WRITING

English

Missouri State University, December 2019

Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

The connections between orality and writing date to the ancient rhetoricians and continue to influence the way we write and are written every day; however, overtly connecting the two in the composition classroom is often overlooked and often underutilized by modern composition teachers. What the ancient rhetoricians did, though, was directly opposed to what we do. They used writing to improve orality whereas I advocate the use of orality to improve writing. We need to help students understand that the writer and reader collaborate to make the performance. A typical session with me as tutor involves my reading aloud or performing the student's essay. By helping our students become storytellers, we are helping them become performers, and in turn better writers. This thesis will trace how orality has informed literacy, and thus writing, from ancient Greece to present day, making connections to Havelock, Ong, Elbow, Writing Center theory and concluding with practical application in the classroom that can begin at the elementary level and carried on through the college composition classroom.

KEYWORDS: orality, literacy, freshman writing, composition theory, Ong, writing center theory

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In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.

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I dedicate this thesis to my wife, Adina Freeman, for always encouraging me and reading drafts, and to my daughters, Isabella and Ava, to remind them to never give up.

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INTRODUCTION

Somewhere along the line in my writing experiences orality became very important. I have grown up as a writer writing what a professor of mine calls “self-indulgent, exploratory essays”— basically telling stories. Around my sophomore year in high school, I discovered the Lewis Grizzard books my parents had around the house, and my interest in reading grew as I began to identify with the personal and humorous stories Grizzard told. I emulated his storytelling style and tone in my writing, something I am cautious to admit in academic settings. I discovered the art of storytelling and gradually I’ve tried to blend that art (though I doubt I’ve achieved the level of art yet) with the writing I have done since.

Orality has become an important part of my writing process. I read this aloud as I wrote it, as I do most pieces. The reason orality has become so important to my writing process is the audience reaction. I try to approach every piece I write as if I were telling a story, because no matter how hard I try, when I read I hear the little voice inside my head say each word, and as I write, I try very hard to make your little voice sound just like mine. In my mind, this makes reading the same collaborative act that storytelling is. I’m not present to read the expression on your face and respond accordingly, but if I use my imagination and if I close my eyes tight enough and wish hard enough, I can see you reading my paper—and liking it.

The connections between orality and writing date to the ancient rhetoricians and continue to influence the way we write and are written every day; however, overtly connecting the two in the composition classroom is often overlooked and often underutilized by modern composition teachers. Granted, classrooms use peer response, but often in only one stage of the writing process. Orality, though, is present at every stage as is demonstrated in other English classes

such as Creative Writing workshops, upper-division writing courses and, of course, sessions in the Writing Center.

What the ancient rhetoricians did, though, was directly opposed to what we do. They used writing to improve orality whereas I advocate the use of orality to improve writing. In a sense, we have come full circle from what they did. Many things prompted this reversal, but in part, I think it has to do with the importance of a secondary orality that has developed in our culture. Now, with very few exceptions, we see Composition far removed from Speech and Communication, even though rhetoric is taught in both departments.

With such a history, it is easy to see why today's composition teachers don't connect orality and writing. The two were never overtly connected for current generations of teachers because they have been disconnected for years. We have to go back generations before the two are overtly connected, but we see hints of the lost orality of composition, a pangea broken off from the main continent, in many of our students' essays. Phrases like, "In conclusion...", "this paper will focus on these three things...", and the five-paragraph essay, are all crossovers from speech class. Our students unconsciously see the connection, but unfortunately, bring the least important traits. For example, I recently worked with a student on his conclusion which started "in conclusion." He thought that's how you were supposed to begin a conclusion. He didn't realize that the audience knew when he was ending his paper without him telling us, whereas, in a speech, we rarely get to follow along with the text, and we need those markers to signal change.

As students of Composition and Rhetoric, we all realize that as rhetoric developed in ancient times, it developed orally. No matter which way we look at writing, be it narrative or argumentative, we can see that orality has always played an important role. After all, we learn to

speaking well before we learn to write and we use written grammar's terms to define our speech from the beginning. Using grammar terms to explain speech shows how closely connected the two are. Also, as I quote sources in this paper, I don't say so and so "wrote," I say so and so "stated" or "said." In the previous sentence, I didn't say I wrote, I said "say." (Confused?) I am often told around the Thanksgiving dinner table about the first "sentence" that I spoke, though I have never heard mentioned the first sentence that I wrote. One could easily say that the first sentence I spoke was also the first sentence I wrote, and for the purposes of this essay, I concur. And if I wrote the first sentence I spoke, then it is evident how important orality can be to writing. In fact, writing and speaking are often interchangeable and influence each other. Whether we want to admit it or not, speech and writing have influenced the way we talk about and write about each form. I don't want to go as far as saying speech and composition classes should be the same because there are things we will do in a speech that we will never do in writing, and there are things we do in writing that we will never do in a speech; they are separate forms. They are closely connected and our students can benefit from realizing the connection.

What our students should bring back from the Speech Department is not the tags that note the organization of a speech but the sense of performance—the idea that the writer performs for the reader like an actor in a play, and coupled with the concepts of audience, purpose, and occasion that we stress in our freshman writing program, the idea that the writer and reader collaborate in that performance. We need to help students understand that the writer and reader collaborate to make the performance. Granted, we talk about audience in the classroom, but we talk about it as a given or as something that doesn't impact us at all. It's a static concept that rarely has meaning to our students. Even if we tell our students that the audience is their peers or the President, they don't understand because there is no conversation. We tell our students who

their audience is, or to identify who their audience is at the inventional stage. It never to gets to that point of collaboration that makes audience important.

In a 1984 interview with Don Burks, Kenneth Burke spoke of collaboration and literature. He responded to the question “Is literature that best stimulates collaboration the same literature that best lends itself to performance?” (Burks 267).

Burke replied: “That’s what it amounts to. Fundamentally, the thing itself is instruction for performance. You perform something that’s done already....” Burke continued: “A work has an existence and an essence. The essence is the non-temporal element which is summed up in the title if you know what the title is talking about. And the existence of it is when you carry it out in detail.” Don Burks then states, “Burke seemed to mean that while a work has its essence, much literature, like all music, requires performance if it is to have full existence in time” (Burks 267).

While my writing and my students’ writing seldom, if ever, reaches the level of “literature,” it does not gain its full existence without the “performance.” But as Burks points out, “Poets, playwrights, performers and speakers all are trying to bring about collaboration, trying to induce audiences to work together with them, to collaborate” (Burks 256) This collaboration between writer and reader is very different, as Burke acknowledges, than what happens between playwright and play audience. The collaboration between writer and reader is not present. It occurs during the writing process and during the reading process. I actually hear the voice, hopefully your voice, as I compose. The collaboration is almost an imaginary construct we create, though it is a very real and important part of the process. The collaboration is the audience response, the connections, the “a-ha” moments that writers long to write and readers long to read. By making students aware that orality and writing are fraternal, if not identical twins, the writing process for many could be enhanced.

One reason why students need to use a writing center is that they are unaware that the writing/reading process is a performance. In my experience, many beginning writers fail to see writing as the collaborative act Burke talks about and thus don't realize or acknowledge their audience. It becomes the tutor's job to act as the mirror for students so they can perform the piece they haven't performed or aren't aware they should. A typical session with me as tutor involves my reading aloud or performing the student's essay. When the essay becomes "oral" and is heard for the first time by the student in a voice other than their own, he or she can actually understand it apart from herself.

In the end, the writing center may be the one best place where orality and writing mesh to create a better whole. As Kenneth Bruffee points out: "What we do in the Writing Center is least of all write, what we do is talk." (Bruffee, "Peer" 3). That's what makes it work. It's the performance and for me, that's talking, whether that's internalized speech, reading it aloud or just talking about the paper. My goal is to internalize some of the conversation of the writing center and externalize the internal conversation that never makes it out¹. By helping our students become storytellers, we are helping them become performers, and in turn better writers.

This thesis will trace how orality has informed literacy, and thus writing, from ancient Greece to present day, making connections to Havelock, Ong, Elbow, Writing Center theory and concluding with practical application in the classroom that can begin at the elementary level and continued through the college composition classroom. Ultimately, my purpose is to provide advice on changing the classroom dynamics and how to implement theory into practice.

¹ An important element of this internal conversation are the tangents that never make it into our formal writing. I have chosen to share some of my narrative tangents in written form between each chapter--tangents that provide meaningful glimpses into the various external dialogues that have shaped my thinking. I recognize that this approach is a bit unorthodox for a thesis, but I believe the tangents provide beneficial illustrations of the intimate connection between orality and literacy. Like my students, I was a storyteller long before I became a writer.

ORALITY AND LITERACY FOR THE ANCIENT RHETORICIANS

In our modern Western world, it's nearly impossible for us to differentiate between orality and literacy. They have been inextricably combined. We can see this in closed captioning, video games that rely on text in game play or to further the storyline, and even talk-to-text on cellphones and digital assistants like Siri or Alexa. Similarly, in ancient Greece, where we find the pedagogical roots of rhetoric and writing that we still utilize today, literacy and orality were intimately connected albeit in different ways and for different purposes.

The Sophists, traveling teachers and intellectuals who visited Athens and other Greek cities in the second half of the fifth century B.C.E., were the earliest known teachers of “rhetoric.” The term sophist (*sophistēs*) derives from the Greek words for wisdom (*sophia*) and wise (*sophos*). It was used to refer to “wise men” for centuries until around the 5th century BCE. For a fee, the “sophists” offered young wealthy Greek men an education in *aretē* (virtue or excellence). These teachers-for-hire taught persuasion and gained fame (and infamy) and wealth by teaching young Greek men the ancient Greek versions of how to “win friends and influence people”. Essentially, they would converse with others in the agora (a public open space used for assemblies and markets) and their “students” would simply observe and listen. The goal was to create articulate statesmen.

But as Kathleen Welch points out, “the historicizing of rhetoric and writing instruction... is far from being a self-evident activity” (2) because we have so little information. Very few writings remain from Sophists so we’re required to piece together information based on Plato’s writings.” (3). Welch relies on H.I. Marrou’s *A History of Education in Antiquity*, published in

France in 1948, as a key source in understanding Ancient Greek education. According to Marrou, “the spoken word reigned supreme” (qtd. In Welch).

Plato was an Athenian philosopher during the Classical period in Ancient Greece, founder of the Platonist school of thought, and the Academy, the first institution of higher learning in the Western world. Plato’s writings are presented as dialogues usually between his teacher Socrates and a pupil. Most read literally as transcripts, almost as a play without stage direction, in which Socrates questions his audience in order to arrive at a greater truth. Plato believed that truth was derived via dialogues in which an assertion is made, questioned, then supported through reason and logic. While these dialogues are recorded in print, the idea that ancient rhetoric was solely oral is misleading. Writing played an integral part of ancient rhetoric. Again, according to Welch,

Plato’s deeply ambivalent attitude toward writing poses many problems for modern interpreters of rhetoric and writing. A common attitude is that Plato simply denounced both rhetoric and writing. This interpretation frequently derives evidence from *Gorgias*, in which a virulent attack on rhetoric is launched. However, Plato’s interest in rhetoric and writing is presented in a much more complex (and favorable) way in the later dialogue *Phaedrus*, in which the power of writing is regarded with great complexity. Most persuasive of all in Plato’s attitude toward writing is the fact that he not only wrote, but that he wrote carefully crafted dialogues. Plato’s engagement with writing was intense and pivotal. (Welch 15-16)

In his dialogue, *Phaedrus*, published around 375 BCE, Plato has two characters—Socrates and Phaedrus. Phaedrus is a young man and student of rhetoric who earlier in the day had listened to the Sophist Lysias on the nature of love. Socrates is interested in hearing about Lysias’ speech, and Phaedrus desiring a walk in the countryside gives the two the opportunity to talk about the speech. Lysias is *in absentia*. What little we know about Lysias and the other Sophists is from how they are portrayed in Plato’s dialogues.

Phaedrus has a copy of the speech and reads it to Socrates. Socrates then counters with his own extemporaneous speech first in opposition to Lysias' position that love is a madness, then Socrates' second speech, known as his Great Speech, discusses the importance of having love in one's life. Toward the end, Socrates transitions subjects to that of rhetoric and writing.

Socrates, as presented through Plato, believes that oratory has the power to move men's souls. He tells Phaedrus,

Since it is the function of speech to lead souls by persuasion, he who is to be a rhetorician must know the various forms of soul. Now they are so and so many and of such and such kinds, wherefore men also are of different kinds: these we must classify. Then there are also various classes of speeches, to one of which every speech belongs. So men of a certain sort are easily persuaded by speeches of a certain sort for a certain reason to actions or beliefs of a certain sort, and men of another sort cannot be so persuaded. (164)

Here Socrates explains to Phaedrus the power to understand, analyze, and anticipate one's audience. Audience anticipation is an important aspect of oratory. Although he doesn't say it explicitly, Socrates suggests that Lysias' written speech is inferior because it does not (and cannot) anticipate the needs of the audience. He goes even further and equates writing with impropriety.

Socrates: But we have to still speak of the propriety and impropriety in writing, how it should be done and how it is improper, have we not?

Phaedrus: Yes.

Socrates: Do you know how you can act or speak about rhetoric so as to please God best?

Phaedrus: Not at all; Do you?

Socrates: I can tell something I have heard of the ancients; but whether it is true, they only know. But if we ourselves should find it out, should we care any longer for human options?

Phaedrus: A ridiculous question! But tell me what you say you have heard. (Plato 165)

Like all good Socratic questioning, Socrates uses this question to then position Phaedrus for argument about the limitations of writing.

Socrates recounts the story of the Egyptian God Theuth who discovered “number and calculation, geometry and astronomy, as well as the games of draughts and dice, and above all else, writing” (165). Theuth visited Thamus, King of Egypt, urging him to share the arts around Egypt. Thamus, King of Egypt, was concerned that writing would dull the memory. While relating this story of the origins of writing, Socrates, says. “In fact, it will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing, which is external and depends on signs that belong to others, instead of trying to remember from the inside, completely on their own” (165). Socrates’ decision to recount the Egyptian telling of the Egyptian mythical origins of writing points to his own distrust of writing. In the story, Socrates conveys that writing won’t help people remember as much as it will remind them of what they once thought. Writing, in Socrates’ and Plato’s opinion, removes dialogue from the equation. Socrates compares writing to the subjects of painting which “stand there as if they are alive, but if anyone asks them anything, they remain most solemnly silent” (165). As with a painting, no matter how real, once on the “page” pictures and words remain static and do not allow for dialogue, which we know to the Socratics is the ultimate form of acquiring knowledge.

Socrates: Writing, Phaedrus, has this strange quality, and is very like painting; for the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing. And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself. (166)

Socrates points out that writing must stand alone. In dialogue or debate, the author can respond. In writing, that cannot be done because once written, words are unchanging. The permanence of writing is the great stumbling block.

Many scholars have debated whether these dialogues actually occurred or are Plato's fictionalized accounts of the dialogues. Most scholars are inclined to assume that these are fictional as noted in *Socrates: Fictions of a Philosopher* by Sara Kofman. If we read *Phaedrus* as a fictional account, the work takes on a different significance. Rather than simply providing a historical account, the dialogues suggest that Plato had a more complex view of writing and rhetoric than is revealed through the words of Socrates. As Welch emphasizes, "Most persuasive of all in Plato's attitude toward writing is that fact that he not only wrote, but that he wrote carefully crafted dialogues" (Welch 16). By crafting written words into the form of dialogues, Plato explicitly illustrates the interactive nature that writing must assume if it is to have any propriety. Interaction with the audience is crucial for the discovery of knowledge.

Plato's use of written dialogue suggests that orality and literacy are much more intertwined than we acknowledge. Plato hints that a key element of writing is the imagined audience. In the written dialogues, Plato embodies the audience in an actual character--Phaedrus. Plato plays the role of Socrates and the audience plays the role of Phaedrus. Without an audience to ask questions of and serve as a foil, the written text would be relegated to a static one-sided opinion. Knowledge is created by continually asserting, questioning, defending, and revising. Plato's fear of writing, though, also lies in audience.

At the same time, Plato fears that uninformed people will quote written words without understanding how and why the writer came to the conclusion. Borrowing more contemporary words, Plato worried that written words can be taken out of context, which is something teachers

counsel students against and why they also stress the need for in-text citations and a Works Cited page. Teachers also ask students to write literature reviews and demonstrate that they are aware of the prior dialogue and what others have discussed. And this propriety is done at all levels of writing. Readers often see the opening paragraphs of scholarly works dedicated to acknowledging past scholarly work.

Plato's legacy of Socratic dialogue is still in use in classrooms, writing centers, and the comments made on student papers. Teachers dialogue with our students to assist them in discovering knowledge, emphasizing the importance of anticipating how their audience might respond to what they have written, and emphasizing that they are "joining a larger conversation," as Bruffee suggests (*Collaborative* 17). Writing need not take the explicit form of a Platonic dialogue to interact with the audience.

Phaedrus has been used to discount writing and also modern technology because these tools weaken the mind. However, as time has borne out, good writing can be as effective in creating knowledge. As I will show, a thorough understanding of self and audience can allow the writer to enter into dialogue in the way Plato envisioned.

TANGENT 1—DON'T WRITE LIKE YOU TALK

“Don’t say ain’t ‘cause ain’t ain’t a word.” This was a joke of my youth and apparently Microsoft Word doesn’t get it because ain’t has a red squiggle. For almost all my life I’ve been told not to write like I talk and even though I’d never used ain’t unironically, it always bothered me when I heard a teacher say “ain’t is not a word.” One day I looked in the dictionary and by God, there it was. I never understood why my teachers didn’t want me to write like I talked since the words were the same. I always felt like speaking and writing were connected even as a child and have lived my life trying to connect my oral voice to my literate voice. I wanted (and still want) them to be inseparable.

I do understand that some people don’t talk as closely to Standard Edited English as teachers want them to, but the most fascinating and important lesson I learned from the Dialects and Sociolinguistics class I took in graduate school was that dialects are as grammatically ruled and complex as Standard Edited English. Every semester I tell the Ebonics rule of the “Habitual Be”—you can only use it if it’s a habit. So if Tommy is late once, one would say “Tommy is late.” If Tommy is always late, then one would say “Tommy always be late.” It’s a habit. Learning this changed my life. I still cringe when I hear someone misuse “seen” as in “I seen you at the store yesterday,” but I’m much less judgmental when I hear it. There must be a rule for it.

When I write like I talk, I most often think of narrative. It’s the building block of most writing classes and when I taught 5th grade, my students had written 9-12 narrative essays by the time they left elementary school. I start English 100 and 101 with narratives. I’ve taught them in 10th, 11th, and 12th grade. I’d teach it to freshman, but I haven’t had the chance. Narrative without voice is painful.

I think intellectually, most writing teachers see the connection between orality and literacy, but that doesn't trickle down to talking and writing. It's a shame. The art of storytelling is connected culturally and possibly evolutionarily to the oral tradition. We have always told stories and the idea that for 12 years of school I was told *not* to write like I talk is, in retrospect, offensive. It was as if those teachers were negating my voice.

I also remember being told I couldn't use the first-person in my writing. In seventh grade, I wrote a five-paragraph essay about why I thought Magic Johnson was the best basketball player ever. (I'm old enough that this was before Michael Jordan and before Magic was HIV positive.) It was a good argument and one that I can still make, and even though it was my opinion, I was not allowed to say "I"! My voice was being undermined from me and I've been fighting to get it back ever since.

We live in a first-person world: Twitter, Facebook, and bloggers. Talking heads, political commentators, talk radio (sports, politics, local, national, etc). In many ways, the "I" is more important than ever. For student writers, developing that first-person singular voice isn't always easy. I've always been a first-person junkie. I love to read it. I love to write it. In fact, writing short first-person columns for the school newspapers in high school and college are how I learned to write, but it's not easy to develop a voice. Young people are often taught (or forced) to suppress their voices. They (their voices and themselves) don't matter much. Many do fight it and develop an oral voice in spite of the best efforts to suppress it, but their writing voices don't grow along with it. It often gets worse in college because, by the time I get them, they lack the confidence to write for themselves because now they have to write for the "professor." They have to sound "smart" because they are in college now. They fail to use their voice because they have become convinced that their "I" doesn't sound smart.

I remember taking an Advanced Comp class in high school. It was only a semester-long, which was odd when I was in high school. I remember two things from that class. One, when asked what “prose” was, a muscle-bound male cheerleader answered, “stuff written by a pro writer?” Two, during a conference with the teacher, Mrs. Smith spoke to me about a piece and voice. She said, “you’re writing like a journalist here and an academic here. With practice, you’ll combine the two and have your own voice.” I don’t think anyone had actually ever presented that concept to me. “My own voice?” I chuckled. “That would be pretty cool.”

I was lucky, I think, to have parents who encouraged me to have a voice. My dad was a journalist (and an editorial writer) and my mom was a history teacher. We watched the news together and we discussed things. I was taught to have an opinion and fight for what I believed in. Not every student gets that at home. It took time to develop my “voice” and you could very easily argue that I still haven’t found it (or maybe that it’s still evolving).

HAVELOCK AND ONG ON THE EVOLUTION OF ORALITY TO LITERACY

The bulk of my experience is as a writing instructor at a community college, especially teaching evening classes. Because of this, the demographics of my classes have always been a scatter graph of diversity. As a graduate student, I taught only two courses. During my first two semesters, I split my time between the Writing Center for 10 hours a week and a freshman composition classroom. My second year was dedicated to the Writing Center 20 hours a week. As a result, I had very little classroom teaching experience when I started as an adjunct at the local community college, and since I was employed full time during the day in Public Relations, all of my courses were either early in the day before I, and often my students, went to work (6:30 and 7:30 a.m.) or in the evenings after I, and again many of my students, got off work. This means I had more than an average share of non-traditional students. I often had students with GEDs, students who were working full time in retail, manufacturing, construction, law enforcement, health care, and more. What stands out most about these adult students was their literacy—in their field. The Certified Nursing Assistants often knew as much about health care and disease as their colleagues with 4-year degrees. Machinists who hadn't been in school in decades and whose factories were sent abroad could read wiring diagrams and explain complex gear ratios that left me slack-jawed. And yet, they were, at times, functionally illiterate in Standard Edited English. The Language of the Academy, as we've come to call it, either eluded them or they perceived it eluded them. This is what led me to Walter Ong.

In 1982, Ong published *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. Ong attempted to identify the distinguishing characteristics of orality by examining thought and its verbal expression in societies where the technologies of literacy (especially writing and print) are

unfamiliar to most of the population. Ong originally published long before “technology” meant ubiquitous laptops or Chromebooks for second grade and up in many school districts, iPads in kindergarten, smartphones, apps galore, voice-to-text digital assistants (Siri, Alexa, Google, etc.), and more. For Ong, basic word processing, voice recordings, copying machines, and print were “technologizing” the word. However, Ong’s idea of technologizing actually begins 2,500 years prior with the development of the Greek alphabet and the Greek Enlightenment.

Ong is heavily influenced by Eric A. Havelock. Havelock argued that the Greek alphabet was the main, if not sole, reason for the Greek Enlightenment and thus the foundation of all Western thought and civilization. The Greek alphabet differs from the Phoenician and previous cuneiform alphabets by having letters for vowels. Having letters for vowels simplified and changed everything allowing for the cognitive effects of literacy—namely, complex thought and the development of rhetoric and rhetorical form theretofore nonexistent.

Havelock looked at the Homeric/poetic tradition of Greek language as form necessary for the transmission of information. The poetic forms were formed not only (or at all) for the sake of art, but for the easy transfer of stored information. That information could be of cultural importance, as we often view epics, or encyclopedic information, such as anatomy through detailed description of where, how, and when soldiers were stabbed and their resulting organ damage to how to anchor and disembark from a ship. Prior to the introduction of the Greek language, cultural transmission was restricted to oral means. As Havelock explains in *The Greek Concept of Justice*,

[A]n oral culture will found itself on a compendious body of stored information directive or descriptive, which is expressed in rhythmic language apart from the vernacular and which can be thought of as an enclave of contrived speech existing within the vernacular. Its vocabulary is likely to be specialized to some extent... to increase the rhythmic capacity of the statements. To this enclave, the oral society will entrust the overt expression of its nomos and ethos, its mores, its “values”.... (Havelock 30)

The linguistic restraints of orality were lifted once the literate society developed. According to Havelock, it's literacy that led to the Enlightenment as opposed to the Enlightenment leading to literacy. Literacy allowed thought, language, and form to develop in different directions through the ability to use abstract nouns, prepositional phrases, and newer syntax not tied to the traditional poetic forms. Havelock states in *The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences* that the "revolution [was] both psychological and epistemological," and created "a new state of mind" (87, 7). In *The Muse Learns to Write*, Havelock states that new prose "became the vehicle of a whole new universe of fact and of theory. This was a release of mind as well as of language" (110). Havelock believes that writing allowed, nee caused, the expansion of thought.

Not all buy into Havelock's theories. As John Halverson points out in "Havelock on Greek Orality and Literacy":

If Havelock's analysis of "primary orality" is unconvincing and if oral literature had neither the function nor the form he attributes to it, he is no more convincing in his account of the great transformation of thought that took place in classical Greece. The problem is that he seems to want to make alphabetic literacy the sole cause of the change as if written language in and of itself created thought. As is so often the case, Havelock's arguments rest on a *post hoc propter hoc* fallacy: if writing preceded logical thought it must have caused it. (160)

Halverson and others object to Havelock's idea that without an alphabet deeper analytical thought would not have developed, and while Havelock's passion for his theories makes it seem as if there is an exclusive connection, there is no way to prove it as Halverson states. However, as a professor, Dr. Patsy Watts, once told me, we never think about things with the depth we do when we write. For example, I used to have an assignment to "write about a significant person." Its purpose was to combine elements of narrative and elements of argument. I once had a student

who decided to write about her fiancé. A couple of class periods before the paper was due, she came to class and said, “I broke up with my fiancé.”

We were surprised. After all, she was writing her significant person essay about him. I asked, “what happened?”

“Well, I realized he wasn’t that significant!”

After the shock and awe of myself and the class settled, I reflected. And while I never want an essay assignment to be the reason a couple separates, it reminded me of Dr. Watts. We never really think about things until we write about them. My student was forced to think deeply about her fiancé and came to the realization that “he wasn’t that significant.” Students every semester come to similarly mind-changing conclusions about border walls, medicinal marijuana, the death penalty, Abraham Lincoln, and a litany of other typical argumentative essay topics. So while Halverson may be right that deep, abstract thought may have been developing next to or in conjunction with literacy, it really doesn’t matter. Literacy forces our students to think deeply about the subjects they write about and enter into dialogues with themselves and others (teachers, tutors, peers, and ultimately their audience). In that regard, Havelock is correct and, in the end, writing teachers win because students think deep thoughts and write about them.

Walter Ong builds upon Havelock’s work and argues that we have moved into “essentially a more deliberate and self-conscious orality [a secondary orality], based permanently on the use of writing and print” (133). Whereas primary orality reflects pre-literate culture that relies solely on oral transmission, secondary orality reflects a literate culture that relies on oral transmission. The prime example is a TV news anchor who delivers information orally from a text source (teleprompter). It’s an oral delivery from a text source (the teleprompter). Although a

text source fuels the orality, the orality differs substantially from text, with its own structure, tropes, idioms, and clichés. Ong states:

Secondary orality is both remarkably like and remarkably unlike primary orality. Like primary orality, secondary orality has generated a strong group sense, for listening to spoken words forms hearers into a group, a true audience, just as reading written or printed texts turns individuals in on themselves. But secondary orality generates a sense for groups immeasurably larger than those of primary oral culture. (133)

Ong's work was published in 1982, and the available technology has exploded since. As I have alluded to earlier in this thesis, we see students engage in secondary orality on a daily basis.

Text-to-speech is a prime example. As a high school teacher, my students would often have their phones "read" an assignment to them. They would sometimes find a "book on tape" online or on YouTube. As an elementary teacher, I would sometimes include a picture book in the curriculum only to discover that it was not in my school library. The solution was to find YouTube videos in which another teacher would do a read-aloud. It came to the point that sometimes those YouTube links would become part of the curriculum.

We can also see the carryover in our professional lives. We "present" papers by reading them at conferences (ironically the origins of this paper). Some of my most vivid memories of graduate school were the readings by visiting authors who read to the assembled audience from their work. Unlike a speech, both these examples exist in print form primarily but then also exist in oral form as well. The popular podcast *Serial*, a nonfiction investigative journal podcast narrated by Sarah Koenig, reached such a height in popularity as to be parodied on *Saturday Night Live*. Podcasts such as this are the penultimate of secondary orality. They are fully scripted but only to be heard orally and never read by the audience. The influence on our students is profound.

Secondary orality cannot be separated from literacy. Secondary orality incorporates structures, vocabulary, and depth of thought of literacy and brings it back to the oral. According to Ong, the literate culture cannot shed its ways of thinking, and both primary oral and secondary oral cultures have a strong sense of group. The secondary oral cultures have an expanded sense of audience—and global village so to speak--that allows for the combining of cultures. Hip-hop might be a good example. What started as an urban, African-American art form has grown to be mainstream and moved to other cultures across the globe. We have “rappers” in nearly every literate culture. Because some students, especially basic writing students, don’t see themselves as literate in the language of the academy, they struggle. What they don’t see is that the language of the academy has already influenced their culture and language and they are influenced by it on a daily basis through the secondary orality. By being exposed to an oral language that has developed with and from a literate language, the language of the academy is not as far out of reach or their realms as they think.

Ken Macrorie coined the word *Engfish* in his book *Telling Writing*. Macrorie explains how students invent an academic voice. To them, it sounds like what Standard Edited English is supposed to sound like. Macrorie’s solution for Engfish is honesty. “Students thoroughly trained in Engfish are hard put to find their natural voices in the classroom.” Students have spent school years mastering Engfish by poorly mimicking teachers and textbooks because they think it’s the “official language of the school.” By trying to sound academic, “students cannot express truths that count for him” (Macrorie 299). Connecting students back to their own orality allows them to speak the truth.

One of my favorite examples of a literate, oral, truth-telling student was Steve. He had worked at a plant that was closed and moved overseas. He had come back to school via

vocational rehab through the state. He'd been a machinist and was in his late 40's. He lifted weights, had a silver Fu Manchu mustache and rode a Harley Davidson. He was exactly the opposite of what one expects from a college student and he knew it. Steve wrote a narrative essay about "noodling," the art of bare-handed fishing. While catfish are spawning, they nest in a hole like a hollowed-out log. When one noodles, you stick your hand in the hole, usually in a large catfish's mouth, and wrestle it into submission. It's not uncommon to catch fish in the 20-40 pound range, roughly the size of Steve's well-built leg. He caught a large flathead catfish and brought it home and kept it alive in his young daughter's kiddie pool. She was about three and he watched her befriend the catfish that outweighed her. The fish would allow her to pet it and feed it by hand. Steve watched this and developed enough guilt at killing the fish that he eventually let it go. He wrote "I realized that day that I had no right to take the life of a fish older than me so I let it go. I never went noodling again." Steve had voice and it came from an unlikely place. He was surprised by it, but in many ways, I wasn't. Nontraditional students, especially men, are often wonderful storytellers. It's part of the blue-collar way of life. On the job site, in the factories, in the bars after work, men tell stories. While Steve was not confident in his writing before the class, he had been developing his voice for years. All he had to do was put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, and let it flow. As part of the twentieth-century oral tradition, Steve had probably been revising that story for some time without even knowing it.

Familiar as Steve was with revision orally, his paper was rife with formatting and mechanical mistakes. To complicate the issue, he was barely computer literate, and many would have thought that he was not literate in the language of the academy. He probably wasn't. However, the story he told was artful and moving and brought a tear to my eye. It was wonderful and the perfect example of why I start each English 101 section with a personal narrative. Steve

had stories to tell and he could tell them. He just needed an opportunity to prove to himself and me that he could do it. His ability to call up his skills of storytelling (orality) made him into the literate person he didn't think he was. He had probably told that story a dozen times and knew it well. He had already written it before he wrote it. To me, this is proof that even the students that feel the least prepared for college writing can still write and are greatly influenced, no matter their educational background, by living in our secondary oral culture.

TANGENT 2—EMBRACING THE SCENIC ROUTE

My mind thinks in tangents and because of that, my writing does, too. I've struggled for 20 years to write this thesis in part because every time I begin writing, I get sidetracked by a tangent. For example, reader-based and writer-based prose sent me for a loop one year. I realized it was important and Flower and Hayes became a part of my thesis. Even though that tangent paid off (and they often do), my fear of tangents knocked me off track. I always thought "if I keep writing, I'm going to end up including every theorist I've ever read." It became debilitating—how do I write this without including everything?

Upon reflection, I found that tangents can be helpful. Some of my best writing has come from letting myself get off track. Letting my mind wander in writing is important. A small presentation on the digital writing process for my 5th graders led to a presentation of the "Digital Writing Process" I gave to other elementary teachers at a conference. A chance meeting with a first edition *One Man's Meat* by E.B. White (while I was researching for my thesis) led to an essay on the importance of teaching narratives in order to develop voice, which led to a presentation given to colleagues at Ozarks Technical Community College.

Tangents in the classroom can be difficult to deal with, but for me are the most important part of developing community and rapport with a class. An older teacher-mentor when I taught elementary called them "rabbit trails." She asked if I remembered doing it. I said, "of course. Those made some of the best classes!" Since she was coaching me to avoid rabbit trails, it wasn't the answer she was looking for. Ironically, my most vivid memory of sophomore history with Mr. Stewart was him telling a story of trying to hunt rabbits with a submachine gun while stationed in Africa with the British Army. I'll take a good tangent 8-days a week.

My experience teaching 5th Grade informs this thesis tremendously. It's through those three years that I was both exposed to a lot of education theory but also forced to recall much of what I learned in graduate school. Surprisingly, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development became a topic of conversation with a literacy coach, PE teacher and myself in my hallway duty one morning.

The literacy coach at my elementary school was humblebragging about doing a presentation to the faculty at a neighboring school district. She went on and on about how amazed the group was about her knowledge of Vygotsky. I asked, "I don't understand. You all have the same degrees and went to the same schools. How do they not know about this?"

The PE teacher said, "you really don't learn any of this in college. I learned more from training after I got hired."

The Literacy Coach agreed and said, "well, Web, do you know about the Zone of Proximal Development?"

"Of course, I do. I have Vygotsky's *Mind in Society* on my nightstand!" This was true, but not as if I read it every night before bed. I just have a stack of dusty books on my nightstand all for this thesis that I wasn't writing. I responded "imagine a target. In the center is what the student can do, the next ring is what the student can do with help and the last ring is what the student can't do."

The PE Teacher chuckled and headed off to class. The Literacy Coach mumbled something about me being right, and I thought to myself "Ask me another. I dare you." I hate it when people try to stump me.

It's these little flashes in life that help develop good writing. We have to let our minds go on tangents and talk ourselves back. It's a dialogue we have with ourselves as we work through

our thoughts, ideas, opinions, and feelings. In a conference for this thesis, Dr. Weaver asked me how I dealt with tangents with my students. I have two ways. One doesn't work as well because it's old and references the comic strip "Family Circus." About once a month, one of the kids in the family would go on an adventure and artist Bill Keene would draw the neighborhood or the

playground with a dotted line showing the character's circuitous route, as in Figure 1 (qtd. in Weldon). No matter where the dots took the kid, he always made it home. I



Figure 1: Family Circus classic "dotted line" comic.

I illustrate this on the board by drawing it. I tell my students that this works every time unless we start erasing dots. With that, I

start erasing dots off the board and the path quickly falls apart. "Tommy, Suzie, or Billy will not make it home without all the dots and neither will your paper if you leave steps out. Take the scenic route," I say, "but make sure the kid gets home or it won't make sense."

The second way I illustrate tangents is with Google Map directions. I ask for a volunteer who might be going on a road trip soon, maybe out of town for the coming weekend. "Imagine," I say, "that you've printed you Google instructions and I swipe them. I take a black marker and black out all the odd steps. I give you 2, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 but I cross off 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. Will you get there?"

Depending on the student, I get different answers. Some freeze up and don't say anything. Some say "not a chance" because they are directionally challenged. I say "Maybe you get to St. Louis but you can't find your hotel or the ballpark or your friend's house. This is your

paper. Include all the steps. How do we get from point A to B to C without leaving any steps out? Tangents work as long as the writer connects the dots.”

But sometimes my students take me on a rabbit trail. Some do it intentionally. Some don't. Once a student started class with this statement: “Remember last week when I was kind of cranky in class?” Several in the room quickly nodded or voiced affirmation. “It was because I didn't have my bong hit.”

“Wait, what?” I said to laughter and confusion.

“I have really bad social anxiety disorder,” she said, “and traditional medication doesn't work, so...”

“I'm not sure bong hits are how your doctor's prescription would read,” I said.

Some people might have freaked out. Some teachers might have shut it down as inappropriate. I took it as an opportunity to dialogue about legalization, medicalization (this was before Missouri and many other states had legalized medical marijuana) and how we could construct an argument supporting our opinion.

Tangents make things happen. Tangents start with a nugget that gets tossed and turned until polished. Who needs Google Maps?

MODERN RHETORICAL AND WRITING CENTER THEORIES—FROM INNER TO OUTER AND WRITER-CENTERED TO READER-CENTERED

It's through the text that students are often confirmed. As much as writing teachers attempt to address that the success of a paper is not a reflection on the writer as a person, we as writers know that it's just not true. Seldom does a writer not extend his or her neck from the shell when someone reads what he or she has written. Writers are often vulnerable to attack and are nearly always not present to defend themselves. Students are aware of this and often seem to take it personally when they don't succeed. No matter what the level of the writer, from a freshman composition student to a tenured professor, any reactions, whether they are positive or negative, are reactions to us. Students rarely say, "My paper got an A," or "My paper got a D," but usually say, "I got a D" or "I got an A." Students often feel the grade reflects on them personally. To receive a good grade is to be consummated by the teacher, and this is the only way, outside of the Writing Center, that many students can feel consummated. (Even our terminology reinforces this idea. The idea of getting an "A" or "D" implies that the teacher "gives" the grade, not that the student earns it. Even the student earning a grade is inaccurate. The student's performance during that particular week on that particular assignment under those particular conditions is what the grade represents.)

In an endnote to *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays* by M. M. Bakhtin, editor Michael Holquist explains the difficulty in translating the Russian word *zavershit'*. "'To consummate' (to bring to the utmost degree of completion or fulfillment, to accomplish) is intended to convey the definitiveness implied by the Russian *zavershit'* (cf. German *vollenden*). Other translations of Bakhtin use 'to finalize' instead of 'to consummate'" (233). Bakhtin uses it

in the context of literary theory in the reader's attempt to make the hero whole. "What makes a reaction specifically aesthetic is precisely the fact that it is a reaction to the whole of the hero as a human being, a reaction that assembles all of the cognitive-ethical determinations and valuations of the hero and consummates them in the form of a unitary and unique whole that is a concrete, intuitable whole, but also a whole of meaning" (5). In Writing Center theory, students ask the tutor to close the loop and make their narrative selves/hero whole as an interactive audience member.

In their article "Teaching, Classroom Authority, and the Psychology of Transference," James Baumlin and Margaret Weaver contextualize French psychologist Jacques Lacan's idea of transference. Citing Robert Brooke's article "Lacan, Transference, and Writing Instruction":

For Lacan, transference is best understood as a dynamic structure located partly within a person and partly between people. On the one side is a "divided self," a person (perhaps a patient) who does not understand some part of her own action.... On the other side is an authority figure, a person whom the "divided self" *supposes to know* how to interpret the behavior. The person who feels divided looks to the authority figure for interpretation.... When the figure responds by asking questions or being silent (as analysts are largely supposed to), the divided person tries to respond/interpret the behavior as she thinks the authority figure would. (p. 681).

Brooke adds "the important relationship, then is largely *within* the divided person, since it involves a relationship between her conscious self and her projection or current understanding of the knowledge and purpose of the knowing authority" (p. 681).

As Baumlin and Weaver point out, the concept of transference has implications in the classroom and the Writing Center. "By projecting/transferring an image of the self ('the subject supposed to know') onto the analyst, the 'divided' person finds in the presumed authority figure an external means to initiate his or her own inner dialogue. Hence, the analyst serves as a mirror

for the person” (77). This transference happens between student and teacher and student and tutor, as both the tutor and the teacher represent the authority figure in the relationship.

A failure to achieve Bakhtin’s consummation often leaves writers, especially students, feeling inadequate and alienated. This is where the writing center comes into play. As Christina Murphy points out in her article “Freud in the Writing Center: The Psychoanalytics of Tutoring Well,” “students come to a writing center for one reason only—they want help with their writing,” (43). She goes on to say, “the tutor’s role often is primarily supportive and affective, secondarily instructional, and always directed to each student as an individual in a unique, one-to-one interpersonal relationship” (44). Students come to the writing center looking to be consummated as well as the means to achieve consummation from whomever or whatever brought them to the writing center to begin with.

The “roles” in the writing center become very important. I think tutors may be more aware of the role-playing that goes on than anyone, which is probably what led me down this path. (I worked as a writing center tutor for five years as an undergraduate and graduate student.) How many times have tutors worked with students who preface the reading of their paper with things like, “It’s very rough” or “I just whipped it our last night and didn’t get a chance to proof it” and so on? They are adopting the role of the student who isn’t prepared, or didn’t put out the best effort in part to make excuses for any mistakes they may have made, and also to soften any criticism the tutor may make. Many tutors are aware of this role and have played it themselves. By beginning a session in that way, students are, to put it loosely, fishing for a reaction, usually confirmation that the draft is rough or that it’s fine and they don’t really need any revisions. In the terms of Lacan, they want to be mirrored (3), which is interesting in itself because if all tutors are doing is acting as a mirror, then tutors are telling students what they already know. Students

are transferring a role on to the tutor in hopes that the tutor will confirm this role. It's through these transferences that students become whole by both reflecting what the student needs to hear and by sometimes refusing it, challenging the student. By projecting the role of the unprepared student, students elicit a sympathetic response from the tutor. Students feel the divided self become whole by either the tutor accepting the transference from the students or accepting the transference from the tutor who might be asking questions in order to lead the students to certain conclusions. If neither is accepted, students leave the writing center feeling unproductive and often more frustrated than when they entered. Often the benefit of the Writing Center is the comfort level students have in the roles that are being played. They can feel comfortable talking about their paper with someone who has no authority over them. They feel the role of the tutor gives honest feedback, something students may not feel they get from teachers aside from just a final grade, in part because teachers don't often give feedback aside from comments on a final draft. An outcome of a successful writing center session helps break down that hierarchy and thus changes the roles of everyone involved.

Again, Christina Murphy makes a strong case concerning the relationship between tutor/student and therapist/patient as similar, and the quality of that relationship "...determines how successful the interaction as a whole will be" (Murphy 44). Murphy further makes the comparison between therapist and tutor by citing Jim W. Corder's essay "A New Introduction to Psychoanalysis, Taken as a Version of Modern Rhetoric," which describes psychoanalysis, "from a rhetorical perspective, as 'the talking cure,'" (44). This idea echoes the theories of Lacan who also utilized "the talking cure" in his practice. The cure comes when the performance allows for the student's consummation.

Through the Socratic questioning writing center tutors usually employ, much like Lacanian therapists would do, the student talks through his or her own problems. A prime example happened the fall of my first year of graduate school when a student came into the writing center with an assignment to write about “coming of age.” This was early in the semester and she was struggling. Her first paper earned a C, a grade she apparently was not used to seeing in affiliation with her academic record. After she vented for several minutes about vague assignments, vague instructions, and vague remarks, we got down to work. We went through her paper sentence by sentence looking for problems and solutions. She wrote about how she and her friends had helped a classmate after a house fire. In the months after the fire, the friends shared everything from clothes to bedrooms with the victim and this brought the whole group together. Her paper literally had as much detail as my explanation and didn’t let us understand her story. She had some artful sentences, but her essay was very superficial—she lacked the detail, explanation, and examples it took for us to go through what she had gone through when she “came of age.”

As we went through the paper, each time a question occurred to me I asked it. I reminded her that the audience didn’t have the slightest idea who or what she was talking about and that if we were to understand her story, she was going to have to show us. She came up with some ideas about making her paper more concrete and after we finished, I asked if she felt as if she had a plan for revision. She remarked that I had asked the same questions her teacher had and now she realized that maybe her teacher was right after all. As we walked towards the door together, her teacher, a fellow teaching assistant and tutor, entered the writing center.

I commented, “You better get ready for a good paper.”

“Good! [To the student] How did it go?”

“Great. You know, I was really mad at you when I got here. But now I see why you said what you did. It makes sense.”

The student came into the Writing Center wanting someone to confirm that her teacher was wrong and she was right. By approaching the tutoring session in this way, she justified the choices she made in her essay and had permission to discount the comments her teacher made making the student right all along. To understand why the audience response was what it was, the student needed to understand the paper as a performance. In a blog post entitled “Writing as performance,” Andrea Lunsford discusses writing as performance.

Students are sometimes puzzled by the notion that writing is performative. Yet some discussion usually clarifies the concept as students quickly see that their writing performs for a grade or other reward for an audience of academics (mostly teachers). In these pieces of writing, students adopt the role or persona of the “good student.”

Students don’t often see their work rising to the level of performance because of the artificial nature of writing in the classroom. As Ong points out, “the audience is always a fiction” and for many students, rhetorical situation remains a vague concept until they write outside of the classroom. But Lunsford points out that there are ways in which we can show our students that writing is a performative act.

But we can see other ways in which writing performs: from The Declaration of Independence to the petition that leads to a change of policy or a Kickstarter site whose statements are so compelling that they elicit spontaneous donations, writing has the capacity to perform. At its most basic, saying that writing is performative means that writing acts, that it can make things happen.

By asking the questions that I did, I forced her to perform. What I’m saying to her is “tell me your story.” She didn’t see herself as a performer; she saw herself as an unjustly accused bad writer. She wasn’t a bad writer. She just hadn’t told her story. She wasn’t being critiqued

personally, but her performance was being critiqued. She went from seeing her instructor as a harsh grader to seeing her as someone who could actually consummate her.

Another way to look at that student's problems is through the lens that Linda Flower conceived of "writer-based" and "reader-based" prose in "Writer-Based Prose: A Cognitive Basis for Problems in Writing". Writer-based prose is a personal prose written for the self or with the self as the audience. Reader-based prose is written with the audience in mind.

In function, Writer-Based prose is a verbal expression written by a writer to himself and for himself. It is the record and the working of his own verbal thought. In its structure, Writer-Based prose reflects the associative, narrative path of the writer's own confrontation with her subject. In its language, it reveals her use of privately loaded terms and shifting but unexpressed contexts for her statements. In contrast, Reader-Based prose is a deliberate attempt to communicate something to a reader. To do that it creates a shared language and shared context between writer and reader. It also offers the reader an issue-centered rhetorical structure rather than a replay of the writer's discovery process. In its language and structure, Reader-Based prose reflects the purpose of the writer's thought; Writer-Based prose tends to reflect its process.

This student, who by all accounts had been a successful student in high school, was obviously not transitioning between the writer-based prose of her mind and the reader-based prose she needed as a burgeoning member of the academy. I have no idea how that paper turned out, and as tutors, we rarely ever find out, but we talked through the problems she had, and after she noticed the problematic areas, she came up with her own solutions. By helping her find her own solutions, I acted as a mirror. By acting as her mirror, she was able to perform, both literally and figuratively, in front of me and see her own solutions. She was able to understand that there is a difference between writer-based and reader-based prose, what steps she needed to get to reader-based prose, and, ultimately, why revision was necessary to achieve the goal of her paper. Without revision and evolution to reader-based prose, the performance was lacking and the consummation could not happen.

It was very apparent that this student knew how to write, as the vast majority of students who take writing courses and use the writing center can. Kenneth Bruffee, champion of collaborative learning, sheds light on this idea: “Helping open admissions writers was more profound than simply how to ‘correct errors.’ Teaching writing might, in fact, involve an issue that seemed altogether beyond our professional training and expertise to understand: acculturation” (Bruffee, *Collaborative* 16-17). Every student in my sections of English 101, as Bruffee states, is fully capable and competent at writing. What they struggle with is understanding the culture they are thrust into and the expectations that go along with the new culture. Being thrust into a new culture is a frightening thing. If we follow the post-modern belief that reality is created through language, then the perception of feeling alienated is all that matters. Students’ alienation obviously keeps them from identifying with what Mary Field Belenky called the “Fraternity of Powerful Knowers” (25). The lack of identification results in the students’ inability to perform well in the classroom. Again, the student “coming of age” in the writing center could *tell* her story to anyone. She told it to me in a clear, articulate manner, but for many reasons she had trouble translating what L. S. Vygotsky calls “inner speech” to the language of the freshman composition classroom, and thus she appeared in the Writing Center. Again, I think it important to note Vygotsky’s “inner speech” refers to much more than speech. It refers to thinking processes. It becomes more evident that thinking, writing, and speech are all very closely related and interdependent with one another, if not the same act. Vygotsky states: “In the same way that internal speech and reflective thought arise from the interactions between the child and persons in her environment, these interactions provide the source for development of a child’s voluntary behavior” (90). Writing functions in much the same way as we convert inner speech to outer writing, or, as Kenneth Bruffee writes in “Peer Tutoring and the

“Conversation of Mankind,” “As the work of Lev Vygotsky and others has shown, reflective thought is public or social conversation internalized.”

Writing is internalized conversation re-externalized. The goal is to get students to talk in ways that we would like them to talk, then they internalize this talk. I often tell my students that as they become academic, their voice will become academic. As students internalize academic speech, they will externalize it through their writing. Their inner speech becomes outer speech. The writing center then gets students to re-externalize this talk in another form (writing). The writing center is a place where students are exposed to academic language, internalize it, and are able to externalize it through their writing. According to Bruffee “knowledge [is] maintained and established by communities of knowledgeable peers. It is what together we agree it is, for the time being” (*Collaborative*, 427). This means that students get confirmation of their internal and external voices through dialogues with the tutor. It is a convergence of orality and literacy as well as inner and outer speech.

Vygotsky and Bruffee help to explain the phenomenon that Havelock observes: literacy forces our students to think deeply about the subjects they write about. Literacy is re-externalized conversation (dialogue) and literacy prompts deep thinking because it requires writers to move the oral conversation from external to internal and then external again, sometimes through the writing process but also through conferences with tutors, teachers, and teacher comments. Writing center tutors model the kinds of conversation students should be having internally with themselves when they write.

What Flower, Bruffee, Vygotsky, and Murray propose is conversation after something is written—using orality to enhance and elaborate upon the conversation that already exists on paper in the form of writer-based prose. As Donald Murray points out in “Teaching the Other

Self: The Writer's First Reader" students are often surprised that they know the answers to the questions being asked by the tutor. Being in dialogue with another person prompts the writer to discover new things. Murray quotes student Merrick: "Before I spoke with people, I did not think of all those things because there was no-one to think them for. Now things come out of my mouth which are true (147). The session with the tutor allowed the student to close the loop and realize that he was more capable than he thought.

Writing as thinking has developed into an integral part of modern education. In all disciplines at all levels of education, we ask students to write in order to understand the abstract concepts they encounter in ELA, math, science and social studies. Granted, I may be biased by my background as a writing instructor and tutor, but as a 5th-grade teacher, I asked my students to write in each of these disciplines and I saw writing as an assessment tool in K-5 in my school. Epistemic Rhetoric is a conduit to new knowledge. As Plato proposed through his Socratic dialogues, rhetoric was the pathway to knowledge. We use writing as the pathway between the inner voice and the academic voice, which is why it's so important that we utilize students' oral voices, at all levels, to expand their literate voices.

What I find interesting, and indeed profound, is that beginning students often come to us with a developed concept of reader-based prose when *orally* performed. They can tell a good story aloud, but often not in writing. The connection between reader-based prose and writer-based prose eludes them. The connection needs to be made in beginning composition classes by emphasizing that students need to perform through talking (orality) and writing with equal thoroughness; their literate voices should have the same depth as their oral voices.

To build on the ideas, Bruffee suggests that we want to do more than introduce them to a culture they are unfamiliar with ("Peer" 16). The assumption is if we make them aware of the

culture, or as Bartholomae suggests, “invent the university” and show them the conventions, they can become members, but for students, becoming part of the academy is a two-way street; it is a collaboration not an indoctrination, and the collaboration happens when these students are consummated through their performances within the academy. Students who can recite rules and understand Standard Edited English and academic discourse can’t necessarily perform it.

Before next chapter about pedagogy, I share a tangent that reveals my own transformation of inner speech and my process of shifting from Writer-based to Reader-based prose from a first-person perspective.

TANGENT 3—TALKING TO MYSELF WHEN I WRITE

I remember first hearing about Vygotsky and inner speech while in graduate school, learning that as children cognitively mature, their outward speech (talk to themselves) becomes inward. It gave me a sickening feeling because when I write, that inner voice is still an outer voice. In other words, I talk to myself when I write.

I get stuck all the time. Anyone editing my work will inevitably find a “the the” somewhere (and not the British post-punk band). It’s because I’ll be writing a sentence and get to a “the” and stop. Then I’ll say out loud “the what? the... the dog.” Mid-sentence I’ll get stuck on a “the,” write it again, and never think twice about it. The reason I felt sheepish in graduate school was that I thought I ought to have outgrown my inner speech, and while some people in my life may not be surprised that I haven’t, I’ve come to realize that what I’m really doing is engaging in a dialogue with myself. (Though, as I write this, I’m sitting in a public place forcing my dialogue inside so no one thinks I’m crazy.)

I often encourage my students to talk to themselves. During my Writing Process PowerPoint, I have a bullet about working under the conditions that are best for the student. Some people like to get up early, some stay up late, some need music or TV, some avoid the bustle of the computer lab. I had a student one semester who always read in his garage to get away from his family. It was the only quiet place he could find. I always tell them that I talk to myself when I write, trying to get unstuck, helping me edit, and finding the happy medium between oral and literate that makes my voice *mine*.

I don’t know where it comes from. Is it a lack of cognitive maturity? Is it a holdover from the writing center? I’ve also noticed I talk to myself when I put together furniture. I’ve used all

kinds of gimmicks to help me write. One semester I had a lucky “writing hat” that I always wore. I was taking a Creative Writing – Short Story class and I wrote the first short story of the semester while wearing the hat. I kept wearing it until the mojo wore off at the end of the semester. It worked for four months, which is something. Even with the hat, I still talked to myself. It’s important to show my students that everyone is quirky, and no one writes in a bubble. Conferencing in one way or another, whether in the writing center, with a peer, with an instructor, or with ourselves, is invaluable. Engaging in some kind of conversation enables us to anticipate the audience response when we put that hat on.

I’m reminded of Anne Lamott’s “Shitty First Drafts,” an essay in her book *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* in which she talks about silencing the voices in her head, putting each voice in a jar to silence it (33). Her voices were usually negative and while she was writing about overcoming self-doubt, the essay itself is filled with her talking to other people about writing and her topics. Her drafts were done in dialogue with herself. I sometimes analogize it to my students as playing checkers with yourself. We’ve all done it and we all started off fair, neither favoring black nor red. But eventually, you pick a side and set up a quadruple jump for a color just because it’s cool. Ultimately, the dialogue with oneself becomes first-person. And I believe that first-person is important and possibly the highlight of secondary orality. In the next chapter, I show the scope and sequence of the assignments starting with a first-person narrative and slowly adding complexity of over the course of the semester.

APPLICATION—TAKING THEORY TO PRACTICE

If orality informs literacy, bringing this to our freshman students comes two-fold: through the scope and sequence of our classroom assignments and our use of student/teacher and writing center conferences. Based on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development, P. David Pearson and Margaret C. Gallagher coined the term "gradual release of responsibility" or GRR Model. The four phases are a focused lesson, guided instruction, collaborative work, and independent work. This was especially emphasized to me in my training to teach elementary school, but is as useful in both my high school and college classes as well and, in retrospect, I see this in my writing center background.

The goal of the GRR Model and the ZPD is teacher obsolescence. Ultimately, according to Nell Duke and P. Davide Pearson in "Effective Practices for Developing Reading Comprehension," the instructor transitions between control of the process and product to "all the responsibility for performing a task...to a situation in which the students assume all of the responsibility". As Doug Buehl points out, the GRR model "emphasizes instruction that mentors students into becoming capable thinkers and learners when handling the tasks with which they have not yet developed expertise." I, as well as probably all writing teachers, literally say to my students "this is a process you can apply to any class in the future." In the course objectives for English 101 and 102, our goal is to prepare students for "college-level writing" and we can do this in both the structure of our lessons and the structure of our class.

The lesson plan structure of the GRR model is based on four stages: direct instruction, guided instruction, collaborative structure, and independent practice. In an average class session in English 101, on a daily basis we can see the four phases unfold as such: Direct Instruction

happens in the form of the teacher stating “today let’s analyze the reading for figurative language.” The teacher points out examples of figurative language.

Guided Instruction might look like the teacher stating “Look in paragraph four. We know similes include ‘like’ or ‘as’ Do you see any similes in paragraph four?” This could take the form of written work as a formative assessment or oral discussion. In the elementary and high school classroom, we often need to give formal formative assessments to establish groups for further interventions and remediation. In college classrooms, this takes the form of oral discussions.

The Collaborative Structure can take many forms in the college classroom. The classroom discussion could evolve to students finding figurative language on their own and pointing it out in class. The instructor could put students into groups or pairs and ask each group to find an example. Or the instructor could use more formal cooperative learning structures depending on the instructor’s experience and the needs of the classroom.

The final phase of the GRR model of independent learning can also take on different forms in different classes. A basic writing classroom might take the form of “write five similes and five metaphors and turn them in by the end of class.” The instructor might circulate and check for student competency and reteach as needed. In an English 101 classroom I might include a requirement for five instances of figurative language in an essay. In a 102 course, it might include the form of “be sure to include figurative language in your paper.” The Gradual Release of Control is built into the scope and sequence of the course, from basic writing to more advanced classes, as well as the individual lessons.

One can see in the GRR structure a gradual shift from Orality to Literary as well. The structure of the lesson begins orally with the direct instruction, evolves to class discussion and collaborative work orally before transitioning into student written work. The sequence of our

essays over the semester in English 101 can also follow the GRR model and the shift from orality to literacy. The sequence of my five essays in freshman composition are similar to James E. Kinneavy's Basic Aims of Discourse of expository, persuasive, literary and expressive. My assignments are as follows: Narrative, Analysis, Rogerian argument, Classical Argument, and Research Paper. Similarly, as James Moffett illustrates in his essay "I, You, It", teachers should create assignments with a purposeful progression of informal to formal, personal to impersonal, and lower to higher levels of abstraction. Each paper shifts from orality to literacy as the semester progresses by each building in more academic language and sources. While placing percentages on each is impossible without a large-scale study, one could argue that a narrative could be 100 percent oral and research could be 100 percent literate, though this paper proves that with experience, a writer can move back and forth between an oral and literate style.

Narrative Essays

Narrative essays tell a story and what could be more oral than that? Many times I have sat around the proverbial or literal campfire telling stories. It's in our cultural DNA to pass on stories from our communities, families, and personal lives. My assignment is to "write about a significant experience" and we spend time talking about what significant means, what an experience is, and what is appropriate for a college classroom. I always advise students to not, in the words of Nancy Walker who was the director of freshman composition when I was in graduate school, "violate your own privacy." I also tell students to avoid cliché experiences like driver's license and high school graduation (unless their story is especially compelling) and inappropriate experiences like the first time they get drunk or high. I say "think about the stories you tell when you want someone to know you. If it were the first time you met, what would you

tell so that someone would get to know you?” This frontloading and moderate amount of scaffolding nudges students in the direction of drawing on their ability to *tell* a story. I use words that compel an oral response because, in my experience, I get the best stories from my students this way. This is not to say that narratives are easier because they are first-person, but they are the form most closely connected to orality, and thus the best place to start. A good narrative essay is complexly argued and has a strong thesis, but since the form is naturally occurring to many students, it is the best place to start.

In class, I utilize a GRR model by talking about how I would tackle the assignment. We take time in the prewriting stage to share what we might write about. I always participate, too, and teach by example. I have a handful of topics that I pull from: teaching my daughter to ride a bike against her will, a conversation with a homeless panhandler in Washington D.C., or a fishing story (always my best and go-to) about taking a friend in college and him catching the biggest smallmouth bass of his life. By telling my story, I am illustrating the level of detail that is necessary, what constitutes “significant,” and, most importantly, that personal stories are worth sharing in writing. Of course, the older I get, the more stories I have, and at times my teenage students struggle, but this is when we dig deep. I’ll ask about wins and losses (in sports or life), vivid memories that stick with you, fun trips, awful trips, a time you’ve helped someone or a time when you’ve been helped, and so on. Young students often (always) counter that “nothing significant has ever happened to me.” What they fail to understand is that the assignment asks what is significant to them not someone else. Once we have a conversation that points out that there are experiences in life that helped make them who they are, students generate a good list.

As writing teachers, and as a former writing center tutor, we know the questions to ask to get the most out of our students. Writing Center tutors are also well trained to get the most out of

students and I think they often excel in the pre-writing and invention stage. Send a student with a detailed assignment sheet that defines significant experience, outlines privacy concerns, and warns against pitfalls allows the tutor a proper framework to help a peer find the right story. Performing the story orally helps to consummate the writer by watching the expressions of his/her peers and knowing what are the important parts of the story to share and whether the story is even significant. Because the story is first shared orally, I always suggest they start with “what are the stories you like to tell.” Students are much more likely to be successful. (see Appendix A).

All this draws on theories of performance, Socratic questioning, Writing Center practice, psychoanalysis, and the students’ own skills. Since we still primarily communicate in an oral way, students instinctively know what to do. They come to class with a thorough understanding of the narrative story arc, in part because they’re taught that all through elementary school. As a former 5th grade teacher, I’ve seen my students write three to four narratives a school year in third, fourth, and fifth grades. Students K-2 also work on the narrative structure, again for the same reasons I do with freshman comp, as well as students in middle school and high school—it’s natural. So, it takes one lesson in my classroom to remind students that they need exposition, rising action, a climax, falling action, and denouement or resolution. The narrative structure is both instinctual through thousands of years of collective unconscious to years of instruction and practice in school.

Our freshman composition students come to us with so many skills that have been both taught and naturally acquired. They come to us with a natural sense of audience as they deal with it every day through their oral social interactions and secondary orality through texting, social media, email, and other electronic mediums, which do provide consummation through such

things as “likes” and emoji responses. A particularly memorable example happened one semester when I had a veteran in class. The interaction goes something like this:

“Were you ever deployed over Thanksgiving?”

“Yeah, a couple of times.”

“Would it be out of the ordinary for someone to say, ‘pass the effing gravy’ at Thanksgiving on the ship/base/camp?”

“Uh, no. [laughs] Someone would definitely say that.”

“Ok, fast-forward to when you’re home. Would you say ‘pass the effing gravy’ to your grandma?”

Nine times out of ten, they answer that is “no.” Occasionally someone has a colorful grandmother who chews and spits and cusses like a sailor, but the point is made each time. We all understand the code shifting that goes on during the day every day. Students understand audience. What they don’t understand is that the teacher is not the audience but the academy at large is and the narrative is the bridge and the first step on the arc of the course.

Analytical Paper

By moving on to an analytical paper, we can begin to integrate more academic language. Of course, there are many types of analytical papers, but by starting with something small like a TV commercial, students can analyze something with only one required source and continue to build off their own voice. Depending on the group, assignments might require students to have more than one source, but the heart of an analytical paper is the analysis by the writer, so we’re solely integrating other voices into student writing while maintaining their personal voice. So if a

narrative is 100 percent oral, a beginning analytical paper may be 80 percent oral. At times, I'll even tell students that no more than 20 percent of their paper should be quote or source.

Again, to integrate the GRR model, we'll watch a commercial together in class. I'll start my model analysis through a combination of direct instruction and Socratic questions. "How can we understand McDonald's appeal to audience based on the actors in the commercial?" Through oral, class discussion, we break down the walls that intimidate students. There is no "throwing into the deep end and seeing if students can swim." For me, the model for this assignment includes an informal outline on the board, potentially for more than one commercial and from more than one angle (see appendix B for details on the assignment).

Rogerian Argument

As James Baumlin notes in "Persuasion, Rogerian Rhetoric, and Imaginative Play", Rogerian argument begins by assuming that a willing writer can find middle or common ground with a willing reader. For me, negotiating differences over the course of a paper is a more conversation method of argument and helps utilize students' orality. Throughout our lives, we negotiate differences with the people in our lives on a daily basis. While doing this in the format of a paper is foreign to a lot of students who have never written like this before, the methods are familiar and deeply based in our understanding of audience. In order to find common group, we must understand our audience.

Since we're typically discussing two sides of an issue, this is a good opportunity to work in more sources as we gradually get more academic in the sequence of assignments. We slowly, without students realizing, are becoming more literate and less oral with each assignment. Within the GRR model, each essay begins the process anew. Appendix C outlines the prescribed steps of

the Rogerian Structure, which are especially important since many students haven't been exposed to the structure previously. I again model with a topic I might use, creating an outline on the board and walking through my steps. I will integrate classroom discussion and cooperative structures as needed to develop the sample argument or analyze sample arguments provided as readings.

Classical Argument

Typically paper four of five, the Classical or Aristotelian Argument is a structure familiar to students, so it gives a good opportunity to step further away from the oral as we transition to the more academic, literate voice. While we might integrate two sources with the Rogerian, the Classical might require three or four, depending on the timeline of the assignment and the progression of a class as a whole. Again, it relates to the gradual release and is dependent on the individual group and the course requirements. At my institution, we have English 100 (basic writers), English 101 (Freshmen Composition) and English 102 (Composition 2). For me, each course follows the same structure with different levels of scaffolding along the way. (Note: I typically do not teach a narrative in English 102. The course objectives require the focus be on academic writing.)

The Classical Argument, though less oral and more literate than previous assignments, is born of the oral tradition of ancient rhetoric, so while it is academic, the structure is familiar and linear enough that students can still borrow from their oral backgrounds. Since it is a familiar structure and we are farther into the semester, the need for scaffolding is less, though I will still model and outline on the board as I introduce the assignment. With this assignment, as we are now 60 percent through the class, it requires students work more individually with scaffolding as

needed. They have begun to internalize the questions that they need to ask—they are beginning to have the inner conversation that is crucial for deep thinking. At this point, and throughout all the assignments, that scaffolding can come as individual student conferences, classroom discussions, and writing center sessions.

Research Paper

The research paper structurally is virtually identical to the Classical Argument. The main difference for students is the nature of the topic. Argumentative essays typically draw from current events or classically divisive topics (death penalty, legalization, etc.), but Research Papers typically come from topics of interest to the student.

In class, I'll model the formation of a research question, again starting orally with a class discussion on “what’s right or wrong about this as a research question” and then moving on to students developing their own question. Each essay follows the same GRR model. The Research Paper becomes more literate through the nature of the topic, an increase in source requirement, and more formal in language. This is supported by reading models that reflect each point. But it’s also important to emphasize the roles narration plays in explaining the background or context of the topic. Since narration plays a role in explaining any topic, but especially in the structure of the Classical Argument, I can reinforce the role of the student’s voice in each paper.

A key to the development of writers is feedback, which in my classroom takes the form of conferencing, peer response, and written teacher feedback. Without feedback, the writing process is incomplete. Most student writers, me included, need feedback to drive revision, especially as they progress from writer-based to reader-based prose.

Conferencing can take on three forms: whole group, online via comments on drafts, and face-to-face, all of which encourage and embrace secondary orality. By talking about writing in these different settings, I have the opportunity to be the mirror to the student, whether it's in the elementary, high school, or college classroom.

In whole group conferencing, I ask for a volunteer who is struggling in the early stages of an essay. I go through typical Socratic questions. "What's your topic? What are you trying to accomplish?" and we talk through the paper, looking for solutions to flesh out the essay. By doing this in a whole group setting, I get to indirectly mirror for the other students and model to the whole class how one could talk through the problems with their papers. In my elementary and high school classrooms, I often conduct online conferences. By utilizing the Google Technology my school districts have utilized, I can make live comments on a student paper while they write. At times, I also engage the student in oral conversation and, if need be, transition into a traditional face-to-face conference. Face-to-face conferences allow deeper and longer conversation but are also more time consuming. In the elementary classroom, we were trained to keep our conferences to 2-3 minutes. We'd offer one praise point, one teaching point, and making sure the student had a plan for revision. In high school, the bar and the time are raised, and I typically offer a praise point and several teaching points. In my college classroom, I typically offer several praise points and several teaching points and work hard to help students come to their own conclusions. No matter the type of conference, I encourage students to pursue their tangents. Often in the whole group conference setting, we explore tangents that lead students to refining their topics and their essays, focusing in on what students really want to write about, but this is also effective in both face-to-face and online conferences as well.

I train my students to conference and peer respond in the same way that I conduct conferences. I always tell them, jokingly, that “it’s my job to be mean.” I ask them to offer a praise point by finishing the sentence “I like…” and a teaching point by finishing “I think you should…”. Students are free to discuss openly questions they have and engage partners in conversation but are instructed not to correct punctuation or worry about “lower order concerns”. This keeps students from focusing on trivial matters instead of “higher order concerns” such as structure and development. Often, I tell students that they will get as much out of reading other students’ papers as they will from the feedback they receive. By reading another student’s paper, they get confirmation about the choices they’ve made in their own paper. It’s similar to providing models or mentor texts, but student writers get to have a real interaction with a member of their audience.

Teacher feedback takes the form of both in-text comments that ask questions and provide positive feedback and also summative, wholistic comments at the end of the essay. Since I allow revisions in my high school and college classes, my comments are typically geared toward how students can improve their essays, but not all students take advantage of that offer. Summative comments provide praise when appropriate and an explanation for the student’s grade, hopefully offering consummation as well as opportunities for growth.

The final thing I do to encourage revision, especially with the narrative essay, is encourage my students to read their drafts aloud. I began my thesis talking about how closely connected orality is to my writing process and I share that with my students. Peter Elbow provides numerous handouts and memos on his website. In “Reading Out Loud: The Uses of Voice and Ear for Writing and Reading,” Elbow encourages students to read their work aloud. “When the writing ‘sounds right,’ then the author’s meaning is *alive* and *in the sound*. The felt

meaning is in the writer's body, and the writer is checking that the felt meaning is also in the sound." By reconnecting to the oral, students are encouraged to hear what their audience "hears." It also reconnects the act of writing to a performance and it helps root out and avoid Engfish, and while I especially emphasize it during the narrative essay because it is first and lays the foundation of our writing process for either the semester or school year, I constantly remind students that it's a helpful exercise whether they are writing narratives and research papers or emails and memos in their future professional lives. The tools we learn in English 101 will hopefully follow them throughout their lives.

Ultimately, the purpose of freshman writing is to get students ready for other classes. Over the course of the semester, students become more comfortable with both the process of writing and their voices. By gradually increasing the difficulty and nature of the assignments, students slowly transition from the inner to outer voices. While I've had colleagues who have eliminated personal/narrative writing from their classes, I think it is the single most important essay of the semester. Nothing prepares student voices more and builds confidence, especially in students who aren't comfortable writing. By encouraging students to explore tangents, make connections, and not focus on "sounding smart" (and avoiding Engfish), the confidence carries over into successive papers. With each paper, their voice naturally grows and becomes more academic naturally. Over 20 years of teaching, I've never seen an "ain't" in a research paper.

IN CONCLUSION...

In the 20 years it's taken me to write this thesis, I've thought long and hard about the implications of "write like you talk." There will be teachers at all levels that will read my advice and cringe, and I'm sure there are a few of my former teachers rolling over in their graves. However, I've used it successfully in elementary, high school, and community college levels with traditional and non-traditional students with native and non-native students. I think most importantly, I've used it successfully in my own writing, including the development of this paper.

As a writer, there are still things I struggle with. I am an awful editor, which shocks people who find out I teach writing. I am not good with transitions and, not only am I bad at conclusions, I'm not that good at teaching them either. I do pride myself on my voice being authentic to who I am, and I think that springs from the idea that our writing voices should be honest and real, and my favorite writers have authentic voices. I also write like I talk.

I think because I was at times a reluctant student, I know not every student comes by writing easily, but I argue that if we embrace writing like we talk, students will come by their writing voices naturally. Orality, secondary orality, and literacy can work together with good instruction, guided release of responsibility, and creation of a classroom community to make nearly every student who walks through our door competent writers if they want to be. I firmly believe that my students were writers when I got them; I just guided through the beginning stages of writing for a new academic audience. It didn't matter if they were 10 and writing about a trip to Worlds of Fun or 45 and writing about setting a catfish free.

If students write like they talk, as they grow, so will their voices. Writing should be a natural act, and I want my students to embrace that mindset. Embracing what they already understand about audience and language based on their orality and secondary orality will open doors and unlock potentials.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Narrative Essay

Write about a significant experience.

There's an old saying about writing: Write what you know. What do you know better than yourself and the experiences you've had?

The key to writing this essay begins with the word significant. How do you define it? What is significant to you may not be significant to me and vice versa. As Walt Whitman said, "I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars." We can find significance in small things as easily and large.

Dictionary.com define significant as "Having or expressing a meaning; meaningful." Experience is "an event or a series of events participated in or lived through."

So the assignment begins with you think about the experiences of your life. Which are significant? Which stand out in your memory. A good place to start is to think about the stories you like to tell. If you were meeting someone for the first time, what stories do you tell that help define who you are?

There is one rule, though. And this is more or less the only rule. Don't violate your own privacy. If the experience is something you don't feel comfortable with the whole class knowing, it's not a good subject for your paper.

Rules of thumb when choosing an experience:

1. Avoid cliché experiences (Drivers license, high school graduation, first car wreck, etc. While these were all important moments in our lives, most of them are more or less the same. If yours stands out as a not-so-typical experience, it may work well.)
2. The first time you go drunk/high never works. (And yes, every semester someone tries to write this.) Stories about being under the influence of something are usually only funny when the audience is also under the influence. Neither is appropriate and no matter how hard people try, they just never work.
3. The best narratives have a point. They're more than just a good/funny/sad story. What does it all mean? Also, think about the essays we've read. How does each fit this assignment?

4. As with all our papers, think about the trinity: Audience, Purpose and Occasion. How will each help you decide what to write about?

The paper needs to be as long as it takes you to tell your story. I've had very good essays be anywhere from 4-12+ pages.

Appendix B: Analytical Essay

Advertisement Analysis

Perhaps no other form of media has had quite the impact on culture as that of the advertisement. Advertisements are really a window to the soul of a culture, displaying our values and worldviews. Advertisements are memorable and quick, while still giving a brief argument with a glance. With every advent of technology, be it print, television, film, the internet, and even on our phones, marketing has been there to guide us and tell us what to buy and where to find it but what's cool, desirable and even our gender role. It is this area that we will be examining in this paper. This paper will think about how effective or ineffective marketing draws in the audience and what underlying messages are involved in that communication.

First, you will start off by thinking about what type of medium you want to use. There are literally thousands to choose from: print ads (magazines, newspapers), television or film ads (commercials), internet ads (pop-ups, sidebar ads on social networking, sponsored blogs) or phone ads (pop-ups, apps). After choosing your medium, think about what the message is for this ad. Why does the company choose to advertise in this specific way? Who is the audience?

Consider the following when you're writing. Note: this is not a checklist you need to tick off in the paper but some things to think about. Not every ad will address all the items on this list. Choose one, or something else, and dive deep in your analysis.

- Who is the audience? What demographics is the ad playing to? Why?
- What are the picture elements of ad? What are the "written" elements of the ad? How do they work together?
- If there are figures (men, women, children, animals) what are they like? What can be said about their facial expressions, poses, hairstyle, age, sex, hair color, ethnicity, education, occupation, relationships (of one to the other)?
- What is the theme of the ad?
- What is the plot of the ad? (Yes, even print ads have a plot that can be derived. Just look a little closer. Read between the lines.)
- What stereotypes are given in the ad? (Example: Men only care about hot chicks and beer in Bud Light commercials.)
- What is the general feeling the advertisement gives? How does it convey this feeling?
- What is the item being advertised and what role does it play in American culture and society?

Dig deep. Don't just analyze the argument. Analyze what the ad is saying about our *culture*.

Appendix C: Rogerian Argument

Rogerian Argument

Because a Rogerian argument will help you find common ground with your audience, you should consider this style of argument when you have a difficult or controversial topic and want to use a connection with your audience as a part of your persuasive style. But what is common ground? Finding a common ground involves meeting your opposition in the middle.

Know your audience — Is your audience going to be reluctant to change on this issue? If so, a Rogerian argument can be persuasive. It is also going to be a wonderful exercise in helping you see things from your audience's perspective, as your goal is to understand the other side of an issue and then meet your audience in the middle. Some brainstorming can help you as you think about how you are going to approach your audience and find the common ground you need.

1. Introduce the problem — When you begin your argumentative essay, you should introduce the problem or issue in a way that makes it clear to an opposing audience that you understand their position.
2. Acknowledge other side — Unlike some other argument structures, in a Rogerian argument, you should address the opposition in the very beginning of your essay. After your introduction, you should explain the contexts in which your opposition's viewpoints make sense and are valid.
3. State your position — It's now time to present your side. Your goal is to evenly and carefully make the case for your position in order to be as persuasive as possible to the other side. Explain the contexts in which your side of the issue makes sense.
4. Bring two sides together — After you present your position, your next step is to explain how the opposition would benefit from considering at least certain parts of your position. Focus on the value of your position while remembering the value of the other side.
5. Reach a conclusion — As you reach the end of your Rogerian essay, remember to remind your audience of your main points and try to leave your audience with something to consider, even if they are still not convinced by the balanced presentation on the issue you have presented.

Your paper should utilize at least 2 sources, one per side, and be written in MLA style.

Appendix D: Classical Argument

Classical Argument:

Generally, this is a structure we are all familiar with, though it is often oversimplified. It has evolved over a couple thousand years to other forms of argument that we will try out later on, but this is still commonly used literally every day from Congress to convincing our Significant Other that we need Double Stuf Oreos.

- 1) Introduction to general topic which leads to a clear thesis
- 2) A moment of definition, background, and/or precedence (this is a section which clarifies and gives history on the topic or your stance on it).
- 3) Support 1: This is typically the most logical reason why one should support your claim.
 - a) Evidence
 - b) Backing for evidence
- 4) Support 2: This is typically a side of the argument most don't think about. Perhaps it is a little known effect of the issue that interests and compels your reader to continue with you while you argue your point.
 - a) Evidence
 - b) Backing for evidence
- 5) Support 3: This is typically the strongest support of your claim. It is generally positioned last to deliver the most impact. It may include a staggering fact, testimony, or statistic. It also might include a very emotional appeal that the audience can relate to. You want this to build into a very strong, winning conclusion.
 - a) Evidence
 - b) Backing for evidence
- 6) Concession: One way ethos (ethical appeal) is maintained is through presenting yourself as a fair and knowledgeable writer. In order to most effectively illustrate this, writers will give a nod or concession to opposing viewpoints. For example, if you were arguing against the death penalty, this may be a place where you recognize legitimate reasons for why one might consider the death penalty. It is also a good idea to cite outside sources in this section. This does not weaken your argument. Rather, it shows you are aware of multi-perspectives on this issue and aren't afraid or apprehensive to note them because you will also refute them.
*Concession does not have to follow in this order. Some writers include concession after the "definition" section so that they can dedicate their supports 1 – 3 to the refutation.
 - a) Consider evidence and backing for evidence
- 7) Refutation: In this section, you refute the concession. Even though you concede to an outside perspective, you remind your readers that either a.) there may be some kind of logical error in the other perspective or b.) that, even though this outside perspective may be valid, the harm or benefits do not outweigh those of your perspective.
 - a) Evidence
 - b) Backing for evidence
- 8) Conclusion: Unlike the traditional "summary" conclusion this is the space wherein you want to really drive home your claim. You may recap your essay here, but the last note needs to

strongly appeal to your audience to consider your perspective. Think of it as a moment of “grand standing” or the rallying end of a speech.

You should work at least 2 sources into the body of the paper to help support your argument and be written in MLA style.

Appendix E: Research Paper

Research Paper

The first thing to keep in mind about Research Papers is that they ARE NOT REPORTS.

The purpose of a research paper is not to inform, it's to prove something. My thesis could be "Abe Lincoln was the best president" and then set out to prove it through research. If that sounds like an argumentative essay, that's because it more or less is. In many ways, every essay you will ever write is an argumentative essay. Every type of essay requires you to have a thesis and support that thesis. So, in that sense, all writing is persuasive.

The first step in a research paper is to develop a research question. A research question is the question around which you center your research. The answer to the question becomes your working thesis. It should be:

- clear: it provides enough specifics that one's audience can easily understand its purpose without needing additional explanation.
- focused: it is narrow enough that it can be answered thoroughly in the space the writing task allows.
- concise: it is expressed in the fewest possible words.
- complex: it is not answerable with a simple "yes" or "no," but rather requires synthesis and analysis of ideas and sources prior to composition of an answer.
- arguable: its potential answers are open to debate rather than accepted facts.

You should ask a question about an issue that you are genuinely curious and/or passionate about.

Your paper should utilize four sources and be written in MLA style.