

Reading Rhetorically Writing Rhetorically

Understanding Academic Discourse

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Rhetorical Reading

"The process of reading is not just the interpretation of a text, but the interpretation of another person's worldview as presented by a text."

—Doug Brent

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Rhetorical Writing

The process of writing is an individual's presentation of an interpretation—a "worldview"—to an audience of readers.

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Rhetorical Writing

- ▣ Aristotle defines RHETORIC as discovering (and using) the available means of persuasion in a given situation.
- ▣ Today we use the term to refer to all the techniques a writer or speaker might use to influence readers or listeners and modify their understanding of a subject.

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Rhetorical Reading/Writing

Rhetorical Reading = Reception

Rhetorical Writing = Production

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Rhetorical Writing

When we teach RHETORICAL WRITING, we teach students to ask:

- ▣ Who is my audience?
- ▣ What am I writing about (content)?
- ▣ What is my purpose?
- ▣ How should (will) I position myself in relation to audience, purpose, and content?

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Rhetorical Reading

When we teach RHETORICAL READING, we teach students to ask these questions:

- ▣ Who is speaking (who is the author)?
- ▣ To whom (audience)?
- ▣ About what (content)?
- ▣ To what end (purpose)?
- ▣ HOW does the speaker/author present the argument (how is LANGUAGE is used to influence me)?

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Writing and Reading

The RHETORICAL WRITER asks:

- ▣ Who am I as the constructed writer?
- ▣ Who is my audience?
- ▣ What am I writing about (content)?
- ▣ What is my purpose?

The RHETORICAL READER asks:

- ▣ Who is speaking (who is the author)?
- ▣ To whom (audience)?
- ▣ About what content?
- ▣ To what end (purpose)?

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Rhetorical Reading

Rhetorical reading requires rhetorical analysis.

This is analysis of the RHETOR—the speaker/writer and his/her verbal actions.

This is also referred to as “critical reading” or “critical literacy.”

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Rhetorical Reading

ETHOS: Who is the author?

- ▣ How is the author qualified to write on this subject?
- ▣ How does the author make himself or herself seem credible to the intended audience? (Is the author credible to me?)

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Rhetorical Reading

PATHOS: What is the relationship between the writer and the audience?

- ▣ Who is the the intended audience? (Am I part of that group?)
- ▣ How does the author hook the intended reader? (e.g. humor, emotion, logic)
- ▣ How does the author keep the reader reading?
- ▣ How am I responding to these appeals? Why? (How does this writer's worldview accord with mine?)

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Rhetorical Reading

LOGOS: What is the content and purpose?

- ▣ What questions does the text address?
- ▣ Why are they significant questions?
- ▣ What community cares about them?
- ▣ How does the author support his or her position with reasons and evidence?

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Rhetorical Reading

LOGOS: What is the content and purpose?

- ▣ Do I find the argument convincing?
- ▣ What views and counter arguments are omitted?
- ▣ What counter evidence is ignored?
- ▣ How does the author's purpose fit with my purpose for reading?

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Rhetorical Reading

When we teach RHETORICAL READING, we are NOT teaching strategies.

Strategies are ANALYTICAL TOOLS for accessing textual content .

Strategies are ANALYTICAL TOOLS to support the processes of making meaning from texts.

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Rhetorical Reading

When we teach RHETORICAL READING, we are teaching HABITS OF MIND—ANALYTICAL CONCEPTS that position texts rhetorically, and that MAKE CONSCIOUS an awareness of the reader's position(s) and response(s) to a text.

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Rhetorical Writing

When we teach RHETORICAL WRITING, we are NOT teaching forms or formulas.

Forms and formulas are “training wheels” that substitute language patterns for genuine consideration of audience, purpose, and content.

Instead of forms and formulas, we teach processes of producing meaningful texts.

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A Key Question to Ask:

What CONVERSATION is this text joining?

Human utterances—spoken or written—are always within a context of what has gone before and what will come afterwards.

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Kenneth Burke

“Imagine you enter a parlor. You come in late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar.

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Kenneth Burke

"Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress."

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Within the conversational context:

- ▣ What CONCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE do you need in order to participate?
- ▣ How do you acquire it?
- ▣ What PROCEDURAL KNOWLEDGE (how to read a particular genre, for example) do you need to have in order to participate?
- ▣ How do you acquire it?

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What are we teaching?

- ▣ Processes of reading
- ▣ Processes for writing
- ▣ Habits of mind

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Reading and Writing Instruction

Why must these lessons be made explicit and repeated?

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Reading and Writing Instruction

- ▣ Discipline specific
- ▣ Genre specific
- ▣ Students OFTEN do not transfer strategies and habits of mind from classroom to classroom, from discipline to discipline without explicit help.

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Social Studies Genres

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| ■ Timelines | ■ Historical descriptions (factual, narrative) |
| ■ Written debates | ■ Biographies |
| ■ Persuasive essays/arguments | ■ Posters |
| ■ Analytical essays (compare and contrast; cause and effect) | ■ Maps and charts |
| ■ Interviews | ■ Research papers |

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Science Genres

- Lab Reports (procedures)
- Journals
- Field notes
- Explanations
- Arguments
- Descriptions
- Abstracts
- Research papers
- Science fiction
- Persuasive essays
- Written debates
- Letters
- Editorials

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Mathematics Genres

- Proofs
- Word problems
- Refutations
- Process writing
- Strategy logs
- Problem/solution
- Cause and effect
- Evaluation

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English/Language Arts Genres

- Short stories
- Poems
- Personal narratives
- Exposition: Analytical essays (enumeration, classification, part-to-whole, cause and effect, comparison/contrast).
- Exposition: Extended definition
- Persuasion/argument

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English/Language Arts Genres

- CAHSEE GENRES:
 - Biographical essay
 - Response to literature
 - Persuasion
 - Business letter

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Rhetorical Reading and Rhetorical Writing



- Teaching one can inform development of the other.
- Teachers have to make the links explicit for learners.

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