

8 Reading and Writing Connections in College Composition Textbooks: The Role of Textbook Readers

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College composition textbooks are a place where most first year writing students and some writing instructors are introduced to the idea of writing studies as a discipline. Inasmuch as they are used to help writing instructors meet the objectives and outcomes of their respective schools' writing programs, composition textbooks are introduced as tools for helping students learn how to write in a wide array of modes and genres and through various methods of inquiry. While designed to support the writing teacher's efforts to guide students in different ways of composing, these texts also introduce students to ways of thinking and reading critically, with varying degrees of explicit instruction.

Textbooks are successful in helping students learn how to read, think, and write critically only in the manner in which the instructor wields them, dependent on how they are used as part of the instructor's syllabus, as part of the scaffolding of writing assignments, and as part of the teacher's instruction, or ancillary to it. That said, the way composition textbooks, and composition readers in particular, represent the relationship between reading and writing can frame the way teachers and students perceive and enact these skills. In this way, composition textbooks are one site where we can examine the construction and scaffolding of reading and its relation to writing.

In advocating the close connection between reading and writing discussed throughout this volume, this chapter looks closely at how select best-selling composition readers in different market segments

help students in developing critical reading skills as an extension of the reader's primary mission of providing composition instruction. I identify a select number of other influential textbooks—some readers that are not necessarily market-leaders as well as a couple of brief rhetorics—that offer instructors more unique opportunities to integrate instruction in close, critical reading skills as an integral part of writing assignments. While changes in the delivery of college textbooks means that books and texts are being published digitally, we focus here on print books and on the close reading of print texts, though some attention must be paid to how visual images are introduced as texts in composition readers.

WAYS OF READING AND FIRST-YEAR WRITING

In a meeting with graduate students and writing instructors at Georgia State University in November, 2011, Andrea A. Lunsford talked about “(Some) Ways of Reading.” She spoke of different kinds of reading, including informational reading, ludic reading (playful, pure pleasure), rhetorical reading (aimed at action), aesthetic reading (deeply hermeneutical/close reading), and creative reading (the text invites readers to create on their own). Readers, she said, are reading more and different kinds of texts, especially digital texts. Writers, she said, insist on creating and producing as well as consuming text (A. Lunsford, personal communication, November 30, 2011).

College textbooks offer help to students in developing skills for some, but not all, of these kinds of reading (few, if any, help students develop a purely ludic or appreciative manner of reading, for instance). If one general aim of first year writing courses is to help students develop first as analysts and then as creators of texts, then textbooks play an important role in helping them move from being *recipients of* information, knowledge, ideas, and skills to being *participants in* the creation of *new* content, *new* knowledge, and *new* texts. The link between effective reading and writing, then, is evidenced by students' responses to assignments that show they understand what they have read and can use that understanding to create new text. If textbooks are designed to follow the arc of the writing classroom, then they must be evaluated according to the manner in which they help first year writing instructors move students from consumers to producers.

THE READING-WRITING CONNECTION IN TEXTBOOKS

The amount and kind of reading and writing instruction in college composition textbooks is disparate and wide-ranging. Textbook publishers generally categorize their books as handbooks, rhetorics, and readers. Although the distinctions among the types are often blurred, as they offer variants that combine core features of one type or the other (e.g., rhetorics with readings, rhetorics with a handbook, etc.), some generalizations hold. In some kinds of composition textbooks—most handbooks and some rhetorics—reading skills are discussed as a core set of strategies. That is, in textbooks that do not offer readings as core material to which students will refer to for analysis and re-reading, and upon which writing assignments are built, these textbooks are intended to serve as references for instruction or as the foundation for classroom work. Guided reading advice is not evident in specific applications, but rather is seen as a general set of critical thinking, analytic, and writing practices that can be applied to specific writing tasks.

So while most comprehensive handbooks on the market have abundant advice on critical reading and thinking strategies, they are best used in a skilled teacher's hands. Similar to the way instructors use handbooks for grammar instruction or advice on doing research, a full understanding of critical reading strategies extracted from these textbooks is dependent on explication by the writing instructor and on application as part of careful scaffolding in specific writing assignments of the instructor's creation.

While many handbooks cover the same material, *rhetorics* are textbooks designed to help students write effectively. They offer students an introduction to the processes of writing, and most have fully developed coverage of the writing and reading connection. They have distinctive chapters with advice on how to write fully developed, analytical papers, including: invention and revision strategies, editing advice, and writing assignments so students can practice what they are learning about the processes of writing. The reading-writing connection in some rhetorics is explicit, with separate chapters showing critical reading, thinking, and writing strategies. In others, reading advice is implicit as the textbook sends students back to texts for a closer second or third reading.

Rhetorics can be categorized by how they are used in the composition course. Ones that *structure the course* usually include core chapters

organized around major writing assignments that mirror the syllabus for the course, and are often called *comprehensive rhetorics* because they have four distinct parts: a detailed rhetoric, readings, a research manual, and a handbook. These four-in-one rhetorics have detailed writing guides in chapters that correspond to specific kinds of writing assignments, such as writing a causal analysis, writing an evaluation, proposing a solution. As such, most have the word “guide” in their titles. As a group, these are the best-selling rhetorics, in part because they provide so much help for the instructor—whether he or she uses the text in class or not—but mostly because they offer step-by-step, guided writing instruction for students when they need it, inside and outside of class.

Comprehensive rhetorics generally provide a significant amount of specific reading strategies offered as an integral part of the writing guide in each chapter, and the strategies are focused on specific writing assignments. With such detailed and guided reading, and with critical thinking strategies and writing instruction specific to assignments based on rhetorical situations and/or genres, these books closely match the “Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing” plank of the Writing Program Administrators’s *WPA Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition*, and so their advice on reading is specific to the writing assignment. In these books, the writing assignment chapters emphasize the connection between reading and writing in a particular genre. Students are introduced to a reading or a group of readings, and are asked to think about the features of the genre. The writing guide then asks them to apply what they have learned about the features of the genre or writing task to an essay of their own.

Two examples show the connectivity between reading and writing in these books. In *The St. Martin’s Guide to Writing, Ninth Edition* (2011), by Rise B. Axelrod and Charles R. Cooper, each of the nine writing guide chapters follows a sequence. For example, the seventh chapter, “Proposing a Solution,” opens with a brief description of the genre followed by a guide for reading that kind of essay and a discussion of its basic features. The reading guide has a focus on purpose and audience, argument and counter-argument, and a plan for reading that directs students to assess how well the author has achieved her or his goals in proposing a solution. This discussion is followed by an annotated example, three professional readings (with a careful discussion for each according to the reading plan), and a guided writing assignment (pp. 320–83).

In *The McGraw-Hill Guide: Writing for College, Writing for Life, Second Edition* (2009), by Duane Roen, Gregory R. Glau, and Barry M. Maid, the authors have explicitly crafted reading and writing instruction for each kind of writing to the WPA's learning outcomes. In the chapter "Writing to Analyze," they offer three professional essays as examples of analytical writing. Each is followed by sets of questions to guide students to a deeper reading and understanding of rhetorical knowledge (the writer's situation and rhetoric), critical thinking (guiding the student's reflective response and understanding of the essayist's ideas), composing processes and conventions (the essayist's rhetorical strategies), and inquiry and research (guiding the student's ideas for further exploration) (pp. 66–282). Since the release of the outcome statements, all other comprehensive rhetorics have expressly shown how the textbooks correspond in a correlation guide of some sort.

Some of these books also have distinct reading strategies chapters that outline specific rhetorical reading and invention advice, note-taking, or annotating strategies useful in a variety of genres and writing tasks. In *The Allyn & Bacon Guide to Writing, Fifth Edition* (2009), by John D. Ramage, John C. Bean, and June Johnson, for example, the authors offer four chapters of advice to students on how to read and think rhetorically about good writing, subject matter, how messages persuade, and style and document design. In addition, they offer two distinct chapters on seeing rhetorically, or analyzing a text (pp. 89–108), and on reading rhetorically, including advice on note-taking, using a dictionary, and re-reading advice for "first-draft reading" and "multi-draft" reading (pp. 109–49).

Other rhetorics, ones that *do not structure the course*, are often the refined best practices about teaching writing that sometimes reflect the research and/or scholarly publishing of their authors who are influential and well-regarded, if not market leaders (e.g., Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff's *A Community of Writers* (1989) and *Being a Writer* (2002); Linda Flower's, *Problem-Solving Strategies for Writing in College and Community* (1998); and Wendy Bishop's *Reading into Writing* (2003)). Because they have an organization that does not suggest a *design* for the course, instructors can fit the books into an existing syllabus. Rather than chapters on major writing assignments, the chapters are stages of the writing process and/or on elements of writing, like purpose, tone, style, and paragraphs. While comprehensive rhetorics—the four-in-one texts—are the best-selling of the writing

texts, there are other, briefer rhetorics that are notable for their distinctive way of showing students the connection between close reading and writing by helping them develop particular perspectives or ways of thinking. In the eyes of publishers, they are often called *point of view* rhetorics in that they often reflect the teaching practices and theoretical underpinnings of their authors, and thus do not invite easy categorization.

One of the most successful new textbooks in recent years, *They Say/I Say, Second Edition* (2010), by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein, is based on an assumption, implicit in its title, that students can join a larger academic conversation if they learn to place their arguments in the context of what authors have said about the topic they are writing about. It emphasizes inquiry—students have to read and decode and find out what others have to say—to assimilate other writers' voices within their own arguments. There is a give and take, a process of listening to (reading) others' arguments and responding to them. It provides templates—specific signal phrases or constructions—that help students learn transitions in their writing, moving back and forth between what they say and what others have written. The second edition added a chapter on reading, “Reading for the Conversation,” with advice on helping students see that reading an academic text, or a general argument, can be broken down into patterns of “they say/I say” moves. In the chapter on reading, the authors guide students in ways of seeing both the argument that a text's author makes, but also the arguments to which he or she is responding. By recognizing the moves writers make, students can see textual elements that help them see a writer's shift in rhetorical strategy or in meaning. For some, the templates that students have worked with in their own writing provide a key to better understanding some the moves made by the authors they read.

David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen's *Writing Analytically, Fifth Edition* (2009) has an especially targeted focus on helping students learn ways of writing and reading analytically to discover and develop ideas. The book treats writing as, “a tool of thought—a means of undertaking sustained acts of inquiry and reflection” (p. xvii). They develop strategies of rhetorical analysis based on close reading, and as such, advocate observation as a distinct form of thinking. They argue that students need more instruction on information gathering (inquiry) and evidence gathering before developing a thesis. They contend that a thesis can evolve in response to the writer's inquiries, and

as such, encourage students to develop new habits of mind based on inquiry and analysis. Habits of mind include learning to read analytically by paying attention to specific skills that range from discovering meaning (by looking at word selection, entering into a dialogue with a reading, and paraphrasing), to more developed skills for summary and analysis (by freewriting in response to passages in a larger text, ranking to evaluate main ideas and evidence, and uncovering assumptions in a reading), to writing tips for deeper meaning (by applying a reading as a lens for examining something else) (pp. 205–14).

In *The Academic Writer, Second Edition* (2011), Lisa Ede places particular emphasis on helping students learn to *think* rhetorically—in terms of purpose and effect—and inasmuch as reading and writing are parallel processes, students who learn to think about writing as rhetorical processes, they learn the interconnectedness of reading and writing as they respond to the texts they read (p. 249). By thinking rhetorically, she says, students learn how to adapt to the rhetorical situation in terms of making decisions about organization, development, form, and genre. By learning how to think rhetorically, students learn how to act—that is, communicate or write as problem solvers. In arguing that reading is a situated process, Ede treats it as having common rhetorical considerations as writing. A first reading of a text is like composing a first draft; re-reading is like revising. Reading is an active process like composing, and as such, readers engage with a text and can develop “strong reading strategies” (pp. 253–72).

These brief rhetorics, “point-of-view” texts by publishers, are highly regarded for flexibility in their pedagogy. Instructors who use them are at great liberty to construct assignments around the texts, but they very much have to engage directly with the textbooks. They are explicit in making connections among thinking rhetorically, reading for meaning, analyzing texts for both rhetorical methods and arguments to engage, and writing in response to analysis and extended meaning-making.

WAYS OF SEEING TEXTBOOK READERS: READING THE APPARATUS

Textbooks that best raise students’ meta-awareness of the connection between reading and writing and that most effectively move students from consumers of texts to producers of new texts are composition *readers*, since they compel students to read and re-read texts as an inte-

gral element of writing assignments. In this kind of book, reading and writing instruction is developed in the book's apparatus and in how writing assignments are sequenced.

It is important to liberate composition readers from the misconception that all are of a kind. They are often disparaged for not having explicit treatment of critical reading skills (e.g., discerning context clues, annotating, note-taking, reading for main idea, etc.) as found in handbooks or rhetorics. Sometimes, too, they are undervalued as a tool for making explicit the connection of reading to writing, although that charge undervalues the critical thinking questions and writing sequences that are part of the book's apparatus.

A carefully chosen reader can be a valuable tool to the first year writing instructor in designing writing assignments that weave in reading and writing instruction while meeting course outcomes. The reader can, in fact, serve as the place where students and instructors alike are first shown how to closely read complex texts. In fact, as Adler-Kassner and Estrem (2007) say, "the majority of work focused on attempting to articulate various strategies for active, engaged reading is found in the prefaces and supporting material within composition readers" (p. 36).

A reader's apparatus can be evaluated on how well it helps students build reading and writing skills along a trajectory from understanding to evaluating to creating meaning. That is, a look at the apparatus shows how it helps students create writing that demonstrates a grasp of the meaning of a text (understanding), hones skills of analysis and synthesis (evaluating), and develops lines of inquiry or research (creating). Further, if it is aimed at preparing students to see new ways to inform, persuade, or determine new courses of action, then it can be evaluated on how well it helps students build reading and writing skills to use meaning and infer connections between two or more texts and to create new meaning with a rhetorical awareness of audience, purpose, and genre.

We must remember that textbook readers have the primary purposes of: (a) offering readings for use as models or analysis; (b) offering concise writing instruction for a multitude of purposes; and (c) guiding close reading instruction as part of writing assignments. The instructor choosing a textbook reader will answer the first point subjectively; it really is a matter of preference. The second point is dependent on whether the instructor will choose other textbooks, or use his or her own instruction, to introduce students to composition

principles. As to the matter of integrating reading and writing, the most important consideration for any instructor choosing a reader is whether the apparatus helps him herself meet classroom goals. This might be framed as follows:

1. How is the reader/text equipped to help students understand what the essayist/writer is trying to persuade or inform in the selections? That is, how does the textbook help students learn to:

Decode meaning;

Understand the writer's main question (main point, thesis);

Understand language;

Understand audience;

Understand context of the reading;

See the rhetorical moves a writer makes;

Understand the rhetorical situation;

Summarize/paraphrase the text, and learn the difference?

2. How is the reader/text equipped to help students evaluate the text they are reading? That is, how does the textbook help students learn to:

Compare and contrast;

Connect to other text(s);

Refute, based on experience or on reading of other writers;

Synthesize;

Analyze;

Identify context;

Understand counter-point;

Argue against a main point;

Understand the use of source material;

Re-read;

Understand the use of visual elements or text design;

Understand that reading, like writing, is recursive?

3. How is the reader/text equipped to help student create new meaning, to enter the conversation—with a single reading or with multiple readings—with claims or arguments of his or her own and create meaning or extend the conversation in his or her own writing? That is, how does the textbook help students learn to:

- Frame unasked questions;
- Extend a writer's argument;
- Extend and connect to other text(s);
- Understand research strategies;
- Understand voice in their writing;
- Understand the rhetorical situation of their writing;
- Read their writing with critical attention?

Imagine a reader's apparatus as a kind of continuum that helps students develop critical reading skills in increasing complexity, from reading as invention and discovery, to reading as a means of evaluating and analyzing, and to reading as a means to question or challenge their reading and create new meaning. It can provide *practical* tools for close reading as strategies for invention and discovery—such as annotating, note-taking, highlighting, outlining, and underlining—to address the questions of the first two criteria. More importantly, it can provide advice to help students *change their habits of mind* and *learn to ask critical questions* of a text.

The apparatus of a college textbook reader can be evaluated, then, on how it helps students develop reading skills along this sweep: recognize conventions and purposes (reading as rhetorical invention), understand content (reading for meaning), learn to synthesize and analyze (reading to evaluate), and learn to frame a question for research and inquiry in order to respond to an argument or otherwise join an academic conversation (reading to create meaning).

RHETORICAL READERS: READING AS RHETORICAL INVENTION

Among the five major publishers in composition, there are more readers published each year than any other type of textbook. With scores more available in each company's backlist, the number of viable readers avail-

able to writing instructors is staggering. It is widely believed that the reader market is roughly split: one-third rhetorically-arranged readers, one-third argument readers, and one-third “other” readers. The best-selling reader at each publisher is likely a rhetorically-arranged reader, usually deep in its revision cycle. The fastest growing segment of the market is argument-based texts and readers. The greatest diversity of readers is the “other” category, comprised of a large number of books known as cultural studies readers, most thematically organized. The vast majority of readers used in the first semester of first year writing are rhetorically-arranged readers and general thematic readers. Most argument texts and readers are used in the second-semester course of a two-course sequence.

The rhetorical reader has been the dominant best-seller for over thirty years. Every publisher offers several, all sharing the same general organization. Many rhetorical readers remain their publisher’s top-selling reader. The core of today’s rhetorical reader is its collection of professional (and some student) essays collected in chapters that represent traditional rhetorical patterns (narration, description, classification, comparison/contrast, etc.). All top sellers open with full coverage of critical reading and offer general rhetorical guidance on the writing process.

While the rhetorical reader, as a type of book, is sometimes defined by how much guidance on writing it offers, best-sellers have maintained their successes—most have recently published in their tenth or older editions—by responding to the needs of instructors and students. Recently, their authors have added significant amounts of guidance on critical reading that show the interconnectedness of writing and reading.

For example, two market leaders, *Patterns for College Writers, Twelfth Edition* (2012), by Laurie G. Kirszner and Stephen R. Mandell, and *Readings for Writers, Thirteenth Edition* (2010), by Jo Ray McCuen-Metherell and Anthony C. Winkler, have long been valued because of a generous amount of general guidance about the writing process in sections that their publishers call a mini-rhetoric that open the books. Here, the authors introduce writing strategies developed fully as rhetorical methods are examined and developed in writing assignments specific to the modes. In addition, each of these books (and others like them in this market segment) opens each chapter on rhetorical modes with specific and detailed advice to students about writing using that particular method of development. As the market has shifted, and demand for explicit reading instruction has increased,

both the Kirszner and Mandell and McCuen and Winkler tests developed apparatuses to expressly help students read more closely.

Patterns for College Writers, first published in 1980, places a high emphasis on critical reading both as an amalgam of specific reading strategies and as an integral component of the writing process. Its apparatus is fully developed to help students use their responses to reading to move from invention and discovery to analysis and evaluation. An opening introduction, “How to Use This Book,” tells students that “the study questions that accompany the essays . . . encourage you to think critically about writers’ ideas” (p. 1).

A distinct chapter on critical reading, “Reading to Write: Becoming a Critical Reader,” prepares students to become analytical readers and writers by showing them how to apply critical reading strategies to a typical selection and by providing sample responses to the various kinds of writing prompts in the book. It provides advice on specific reading strategies, including active reading tips about reading with a purpose, previewing, highlighting, annotating, and reading with checklists for critical reading and reading visuals. There are also annotated essays to show these processes (pp. 13–27).

Similarly, *Readings for Writers, Thirteenth Edition*, first published in 1974, is another well-established rhetorical reader. The core critical reading chapters are found in, “Part One: Reading and Writing: From Reading to Writing.” The authors offer a brief discussion of four different kinds of reading—casual reading, reading for pleasure, reading for information, and critical reading—followed by guidelines for critical reading. Among the specific tips, they offer advice that helps students read actively, including: reading for rhetorical invention (demystify the author, note the author’s style and words or expressions used, and understand the author’s opening context); reading for meaning (understand what you read and look up facts); and reading to evaluate (imagine an opposing point of view for all opinions, look for biases and hidden assumptions, separate fact from fiction, use insights from one subject to illuminate another, evaluate the evidence, ponder the values behind an argument, and recognize logical fallacies) (pp. 3–7).

In rhetorical readers such as these, the connection between reading and writing is explicit, but the emphasis is on writing. Since rhetorical readers are always used in the first semester of a two-semester sequence in first year writing, and even though some writing assignments ask for the use of source material, the apparatus has a strong focus on

helping students understand content, recognize rhetorical moves, and develop writing strategies that will be expanded in the second semester to include moves towards inquiry and research. Hence, reading strategies developed first are primarily to those of discovery and invention. Frequently, too, these questions are not always presented as writing assignments, unless they are used by the instructor as writing activities. The deeper reading strategies of analysis and evaluation are most evident in writing assignments that accompany each reading, many of which send students to outside sources.

Each selection in the modes chapters of *Patterns for College Writing*, for example, is followed by a series of reading and writing prompts that help students respond to the essay they have read. Comprehension questions call for factual responses (invention and/or discovery); vocabulary projects ask students to confirm meaning and understanding of key words; questions on purpose, audience, style, and structure help students analyze rhetorical strategies; journal entry assignments require a more reflective response (analysis and/or evaluation); and writing workshop questions send students to outside sources and call for connecting what they have read to research and/or personal experience (creating meaning) (for example, see pp. 237–39).

In *Readings for Writers*, the authors provide much of the context for each close reading in a feature called “Rhetorical Thumbnail” (for example, see McCuen-Metherell & Winkler, p. 220). The thumbnail is a preview of each reading with a brief summary of the essay writer’s purpose, audience, language, and strategy, and is intended guide students to discover meaning and focus on analyzing the writer’s strategies. Each reading is followed by vocabulary words and questions about the facts of the reading (understanding meaning), questions about the essayist’s strategies (evaluate/analyze), questions about the issues addressed in the reading (evaluate/analyze), and is followed by writing suggestions that call for synthesis and invite reflection.

Similar to rhetorically-arranged readers are those that are organized by *rhetorical situations* or *aims* rather than rhetorical modes or methods of development. Their apparatus for teaching reading skills is more specific and developed more fully, add guidance to help students return to their own writing with strategies they used to analyze their reading, and the guided writing assignments are more clearly tied to reading responses. Rhetorical aims readers are intended for instructors who prefer readings that correspond to the kinds of assignments

common in first year writing, such as observing an event, reflecting, inquiring, taking a stand, proposing a solution, and negotiating common ground. Unlike rhetorically-arranged readers that have a preponderance of classic—or “chestnut”—popular audience essays, rhetorical aims readers have a higher percentage of academic essays.

Perhaps the best-selling and longest lived of these is *Reading Critically, Writing Well: A Reader and Guide, Ninth Edition* (2011) by Rise B. Axelrod, Charles R. Cooper, and Alison M. Warner. Of all established composition readers, *Reading Critically, Writing Well* arguably has the most fully developed critical apparatus with specific, scaffolded strategies to help students learn the skills required for reading different genres of writing. The text consists of eight chapters, each focusing on a particular kind of writing assignment, from autobiography and observation, for example, to speculating about causes or effects, to writing to solve a problem (p. vi). Each chapter has a collection of student and professional essays. The student essay and the first professional piece in each chapter are annotated to show specific critical reading strategies (p. ix). The annotated professional essay in each chapter is accompanied with reading strategies that are unique to the kind of rhetorical situation being considered. For example, the fourth chapter has specific advice in its “Guide to Reading Reflective Essays” that progresses from reading for meaning (comprehending, responding, and analyzing assumptions) to reading like a writer, and sends students back to the essay for a closer reading to help them understand the writer’s rhetorical moves and how they relate to the their own writing (pp. 147–206).

The connection to writing is made explicit. Each chapter has a detailed guide to writing the particular kind of essay with additional advice, distinctive in its thoroughness and specificity that guides students through a careful and critical reading of their own drafts, employing many of the strategies that they applied to the reading of the professional essay. There is also an extensive catalog of critical reading strategies—such as annotating, previewing, outlining, summarizing, paraphrasing, synthesizing, and other higher order skills—in an appendix with an annotated essay to show all critical reading strategies at work.

A similar, aims-based text and reader is *Reading Rhetorically: A Reader for Writers, Second Edition* (2005), by John C. Bean, Virginia A. Chappell, and Alice M. Gillam. Implicit in its title, the authors contend that reading rhetorically means understanding “the *how* and *what* of a

text's message," that is, the author's purposes for writing and the methods used (p. xxiii). They go on to claim that "the book teaches students how to see texts as positioned in a conversation with other texts, how to recognize the bias or perspective of a given text, and how to analyze texts for both content and rhetorical method" (p. xxiii).

As a text-reader, *Reading Rhetorically* is a two-part text with an anthology of readings, grouped in chapters, devoted to aims-based college writing assignments. Text chapters guide students on how to ask rhetorical questions of the text they are reading to understand meaning, recognize different reading strategies that might be used for different kinds of writing and that will help them read difficult texts in academic disciplines unfamiliar to them, and position themselves to converse with the text and place it in conversation with other texts.

The authors provide much specific help in reading strategies that they call "listening to a text," or, "trying to understand the author's ideas, intentions, and worldview—that is, reading *with the grain* of the text, trying to understand it on its own terms" (p. 47). They explain this array of "listening"-type reading strategies as: noting organizational signals, marking unfamiliar terms and references, identifying points of difficulty, connecting the visual to the verbal, and annotating (pp. 47–52).

By showing students how to read "with the grain," Bean et al., help students develop skills in reading-for-meaning, but by offering specific reading strategies, they also help students learn to read as writers and to begin recognizing and analyzing essayists' rhetorical moves. In describing organizational signals, they advise students to note transitional phrases (much like Graf) and forecasting statements that suggest an author's intent. By suggesting students mark unfamiliar terms and references, they suggest ways for a student to mark passages or terms that require a second reading to decipher context clues or to consult with a dictionary or outside source. Similarly, by advising students to mark points of difficulty, they tell students that some passages might require they return and try to decode or rewrite the passage in their own terms, or to frame questions for further review. By connecting the visual to the verbal, they suggest seeing visuals in relation to the text (by enhancing its appeal, by supporting its claim, or by extending its meaning). All of this is summarized in their advice on annotating, accompanied by a short example (pp. 47–53). The cumulative benefit of this advice is that by helping students see how writers make their moves—make rhetori-

cal decisions—they can apply what they learned to their own writing and learn to read their own writing more critically.

By declaring that rhetorical reading is not “a one-step process,” but requires careful rereading, the authors extend their advice in a section called, “Listening As You Reread” (p. 53). The authors advise students how to map an essay to show relationships among its ideas (pp. 53–54). In a discussion of descriptive outlining, they list verbs that describe what texts do (pp. 54–56). In an interesting way to engage students directly with a text, and to show an obvious connection of the writing to the reading with a unique, skill-building exercise, they introduce students to the concept of a rhetorical précis, distinguishing it from summary. Describing a summary as a brief recapitulation of what a text says, a rhetorical précis is an analysis of how a text works rhetorically (pp. 58–62).

The tables of contents in rhetorical aims readers, as well as the manner in which their publishers categorize and market them, makes them appear as variations of traditional rhetorical readers. The more detailed apparatus that focuses equally on critical reading and writing, however, places them further along the spectrum of readers attending to the development of critical reading skills. Specifically, they assume that by assisting students in developing skills in reading rhetorically, by providing specific reading skills for different kinds of writing, and by preparing them to use their responses to their reading for the writing they undertake, this kind of text assists students in becoming more active readers, more attuned to writers’ purposes and strategies, more skilled at challenging writers’ claims, and therefore in a better position to write in response to other writers, to engage in an act of creation, of joining the conversation.

THEMATIC READERS: READING FOR MEANING AND ANALYSIS

Rhetorically arranged readers, including rhetorical aims readers, comprise the largest segment of the reader market. The majority of readers are organized thematically. The themes tend to be ones students are interested in—personal identity, family, popular culture, education, gender, and social and moral issues—and the themes are the chapter titles. The purpose of these readings is to give students something to write about. They are not usually used as models of writing, but as springboards to writing. As a rule, it is harder to generalize about the

attention to reading that their authors provide; since each is unique, according to its themes, each has apparatus that is unique, too.

Arguably, the fastest-growing category of thematic readers are those known as cultural studies readers, most of which emerged in the past ten years or so, and reflect a shift in focus in graduate programs preparing first year writing instructors. The general aim of cultural studies readers is to help students see the contexts in which texts appear, evaluate the ways and forms that the texts' messages are presented (including print, digital, and visual texts), and use this understanding to form their own arguments and determine their own forms for writing. The challenge for cultural studies readers and for teachers who use them is to maintain focus on close reading as it influences and informs student writing. Because cultural studies as a field invites study of the contexts that generate a cultural product—such as an essay, a film, or an advertisement—it is easy for students engaged with these texts to focus on understanding or interpreting the product and its contexts rather than the elements of its construction or how a student will transfer his or her understanding to his or her own writing. Among these readers, those with a balance of print and visual texts—often called visual text readers—have become the most widely adopted. For instructors, the compelling reason for adopting these kinds of readers is that they start with texts with which today's students are familiar. If the premise is accepted that visual images are “composed” and employ similar rhetorical strategies, then students are already familiar with reading and decoding visual texts, and they can then use the same reading and writing strategies to “see” kinds of texts and “compose” using visuals as texts. For the most part, the consideration of visual texts in textbook readers is limited to developing criteria for reading and evaluating visual texts, rather than to compose them. Generally, textbook authors who have built a reading-writing apparatus around visual texts rely on concepts of “observing” and “seeing,” and usually apply the same rhetorical reading concepts in “reading” visual texts. The implied concept is that, like print texts, visual images can be analyzed for elements of composition and meaning. At present, college textbook readers presume that the same methods of analysis and evaluation do indeed apply, with the exception being that they introduce concepts borrowed from other fields—like graphic arts and photography—to expand the range of rhetorical considerations. The challenge facing textbook authors—and first year writing instruc-

tors as well—is to ensure scaffolding of assignments to assume that observing does not replace analysis and that reading visual images is developed as a part of overall reading strategies and integrally linked to helping students develop writing skills. In textbooks, this must be evident in the apparatus. *Seeing and Writing 4* (2010), by Donald McQuade and Christine McQuade, first published in 2000, was not the first composition textbook to use visuals as texts, but it was the first for beginning expository writing courses “grounded in a simple pedagogical premise: to invite students *to give words and images equal attention*,” and intended to help students learn to think critically about visual and verbal texts and write effectively about them (p. vi, emphasis added).

Each chapter offers selections that move from the concrete to the abstract, and from readily accessible to more complex works (p. xii). Chapters progress from personal to persuasive writing, giving students the opportunity of “practicing skills of observation and inference” (p. xii). These analytic skills apply to reading both print and written texts, and support the authors’ contention that “enabling students to move fluently within and among visual and verbal worlds will improve their analytic and compositional skills” (p. vi). Observational and inference skills are introduced and described in early chapters, and explored with exercises that require students to read both visual and print texts and record their observations and inferences, respectively (p. xiv). Further, rhetorical terms such as purpose, structure, audience, point of view, tone, metaphor, and context are explored as terms that apply to visual images (pp. 16–25). These concepts are explored more specifically within each chapter, in a feature called “Visualizing Composition.”

The reading skills apparatus in the text is referred to as “Seeing.” Paired “Seeing” and “Writing” assignments and questions follow each text. “Seeing” questions guide students back to an image or text with advice on how to closely analyze elements of its composition. That close examination, then, is the starting point for two “Writing” prompts that ask students to write about the texts or to connect to outside readings or resources.

Beyond Words: Reading and Writing in a Visual Age, Second Edition (2009) by John E. Ruskiewicz, Daniel Anderson, and Christy Friend, claims to offer “all the support most students will require to move from reading to writing,” acknowledging the breadth of that claim, the challenge of giving students something to write about, and giving them tools to respond critically and create texts of their own (p. xv).

The first two chapters introduce students to tools for reading and then composing texts, strategies developed further in the thematic readings chapters. The first chapter introduces students to rhetorical terms and concepts such as subject, audience, purpose, genre, media, context, and structure/composition. The second chapter introduces concepts of doing research, documenting sources, revising, and editing—all relevant to composing (p. xv). Thematic chapters (three through eight) include galleries of texts and visuals, clusters that give students multiple perspectives on a given topic, and assignments that ask students to compose in writing and in other media (p. xv).

Visual text readers essentially offer the same sweep of rhetorical invention reading strategies as other readers most often used in the first semester of first year writing, with the added dimension of helping student learn how to read visual texts, extending the understanding what “composition” and “reading” mean. At the moment, the consideration of how well visual text readers offer advice and refine critical reading skills must be seen on the same continuum as other textbooks. Instructors using these kinds of texts face new questions: Do students read visuals the same as they do written texts? Do the same rhetorical practices apply in understanding and analyzing visual images as texts? Are methods of research and inquiry applied similarly when visuals are considered texts?

More broadly, the same questions apply to all cultural studies readers. The challenge for cultural studies readers—visual text readers among them—and for teachers who use them is to maintain the focus on close reading as it influences and informs student writing. Because cultural studies as a field invites study of the context that generates a cultural product, such as an essay, a film, or an advertisement, it is easy for students engaged with these texts to focus on understanding or interpreting the product and its context rather than the elements of its construction or how a student transfers his or her understanding to his or her own writing. The text and the teacher must be sure that the focus of the class is on writing and not on media images or cultural artifacts or controversial issues. The focus of the book’s apparatus and the teacher’s scaffolding, then, must remain on helping students move from consumers to evaluators to creators of meaning.

ARGUMENT READERS: READING TO EVALUATE AND CREATE MEANING

As students move from their first semester of composition to the second, they are often asked to do more with their reading and their writing, and are likely assigned texts that require more fully developed critical reading skills. Writing assignments have students develop lines of inquiry and compose arguments, and usually include an introduction to the research process, culminating in a paper, project, and/or presentation/publication. Textbooks for second-semester courses, therefore, are not entirely different, but are usually of a higher level of complexity in terms of content, reading, writing assignments, and strategies. As defined by market segments, the greatest number of textbooks used in second-semester composition courses is argument texts/readers.

Argument texts and readers are explicit in their attention to critical thinking, and provide ample opportunities for writing instructors to help students analyze and learn the moves in popular discourse, visual rhetoric, and academic writing that involve persuasion—from understanding rhetorical concepts such as ethos, logos, and pathos; to understanding logical fallacies; to developing ways to anticipate counter-argument; to developing lines of inquiry and research; to staking a claim and joining an ongoing debate. The purpose of the readings is both to provide models and to give students something to write about, so readings tend to be examples of argument organized into themes—such as opposing views on controversial topics like affirmative action, immigration, and euthanasia. Argument texts and readers were also the first composition textbooks in the market to introduce students to tools to analyze visual images as texts. What distinguishes them, then, is the approach they take to argument (e.g., argument and/or persuasion based on Aristotle, Rogers, Toulmin; oratorical, visual, print arguments; popular culture and academic arguments) and the amount and kind of apparatus they provide.

Two market leaders, *Everything's an Argument with Readings, Fifth Edition* (2010) by Andrea A. Lunsford, John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters, and *Writing Arguments, Seventh Edition* (2007) by John D. Ramage, John C. Bean, and June Johnson, take a similar position that argument is an act of negotiating differences, or at least that argument is not a feat of staking didactic opposing claims. The authors of both texts suggest that the act of composing an argument, in academic or social writing, involves many ways of reading or otherwise coming

to understand disparate viewpoints. If reading is the act of exploring ways of understanding, then writing is the act of extending the conversation and guiding students to the rhetorical choices of writing as a refutation of a position, an attempt to persuade, or a call for social action. Both market leaders strike a balance between the need for students to read deeply and with focus and the need to develop persuasive writing or academic writing skills—whether the outcome is writing that exemplifies personal advocacy, rhetorical analysis (including summary or synthesis of the literature on a given topic), or writing that extends or contributes to an ongoing academic debate. Thus, the close reading of arguments, regardless of the medium, form, or audience, is integral to the writing process and to the assignments offered in this kind of textbook.

Everything's an Argument with Readings, Fifth Edition (2010) by Andrea A. Lunsford, John J. Ruszkiewicz, and Keith Walters, as posited in its title, contends that all language, “including that of sounds and images or symbol systems other than writing,” is persuasive and calls for a response (p. v). The authors foreground the interconnectedness of reading and writing by saying, for instance

we aim to balance attention to critical reading (analysis) with attention to the writing of arguments (production) . . . [W]e have tried to demonstrate both activities with lively—and realistic—examples, on the principle that the best way to appreciate an argument may be to see it in action. (p. vii)

Examples are on display throughout the book, as it is often seen as both a rhetoric and a reader (the rhetoric portion is available as a separate text). Although there are scores of visual and print texts in the textbook portion, most of the analytical questions call for a student's response to both readings and to the authors' discussion of rhetorical principles that may be a discussion or writing prompt. Main writing assignments are on display in the seven thematic chapters that form the reader portion. It is important to note the distinction between the text and reader portions, in that much of the writing advice that builds on the readings sends students back to the text for deeper explanation of rhetorical concepts. There are seven to ten readings in each text, representing a wide array of genres: photographs, essays, newspaper articles and op-ed pieces, cartoons, posters, etc. Each is accompanied by marginal notes that send students to other coverage in the text for

further help in understanding rhetorical concepts, such as ethos, logos, pathos, or logical fallacies. Each is followed by four to six questions that call for a student's response, usually in the form of a writing prompt or an assignment. For example, in the short essay, "English Loses Ground," by Rochelle Sharpe, a marginal note on the essayist's reliance on facts and statistics sends students to a discussion of using logos to present an argument (p. 722). The essay is followed by six response questions, including a prompt for a short essay evaluating Sharpe's argument, with directions to a chapter about evaluating arguments. *Everything's an Argument* has five chapters devoted to reading arguments, including an explanation of the claim that "everything is an argument." There is full coverage of pathos, logos, and ethos (in that order, in separate chapters) and a wide-ranging discussion of rhetorical analysis and how to think rhetorically. Each chapter concludes with expansive advice on how to respond to arguments (print and visual) presented in the text by sending students back to those texts with reading and writing prompts. In addition, the fifth chapter concludes with a detailed guide to writing a rhetorical analysis.

Writing Arguments (2007), by John D. Ramage, John C. Bean, and June Johnson, positions itself as "focusing on argument as dialogue in search of solution to problems," saying it "treats argument as a process of inquiry as well as a means of persuasion" (p. xxxvii). It strongly foregrounds the connection between reading and writing by saying, "we link the process of arguing—articulating issue questions, formulating propositions, examining alternative points of view, and creating structures of supporting reasons and evidence—with the process of reading and writing" (p. xli). *Writing Arguments* is both a rhetoric and a reader, though the bulk of writing assignments are found in the rhetoric portion. The authors offer writing assignments within or at the end of chapters that draw on discussions of the rhetorical elements of argument discussed in that chapter, and are not, as such, based on the close reading of text. For example, in the chapter on resemblance arguments, the writing assignment for the chapter asks students to write a letter to a newspaper editor to influence public opinion on an issue using persuasive analogy or precedent—topics discussed elsewhere in the chapter (p. 278).

There are different kinds of writing assignments tied to textual close reading elsewhere in the book. The reader portion is an anthology of twelve thematic chapters of seven to eight pieces, mostly essays.

The units conclude with a set of questions for classroom discussion and an optional writing prompt that asks students to consider one or more of the essays in the unit as a basis for analysis or evaluation.

In the chapter, “Reading Arguments,” the authors contend that they “focus on reading arguments as a process of inquiry” (p. 22), and in keeping with the premise that students’ acts of reading, research, and writing are acts of joining larger communities, they say that “because argument begins in disagreements within a social community, you should examine any argument as if it were only one voice in a larger conversation” (p. 22). To assist, they provide five reading strategies: “Read as a believer;” “Read as a doubter;” “Explore how the rhetorical context and genre are shaping the argument;” “Consider the alternative views and analyze sources of disagreement;” and “Use disagreement productively to prompt further investigation” (pp. 22–49).

Long recognized for their concise presentation of the rhetorical principles of ethos, pathos, and logos as classical types of appeals, Bean, et. al. include a discussion of *kairos*, raise the question of persuasive appeals to the writer’s audience, and more closely adhere to the Toulmin system of analyzing arguments and recognizing the rhetorical and logical structures of developing “appropriate grounds and backing to support an argument’s reasons and warrants” (p. xii).

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM READERS: READING AS INQUIRY

One challenge faced by publishers and textbook authors is that the focus on reading the kinds of essays most often found in composition readers—a focus on the essay as a form—does not prepare students for the kinds of reading and writing most students do in college, except in first year writing. College students are expected to write well in courses outside of college composition, sometimes without additional formal writing instruction in the classroom. They are expected, as well, to read deeply and with understanding in disciplines with which they may not be familiar, including understanding forms, jargon, content, and academic conventions. To read and write well in other disciplines, they must learn other genres, develop other rhetorical abilities, learn to develop research projects with an understanding of disciplinary research methods, and comply with disciplinary documentation standards.

In addition, in order to prepare for advanced academic pursuits, join the work force, or even take a role in any community as a citizen with public participation or advocacy, students must develop both reading and writing skills to match expectations of any audience, using various media, and in many forms and disciplines (see Alice Horning's chapter in this book).

At least implicitly, publishers understand the same need, and while textbooks on the market are not built to explicitly address issues with reading across the curriculum, by providing writing across the curriculum instruction they ask students to engage in deep reading of texts mostly unfamiliar to them in terms of complexity, discipline, content, form, and rhetorical approaches.

Writing and Reading Across the Curriculum, Tenth Edition (2008), by Laurence Behrens and Leonard J. Rosen, has long held a best-seller spot in the market niche of WAC texts/readers. The majority of its readings are collected in an anthology organized by themes and within chapter headings that reflect disciplines found in college curricula; e.g., "Sociology," "Psychology," "Biology," "American Studies," etc.

Rhetorically, the focus of the book's chapters is on summary, critique, synthesis, and analysis. Boxed inserts list specific tips for reading for each rhetorical strategy (pp. 6, 74, 144, 208). One chapter, "Critical Reading and Critique," collects reading strategies that focus a great deal on reading to understand if a writer has succeeded in achieving his/her purpose for writing and how to evaluate a text (pp. 30–75).

To write well in a discipline, a student needs to build expertise in the discipline's content and methods of synthesis, analysis, and inquiry. Authors of cross-disciplinary readers for composition courses face the peculiar challenge of helping students develop skills to read content that is complex and unfamiliar while, at the same time, provide general writing instruction and general analytic and research skills that transfer to meet the expectations of a discipline. At the same time, they must be true to disciplinary forms and scholarship while showing representative examples of "effective" writing that reflect both good rhetorical design and appropriate content from that discipline. The balance is that they must rely on students having developed some skills in reading for meaning, analysis, and evaluation, introducing rhetorical concepts that might be valued differently in different disciplines. For the most part, they recognize that students will master rhetori-

cal skills such as synthesis and analysis while they begin developing research skills that will allow them to contribute to such scholarship.

From Inquiry to Academic Writing: A Text and Reader, Second Edition (2012), by Stuart Greene and April Lidinsky, overtly attempts to show the relationship of critical reading, thinking, inquiry, analysis, and argument. The authors show academic writing “as a collaborative conversation, undertaken in the pursuit of new knowledge,” acknowledging that students must learn to write, read, and think in new ways, also showing students that “academic writing is a social act in which they are expected to work responsibly with the ideas of others” (p. v). In addition, they claim to “demystify cross-curricular thinking, reading, and writing” by breaking down students’ processes into a series of manageable habits and skills they can learn and practice (p. v).

The core of the text portion of the book is a progression that helps student develop skills incrementally and cumulatively, beginning with academic thinking and proceeding to academic reading, research, and finally to academic writing. The authors place emphasis on the “recursiveness and overlapping nature” of these processes (p. vi). Describing writing as “a process motivated by inquiry,” the authors attempt to show the interrelatedness of reading and writing:

Inevitably, reading and writing processes are intertwined. Thus in Chapter 2 we encourage students to practice “writerly” reading—reading texts as writers analyzing the decisions other writers make—so that they can implement the most appropriate strategies given their own purpose for writing. (p. vi)

In addition, the authors give students opportunities to practice specific skills associated with strategies of critical reading, including activities focusing on annotating, reading rhetorically, and rhetorically analyzing an essay (pp. 29–49).

READING AND WRITING TEXT-TO-TEXT: EXTENDING THE CONVERSATION

There are some books that do not fit the categories, mostly because they are most effective at extending the sweep of writing expectations, fulfilling the broadest reach of developing critical reading skills, but also because of the specific ways they ask students to respond to texts. Those that provide scaffolded questions based on close readings of

specific texts, and pose questions and prompt students to write a series of analyses and explorations of one text in reply to another, generally show students how to grapple with difficult reading. The premise is simple: Guided writing in response to reading questions helps students develop close reading skills, mastering content as a way to understand meaning and context. Furthermore, intensive writing—and re-writing—is developed through extended writing assignment sequences and as a mechanism for students to pursue a line of inquiry, build a sustained argument, or otherwise contribute to an ongoing academic conversation.

Arguably the most successful of this kind of reader, *Ways of Reading, Ninth Edition* (2011), by David Bartholomae and Anthony Petrosky (first published in 2002), landed in a market with no direct competitors, largely due to its development of ground-breaking assignment sequences and use of lengthy, challenging, academic essays. Essays by Michel Foucault, Paulo Freire, Mary Louise Pratt, and Walker Percy, among others, were seen as challenging to students in graduate school, not to mention first year writing. The authors argued, however, that the “issue is not only what students read, but what can they learn to do with what they read” (p. iii). They suggested that the problem is in the classroom, not due to the reading material or the students: “There is no better place to work on reading than in a writing course, and this book is intended to provide occasions for readers to write” (p. iii). The book’s premises are that students can learn to grapple with and understand complex readings if they are guided by reading and writing assignments that help them construct their own text in response to readings. The anthology has twenty-three lengthy, challenging readings, listed alphabetically. An introductory chapter on reading provides specific advice on reading difficult texts. Each reading is accompanied by questions for a second reading, calling out that “rereading is a natural way of carrying out the work of a reader, just as rewriting is a natural way of completing the work of a writer” (p. v).

The core of the book, though, is its series of assignment sequences that group five or six readings in a broad thematic cluster, such as “The Aims of Education,” “Reading Culture,” and “The Uses of Reading.” Each cluster has a set of assignments—reading and writing—that start students with a close reading and rereading of one core essay, then moves to a reading of another essay, and so on. The assignments lead students to read one essay in the context of, or in conversation with,

another essay. Building a deep understanding of multiple essays helps students frame their own response to the questions raised, and deep understanding is achieved through a series of small and large writing assignments.

The writing assignments collected at the back of *Ways of Reading* first ask students to apply reading for meaning (i.e., synthesis) skills for each reading in an assignment sequence. The assignment sequences, though, are designed to give students a way to re-read the essays. In the assignment sequence on “The Aims of Education,” students are asked to use Mary Louis Pratt’s terms in “The Contact Zone” to examine a similar experience in their own schooling, to examine her explanation of “pedagogical arts,” and describe how that might be put into practice in a writing class (p. 708). In a more fully developed task that looks at these two essays as well as ones by Richard E. Miller and Richard Rodriguez, students are asked to consider the authors’ assertions about the limits and failures of education (especially in the humanities), about their arguments on the benefits of reading and writing, and take up the question, “[W]hat might the literate arts be said to be good for?” (p. 711). While *Ways of Reading* relies on students’ general reading abilities, the cumulative effect of the assignment sequences asks students to discover meaning, and, writing from syntheses and close readings of complex texts, contribute new meaning from their own experience and analyses from multiple those close readings.

Going after the same segment of the market, and also recognizing that students can read complex texts and add meaning to their close reading through writing, *The New Humanities Reader, Third Edition* (2009), by Richard E. Miller and Kurt Spellmeyer, contends that “any text can be linked to any other text in a web of inquiry and analysis” (p. xviii). As an alphabetically arranged reader, the book collects thirty-three challenging readings selected for “creative reading,” what the authors describe as moving from explicit understanding (that is, reading for content) to implicit understanding (or making connections or interpretations) (p. xviii). In that way, they say, even the act of reading for meaning has an interpretive component:

A text becomes meaningful only through the implicit connections it motivates When we read for content, we are reading to preserve the knowledge made by others. But when we read for implicit connections, we become co-creators with the authors themselves. (p. xix)

If the idea of creative reading adds a layer of interpretation to the idea of reading for meaning, then the authors' concept of "connective thinking" adds to the basic notions of summary, synthesis, and analysis. In talking about analyzing the summaries of two texts in the reader, Miller and Spellmeyer say that "this is not the same as connecting them within the context of a larger question or debate. Yet these connections are never waiting for us fully formed already: there is always the need for a leap of imagination" (p. xxi). The leap of imagination is arrived at through writing—"writing to see," the authors say—and is a product of students developing a position, based on reading, research, connecting ideas, and learning to see that revising a position as needed has value as an act of discovery and hard work (p. xxiv). Writing activities are involved and take three distinct forms. Following each selection, the authors provide questions that ask students to see and write about connections within the readings, questions for writing that generally send the student outside the essay to write about their research or experience, and questions that send the students back to the essay and others and make connections between or among related essays. Further sequences are available on a book companion site.

The important leap of imagination suggested by Spellmeyer and Miller, as well as the habits of mind promoted by close and repeated readings of texts in Bartholomae and Petrosky, are consistent with the advocacy of the WPA Outcomes Statement, the Framework for Success, and the positions argued by Alice Horning et al. throughout this volume.

READING AND WRITING TEXT-TO-TEXT: LITERACY AND LEARNING PRACTICES

While the predominant description of first year writing in college catalogs is as a course or set of courses that focus on academic writing or argument, the general outcomes statement of first year writing is a pronouncement for a curriculum that develops research methods, explores the role of inquiry in all writing (especially academic), and as such, requires attention to developing new habits of mind, a better understanding that reading and writing are the tools of inquiry, and a recognition that exploration of literacy itself is a fundamental tact for learning and inquiry.

An under-publicized gem is *Considering Literacy: Reading and Writing the Educational Experience* (2006) by Linda Adler-Kassner. This text contends that students who work to understand the context of lit-

eracy practices (e.g., the ways of reading, writing, and thinking within different groups or communities) can more readily come to understand the practices of writing (e.g., rhetorical choices and definitions of appropriate literacies) that most effectively reach those communities (pp. vi-vii). The author sets up assignment sequences for reading and writing that are based on core assumptions, including, “writing, reading, and thinking are linked, and good writing should always be (partly) about wrestling with ideas,” and that both reading and writing start with “smart (and messy) ideas” and end with “pretty (and smart) papers, and not the other way around” (pp. 1–4).

The bulk of the book is made up of readings thematically linked in broad topics about learning and learners, but its core is a series of assignment sequences that help students explore questions of education, learning, and literacies, and help them understand questions of context, place, and appropriateness in the reading they engage in and the writing they do. Sequences are grouped within four basic kinds of writing assignments: “Learning from Self;” “Learning from Others;” “Learning Through Research;” and “Speaking Out, Joining In, Talking Back.” There are eight or more assignments in each category (the text focuses on similar writing strategies, so the instructor can choose), and students build on writing strategies as they move from one sequence to another. For instance, the “Learning from Self” assignments work on analysis and on working with texts; the “Learning from Others” assignments use the same strategies, but ask students also to work in interpretation and summarizing, among other skills (p. 4). As students read each essay in the sequence, they are asked to write critical reflections, make connections to other readings (in the assignment grouping), and build skills across assignment sequences.

READING AND WRITING TEXT-TO-TEXT: WRITING ABOUT WRITING

An increasing number of writing programs are moving towards writing courses that acknowledge that the study of writing itself, as a field of inquiry, affords students an advanced starting point—their own writing and literacy experiences—and thus deeper insights into how writing works. By reading about literacy and writing, and by subsuming what they learn about reading and writing practices as they develop their own reading and writing skills, students are better equipped

to apply general learning outcomes to their own writing. Reading and writing about reading and writing begets opportunities to learn about reading and writing.

Most college textbooks are based on long-standing assumptions about first year writing: that it is a skill-creating course, or sequence of courses, that provide students with tools that transfer to writing in all contexts, including the workplace, and across all disciplines. In an important article in *College Composition and Communication*, Doug Downs and Elizabeth Wardle (2007) suggest, however, that learning to write in first year writing is not establishing a set of skills to be collected or taught in one or two courses early in students' careers, but that first year writing should be re-imagined to provide students an opportunity to study writing itself. Imagined as an "Intro to Writing Studies," first year writing can instead seek to "improve students' understanding of writing, rhetoric, language, and literacy in a course that is topically oriented to reading and writing as scholarly inquiry and encouraging more realistic understanding of writing" (p. 553).

Whether spurred by Downs and Wardle's assertions or arriving at similar conclusions concurrently, an increasing number of writing programs have re-cast first year writing as an introduction to writing studies. Central to these premises is the idea that in a writing studies curriculum, students become active participants in discovering and creating a writing process, thereby being active readers and active learners as they pursue lines of inquiry related to the process of critical reading and academic writing.

Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs developed writing about writing practices in a new textbook reader, *Writing about Writing* (2011). They tell students that they (students) should study writing as a field of inquiry because by "changing what you know about writing can change the way you write" (p. 2). Also, students see that people engage their worlds through language, reading, and writing—things they do every day. Because language, reading, and writing are subjects with which students have experience, they are more knowledgeable investigators of these subjects than they are with many other things (p. 2).

To help make the reading-writing connection, the authors selected articles (and collected them into thematic chapters) that allow students to "very consciously connect at least *some* part of each piece" to their experiences as a writer (p. 4). The authors acknowledge that both students and instructors might struggle with the content of the readings,

so they scaffold questions “in ways that help make individual readings more accessible to students and that help them build toward mastery of often complex rhetorical concepts” (p. viii). Related to reading, each selection begins with opening sections that frame each reading, give background on the text and author, and suggest activities for students to do before and while they read (p. viii). Each reading is followed with questions for discussion and journal writing and reflection prompts to help focus the students’ reading on important concepts.

Each reading is followed by recommendations for reading-related writing activities, some of which explore and deepen students’ understanding of the very canon of scholarship attached to the processes of reading and writing. For instance, in one assignment following the Haas and Flower (1988) essay, “Reading Strategies and Construction of Meaning,” Wardle and Downs suggest:

Make a list of the rhetorical reading strategies that Haas and Flower discuss, trying to include even those they only imply without explicitly stating. Use this list to help you write a set of instructions on reading rhetorically for the next group of students who will take the class you’re in now. What should they look for in texts? What questions should they ask about texts to ensure they’re reading rhetorically? (p. 138)

This kind of exercise builds meta-awareness or meta-cognition. Rather than being shown how to outline, take notes, or paraphrase, students are asked to join in the discovery of these reading strategies. The act of discovery is itself participatory—and also an act of creative reading—and students are invited to join in and talk back (by writing) to scholarship in the field.

While *Writing about Writing* has writing as a primary focus, its approach to introducing students to the scholarship of the field no doubt challenges students’ reading abilities. It can be assumed that most students in a writing course have not encountered this kind of material before. The book’s focus on inquiry into the scholarship gives it a unique angle on the interplay of reading and writing than does most composition readers. Because the readings are about writing, they no doubt change the way students *think* about how and why writing and reading are done and what is accomplished when writing and reading are performed. This awareness suggests, too, that students will succeed in transferring reading, writing, and inquiry skills to other courses and

other writing precisely because they will know the what, why, and how writing is done.

The idea of transferring an awareness of writing processes and an understanding of rhetorical choices is an important aspect of writing studies that encompasses genre-based approaches to writing. The assumption is that good writing is writing that works (or affects a response or course of action, including social action), but also recognizes that good writing is dependent on context. Students, especially in first year writing, need to be shown how to understand the rhetorical situation—the intersection of audience, purpose, form, and style—in determining what approach their writing takes.

An early entrant in the market was *Scenes of Writing: Strategies for Composing with Genres*, by Amy Devitt, Mary Jo Reiff, and Anis Bawarshi (2004). More of a rhetoric with readings, the text nevertheless has students writing in response to readings of a wide array of genres, including popular, academic, and public sources. The authors are careful to help students learn how to read scenes, that is, observe, analyze, and own the writing situations they will encounter in college and beyond. Part I is a guided analysis of genres, intended to help students observe (read) different genres and analyze the characteristics of communication within different genres, determine effective writing choices within genres, and critique scenes and genres. The steps of “observing scenes, analyzing scenes and genres, and writing within them,” make up the reading and writing activities throughout the book (p. xviii). The remaining parts of the book introduce students to the kinds of writing—and the genres—they will write in college (including, argument, research, and forms of writing unique to different disciplines) and in the workplace.

The idea of exploring the moves within different genres is one of the features of another rhetorical genre text-reader: *How to Write Anything: A Guide and Reference with Readings*, by John J. Ruskiewicz and Jay Dolmage (2010). The chapters in Parts One and Two serve as a guide to different academic and public genres and as a discussion of rhetorical choices; chapters in Parts Three through Nine are reference chapters that cover key aspects of the writing process (p. vi). The connection to reading and writing, and the idea that students can explore moves within different genres, is evident in the questions and writing assignments in the “Reading the Genre” sections that follow each reading in the chapters of Part Ten. Following a review about

The Colbert Report by television critic David Bianculli, for example, the authors ask students to do several writing tasks: re-read the review and list and discuss the essayist's use of metaphors, discuss how the essayist enumerates his main points, examine and relate an image that accompanies the text, evaluate the essayist's critique of Colbert's use of humor, and write a short essay about another cultural figure in the manner of Bianculli.

Like writing about-writing-texts, or texts that deal with literacy and learning issues, rhetorical, genre-based texts and readers help students develop a meta-awareness of their rhetorical choices. By showing students how their writing is influenced by the rhetorical choices they make, they can help them become more versatile writers, regardless of the writing task. As they become aware of audience expectations and the forms and strategies they can use in first year writing assignments, they are better prepared to transfer those learning-about-learning skills, complete the academic writing tasks they face in college, and write effectively after their college years.

WHY USE A READER: THE TRIANGULATION OF STUDENTS, TEACHERS, AND TEXTBOOKS

Instructors looking for assistance in weaving reading and writing instruction in FYW would be well served to closely examine the apparatus of a textbook reader to see how effectively it guides students to close readings and re-readings of texts and determine whether and how it prompts students to extract meaning, analyze and evaluate content, recognize a writer's rhetorical strategies, build writing assignments that allow students to respond to and argue with texts, build an extended inquiry, or otherwise create their own meaning.

It is necessary to see the college textbook reader as a component in the important triangulation of teacher, student, and writing assignment. Inasmuch as student readers may be challenged to apply what they read to what they write, whether it is an understanding of content or a reflection on the rhetorical strategies a writer has employed, the textbook can extend the instructor's pattern of connecting reading and writing to the degree that the apparatus and assignments in the book are seamlessly part of the fabric of writing assignments in the first year writing classroom.

In this way, textbook readers can assume a middle spot in the continuum from instructors to students. This can be seen in two ways. First, the textbook reader can assume a *primary* position if the reading and writing assignments in its apparatus form the basis of an instructor's syllabus, and its apparatus (assignment design) can fill core needs for the instructor. Second, it can take a *secondary* position if the readings themselves are of primary importance and if it is accepted that readings will be mediated by the instructor and used as part of a carefully scaffolded writing assignment or in classroom instruction. In either case, the textbook and the readings must have a clearly defined context for students, and that context must include carefully crafted writing assignments.

Recalling the spectrum used to consider the apparatus in textbook readers examined in this chapter—the move from reading for invention, to reading for meaning, to reading to evaluate, to reading to create meaning—we can see the kinds of textbook readers that most fully integrate reading and writing instruction. From the categories of readers we have considered, the most fully developed critical reading strategies are offered abundantly in books that require students to return to texts with guided instruction for rereading and for writing that grapples with the texts. Readers that insist on this kind of guided reading/writing sequence are those known as aims readers (Axelrod, 2011; Bean, 2011), argument readers (Lunsford, 2010; Ramage, 2007; Graff, 2010), WAC readers (Behrens, 2008; Greene, 2008), readers that invite text-to-text inquiry (Bartholomae, 2011; Miller, 2009; Adler-Kassner, 2006), and writing about writing readers (Wardle, 2011). The context in which each of these books is used, however, might distinguish the appropriate choice for a writing instructor.

The measure of success for college textbooks is market share, and as much as sales reflects the axiom of “meeting the market needs,” there are no criteria to judge whether authors' abilities to weave reading and writing instruction is a primary reason for any book's success. The composition readers examined in this chapter all have top spots in their market niche, mark a shift in the way first year writing is taught, or otherwise provide a rich tapestry of critical reading strategies as an elemental thread in the pattern of guided writing instruction. As such, these are books developed with the first year writing curriculum in mind, the outcomes of which might call for a focus on critical thinking and/or critical reading in the context of academic writing. The assumption is

that attention to critical, close reading skills helps students learn strategies of inquiry, research, using source material, mastering conventions of different disciplines, developing audience awareness, composing in different genres, and otherwise meeting the requirements of first year writing. That assumption is met only to the degree that the instructor has benefited from training or research in teaching reading, and/or has a fully developed plan for scaffolding reading and writing skills as an integral element of writing assignments. The success of composition textbooks, then, can best be determined by how well writing instructors in first year writing integrate the textbooks' advice and assignments in the work they do in class and in the assignments they design. This integration can be enhanced by examining how textbooks represent the relationship between reading and writing in ways that frame how teachers and students perceive and enact these skills.

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