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**The effects of attention to audience at different times during  
composing on the quality of freshmen's essays**

**Willey, Robert John, Ph.D.**

**The University of Arizona, 1991**

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**THE EFFECTS OF ATTENTION TO AUDIENCE AT DIFFERENT  
TIMES DURING COMPOSING ON THE QUALITY  
OF FRESHMEN'S ESSAYS**

by

**Robert John Willey**

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of  
**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**  
**WITH A MAJOR IN RHETORIC, COMPOSITION,  
AND THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH**  
In the Graduate College  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

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TIMES DURING COMPOSING ON THE QUALITY OF FRESHMEN'S  
ESSAYS

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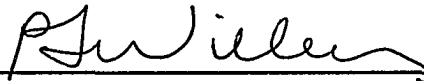
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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "P. J. Willey", is written over a horizontal line.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the effects of writers attending to the informational needs of their readers at different times during composing. Each of 76 university freshmen enrolled in 7 sections of freshman composition and literature was randomly assigned to one of four treatment conditions: 1) no attention to audience, 2) attention to audience before and during drafting, 3) attention to audience before and during revising, and 4) attention to audience before and during both drafting and revising. Students' original and revised essays were scored holistically for overall quality and given separate holistic scores for organization, structure, development, grammar and mechanics, and attention to audience. Due to low inter-rater reliability and other factors that are fully discussed, the study yielded no significant results.

## BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

James Moffett (1968) became one of the first contemporary composition theorists to move audience back into the central focus of attention that it had enjoyed as early as classical rhetoric:

Viewing the student for a moment as an I asked to write something, let's think about *what* and *what for*. His *what* does not usually entail his abstracting raw phenomena from the ground up, and as for his *what for*—his motivation for writing his theme, his audience, and how he wishes to act on that audience—we find slim pickings indeed. He is writing always to the same old person, the English teacher, to whom he has nothing to say but who has given him a *what for* by demanding the assignment and by holding the power of grades and disciplinary authority over him. (p. 12)

Better than ten years later, Ede (1979) reviewed the slowly growing renewal of interest in audience theories and concluded that “the current situation seems a clear case of pedagogy lagging behind theory” (p. 291). Indeed, while the 20-plus years since Moffett raised the question of audience in his now-germinal work have brought us an impressive body of audience theory, research, and pedagogy, many questions about audience still remain: How should writers, particularly inexperienced writers, attend to audience? If they analyze their intended readers, just what sort of analysis of audience should these writers do? When during composing should writers attend to audience? When should student writers be *instructed* to attend to audience? These questions are the central focus of this dissertation.

There is a confusing and often-contradictory catalogue of advice about when and how to teach audience. While it seems as if we know more about audience than ever, a look at composition texts, rhetorics, and theoretical and empirical work reveals that we're apparently still uncertain of *when* and *how* inexperienced writers should attend to audience.

Viewing attention to audience as a central invention activity, for example, many texts and rhetorics instruct student writers to attend to audience *before* they begin to write. Packer and Timpane (1986) demand that students “Keep three basic elements of your paper always in view: your purpose, your audience, and the big picture” (p. 38). Morgan and Vivion (1987) dictate that “at least by the first draft if not during pre-writing—you should begin to form an idea of your audience and its requirements” (p. 88), and they say that audience should be kept in mind through all drafts, revisions, and editing. Kolln (1984), beneath the heading, “Defining the Writing Situation,” gives students three questions they must answer to begin every writing assignment: “What am I writing about? Who wants to know? Why am I writing about it?” (p. 269) and cautions students that “Before you can decide what you’re going to write, you must identify the other two components of the writing situation: audience and purpose” (p. 273). Berke (1985) states that

A fundamental principle of rhetoric is that *you should never write anything in a vacuum*. You should try to identify your audience, hypothetical or real, so that you may speak to it in an appropriate voice. A student, for example, should never “just write” but should always include in the prewriting process a visualizing of definite groups of readers. (p. 40)

In Calderonello and Edwards (1986), considering audience is “One of the most important elements” in the writer’s planning of a text (p. 8). They ask students to define both a general and specific audience as a step in “Discovering and Evaluating a Thesis.” Ede (1989) suggests that, except when writing in a journal or notebook, one is *always* writing to communicate with someone (p. 57). Hairston (1986) instructs students to think of who their readers are *before* they begin to write (p. 2). And Pfister and Petrick (1980) state that a student’s understanding of the four components of the composing process—the writer, the subject, the reader, and the form or style—will be determined by that student’s

understanding of each's relationship to the other three components (p. 216). Their heuristic involves the student in explicit audience analysis from the very beginning of the composing process.

Others, however, along with much theoretical and empirical work (Axelrod and Cooper, 1988; Bereiter, 1980; Elbow, 1981, 1987; Elbow and Belanoff, 1989; Flower, 1979, 1985; Flower and Hayes, 1980a, 1981; Roth, 1987), recognize that audience may be attended to at nearly any point during composing but at times suggest that inexperienced *student* writers, depending upon their aims and purposes, may be best advised in many situations to, in a sense, "ignore" audience early in the composing process in order to devote their cognitive energy to the generation of ideas. This, of course, implies for teachers that often the best time to intervene and instruct students to attend to their audience is during drafting or revising.

Indeed, a thorough review of rhetorical history, theory, and research reveals the depth and complexity, as well as the problematic nature, of the writer's audience. This dissertation attempts to trace the development of audience theory throughout the history of rhetoric, and through an experimental treatment attempts to answer questions of when students should attend to audience and what sort of attention to audience may be most fruitful for them.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Audience in Developing, Pre-Socratic Rhetoric**

From the earliest beginnings of Western rhetoric and through the classical period, audience—the roles of listeners/readers in various discourse situations and the effects of rhetoric on those listeners/readers—has been a central concern. Most discussions of rhetoric and audience begin with Plato and only rarely take a look at any earlier work; such looks are usually limited to the works of the sophists to whom Plato and Aristotle often reacted. While Plato and Aristotle should and do make up a good part of any discussion of the history of rhetoric, much of their rhetorics have their roots in hundreds of years of pre-Socratic philosophy. Especially in light of compositionists' recent debates about the applicability of classical thought to modern rhetoric (Connors, Ede & Lunsford, 1984; Covino, 1988; Golden, 1984; Knoblauch & Brannon, 1984; Lunsford & Ede, 1984), a reexamination of the roots of classical thought is particularly valuable. Knoblauch and Brannon (1984), for example, claim that

Classical concepts do not retain the same intellectual validity today that they enjoyed hundreds of years ago, nor have they ever achieved teaching validity either in available research or in the experience of teachers. They are flawed because they do not accord with the evidence of observation and because they are rooted in an epistemology which is itself insufficient, as more than three centuries of accumulated insight have come to reveal.

(p. 18)

Condemning the “Old Time Religion” of classical rhetoric, they go on to seriously question the applicability of classical concepts to modern rhetoric. Much of the criticism they and others (Kroll, 1984; Long, 1980) direct at classical rhetoric involves the limited perspective of audience they see in Plato and Aristotle. Kroll (1984) spends a lot of time pointing out the limitations of the “rhetorical,” classical perspective of audience, which

he feels is still dominant in our field.

Of particular importance, nonetheless, is how the pre-Socratic philosophers and classical rhetoricians viewed audience and the centrality of that view of audience to the development of rhetoric. Much of what seems limited from our modern perspective about these rhetorics' view of audience can be better understood in light of the foundation the pre-Socratics laid and from which, in varying degrees, all classical rhetoricians worked.

On the surface, at least, the pre-Socratic philosophers appear to deal with audience in a very limited way. In particular, they seem to limit themselves to discussing real and knowable audiences external to their texts: to "target receivers" as Kroll (1984) will later say when speaking about classical views of audience. This is, however, only the way it *seems*. Much of the evidence available from an actual analysis of their texts suggests they conceived a wider variety of possible speaker-audience and discourse-audience relationships, even to the point where some of their actual texts require that their audiences actively play certain carefully-defined roles in relation to those texts. From this we can trace the current debate over audience as addressed vs. audience invoked (Willey, 1990b; see also Ede & Lunsford, 1984).

Audience—rhetoric's effects on people—is central to the development of rhetoric in pre-Socratic philosophy, a fact which overrides the apparent limitations. Many pre-Socratics shared a profound mistrust of people's thinking and reasoning abilities. Much as Plato and Aristotle later did, these philosophers shared an epistemology of ideal forms and believed that common humanity must work through the unreliable vehicle of their senses in order to attempt to perceive the truth. As Freeman (1946) notes, "The study of sense perception and the mechanism of the organs of the sense had always tended towards a disbelief in their trustworthiness; that led to the agnosticism of the Sophists, and for a time the very faith in the possibility of knowledge was threatened" (p. xii).

To varying degrees, Heracleitus, Parmenides, Empedocles, and Democritus, chief





each one believing  
 only what he's met in his random encounters  
 and proudly imagining to have found

the Whole. (p. 31)

And Democritus stated that “. . . Man is severed from reality” (p. 92); “We know nothing about anything really . . .”; and so “it is impossible to understand how in reality each thing is.” Our inaccurate and even haphazard sense perceptions are primarily responsible for this weakness; such perceptions as sweet, bitter, and color exist only by convention; “atoms and void (alone) exist in reality [and] We know nothing accurately in reality” because, of the two sorts of knowledge, the genuine and the bastard, all our senses belong to the bastard.

It's fairly clear what these views mean to an emerging rhetoric. Audiences for skillful speakers are empty receptacles waiting to be filled, and the possibility is strong that their own hearing will deceive them and/or that some “people's bard,” which is how Heracleitus referred to Homer, may, purposely or not, lead them astray. Even speakers on the side of truth would view their audiences in an agonistic light, so much would they have to overcome in order to lead that audience to any perception of the truth.

At the same time, however, these philosophers' texts appear to recognize that rhetoric can indeed guide listeners/readers in the path of the truth they were so concerned with. The fact is, of course, that each engages in rhetoric while laying out his treatise. Each also chooses to record or have his treatise recorded for further, future use. Parmenides and Empedocles even go so far as to call upon a Muse/Goddess to lend further credence and power to their words, a clearly persuasive strategy. After all, either's student, or anyone else reading/hearing the discourse, could choose to ignore or disagree

with Parmenides or Empedocles, mere mortals. But the Muse? The Goddess? Aristotelean ethos pales in comparison.

Gradual, subtle changes are taking place in an emerging rhetoric. While on the surface Empedocles mistrusts humans' thinking abilities as much as had any of his predecessors, he at least is moving towards a realization that through our senses alone can we gain any knowledge or understanding of the Whole. We are capable of movement in the proper direction. This vision of humans and human abilities is shaded just differently enough from Parmenides' to allow this treatise a much larger potential audience and foreshadows the more complex rhetoric to come (Willey, 1990b).

Democritus also acknowledges that at least some of us can move beyond our limited senses. Once the "bastard" knowledge will no longer suffice, "and a finer investigation is needed, then the genuine comes in as having a tool for distinguishing more finely" (p. 93). Democritus is rather vague about how and in whom this "genuine" knowledge will function. Regardless, he does recognize the use and power of rhetoric to overcome these limitations more so than those who came before him, and he explicitly goes on to discuss rhetoric's power to do good:

The man who employs exhortation and persuasion will turn out to be a more effective guide to virtue than he who employs law and compulsion. For the man who is prevented by law from wrongdoing will probably do wrong in secret, whereas the man who is led towards duty by persuasion will probably not do anything untoward either secretly or openly . . . . (p. 108)

By the time we reach Protagoras and Gorgias, rhetoric has matured to the point where it is now very much the basis for classical rhetoric, even when, sometimes, that basis comes about in the negative, as in the case of Plato attacking Protagoras and Gorgias in the dialogues. These Sophists don't share with their predecessors the distrust of

human senses. In fact, Protagoras said that “of all things the measure is Man, of the things that are, that they are, and of the things that are not, that they are not” (p. 125). And according to Isocrates, “*Gorgias had the hardihood to say that nothing whatever exists*” (Freeman, p. 127) except, of course, that we say it exists.

This very different picture of truth and of humans’ place as discoverers/receivers/makers of truth means a further change in the treatment of audience. If each human being is an ultimate judge of what is true, speakers can no longer invoke the Gods or the Muse in order to cast their audiences into such a subordinate relationship to themselves and their texts. Listeners/readers are active, thinking about and judging speakers’ words. Both Protagoras and Gorgias recognize the audience’s ability to disagree with speakers, and they set up the more obviously agonistic speaker-audience relationship that contemporary theorists have noted. Because of this agonistic relationship, speakers must be taught and well-practiced in the rhetorical strategies necessary to “make the weaker cause the stronger” (Willey, 1990b). Protagoras and Gorgias not only concern themselves with sound patterns and figures and other such devices by which speakers can persuade their audience, very much reflective of what we’ve come to expect of Sophistic thinking, but they also plant some of the seeds of some of the detailed analyses of audience that Plato later mentions in the *Phaedrus* and that Aristotle will actually begin to do in the *Rhetoric*.

### **Audience in Classical Greek Rhetoric**

#### **Plato**

Plato’s attacks on rhetoric in *Gorgias* are well known; an understanding of his concepts of audience is important to put *Gorgias* and his other, more complimentary look at rhetoric in *Phaedrus* into perspective. A good, single statement of part of Plato’s view of audience comes early in *Phaedrus* when Socrates describes himself as an audience that has been “filled through the ears, like a pitcher, from the waters of another,” the other being, in this case, Lysias, whose speech *Phaedrus* has just recalled for Socrates (p. 240).

Certainly, as the dialogue reveals, Socrates is no empty receptacle merely filled with the skillful speaker's words, but the possibility of such a speaker-audience relationship is raised here and has certainly become one of the oft-repeated analogies that contemporary discussions of classical rhetoric cite. Indeed, it is just such a possibility that causes Plato to condemn sophistic rhetoric.

In *Gorgias*, Gorgias agrees with Socrates that "persuasion is the chief end of rhetoric" (p. 511). Socrates asks:

Soc. And which sort of persuasion does rhetoric create in courts of law and other assemblies about the just and unjust, the sort of persuasion which gives belief without knowledge, or that which gives knowledge?

Gor. Clearly, Socrates, that which only gives belief.

Soc. Then rhetoric, as would appear, is the artificer of a persuasion which creates belief about the just and unjust, but gives no instruction about them?

Gor. True

A bit later, he further inquires of Gorgias whether it is true that ". . . the rhetorician need not know the truth about things; he has only to discover some way of persuading the ignorant that he has more knowledge than those who know?" The Gorgias of the dialogue, doubtless more cooperative and willing to play the fop for Socrates than his real-life counterpart would have been, again admits that this is true (p. 517). On this basis, then, Socrates opines that ". . . the whole of which rhetoric is a part is not an art at all, but the habit of a bold and ready wit, which knows how to manage mankind . . ." (p. 521), and he further states:

Soc. . . . Rhetoric, according to my view, is the ghost or counterfeit of a part of politics.

Pol.[Polus] And noble or ignoble?

Soc. Ignoble, I should say, if I am compelled to answer, for I call what is

bad ignoble. (p. 522)

Because the sophists, particularly Gorgias, had been so bold as to challenge the surety of any “truth” whatsoever, and because they went on to train speakers in the most effective ways of convincing audiences of any “truths” these speakers saw fit, Plato’s condemnation of sophistic rhetoric centers completely around the role of the audience in the discourse. In *Gorgias*, Socrates goes on to attack the way rhetoricians practice refutation in courts of law (p. 530), saying that rhetoric is of little use to anyone not trying to commit some injustice (p. 541), and comparing the business of his contemporary rhetoric and rhetoricians to the business of poetry and music—giving pleasure, “playing with people as with children, and trying to amuse them, but never considering whether they are better or worse for this” (p. 564). It is this antagonism towards sophistic rhetoric and its practitioners of Plato’s day that is so often cited in the various arguments against any applicability of classical theories to modern rhetoric.

However, as Golden (1984) and Covino (1988) have so effectively argued, looking only at *Gorgias* tremendously oversimplifies Plato’s views of a “true” rhetoric, a rhetoric which is also very much audience-centered. Indeed, even in *Gorgias*, Socrates speaks of a “true” rhetorician

who is honest and understands his art [and has] his eye fixed upon [temperance and justice], in all the words which he addresses to the souls of men . . . . [His aim is] to implant justice in the souls of the citizens and take away injustice, to implant temperance and take away intemperance, to implant virtue and take away every vice . . . . (p. 566)

These few words very much reflect the much-debated vision of a “true” rhetoric Socrates expounds in *Phaedrus*, wherein he recognizes rhetoric’s power to work for the good and rhetoricians’ abilities to move their audiences towards recognitions of truth (see Stewart [1984] for a good overview of debates about *Phaedrus*).

In the beginning of the dialogue, after Phaedrus has read Lysias' speech to Socrates, some of the same images of the role of an audience appear as are seen in *Gorgias*: Socrates states, for example, "I can only infer that I have been filled through the ears, like a pitcher, from the waters of another, though I have actually forgotten in my stupidity who was my informant" (p. 240). Further discussion, taking place after Socrates' speech countering Lysias', brings Socrates to say, "Is not rhetoric, taken generally, a universal art of enchanting the mind by arguments . . . having to do with all matters, great as well as small, good and bad alike, and is in all equally right, and equally to be esteemed . . . ?" (p. 264). Socrates and Phaedrus go on to discuss principles of division and the parts of discourse (pp. 268-270), which should not, as argued by Stewart (1984), have been translated into the "beginning, middle, and end" of composition pedagogy (p. 122). Rather, Socrates is reviewing and actually picking away at many of the principles of sophistic rhetoric preparatory to presenting his own views of the "so-called" true art of rhetoric (p. 275).

Since "Oratory is the art of enchanting the soul," according to Socrates (p. 275), and since, as Socrates has elsewhere said, a true rhetorician will seek to enchant the soul into a recognition of truth, then "an orator has to learn the differences of human souls—they are so many and of such a nature, and from them come the differences between man and man" (p. 275). From here Socrates goes on to say that speakers must have good theoretical notions of and then real-life experiences with their audiences in order to come to sufficiently know them. In this way speakers can know what sorts of speeches will persuade what sort of people in just what settings. He makes accomplishing this task nearly impossible, however, by saying

Until a man knows the truth of the several particulars of which he is writing or speaking, and is able to define them as they are, and having defined them again to divide them until they can be no longer divided, and

until in like manner he is able to discern the nature of the soul, and discover the different modes of discourse which are adapted to different natures, and to arrange and dispose them in such a way that the simple form of speech may be addressed to the simpler nature, and the complex and composite to the more complex nature—until he has accomplished all this, he will be unable to handle arguments according to rules of art, as far as their nature allows them to be subjected to art, either for the purpose of teaching or persuading . . . . (p. 280)

So Plato centers awareness of audience in the discourse process, giving it nearly equal importance with actually discerning the truth. And while it may be argued that Plato never expected such knowledge of individuals' souls to be possible, Aristotle, building upon Plato, does manage to construct a surprisingly complex view of audience.

### **Aristotle**

As did his predecessors, Aristotle forwards a philosophy of ideal forms. The truth is beyond our immediate abilities to apprehend it, and rhetoric is a morally neutral tool that can be used to move us towards apprehension of the truth. Directly answering Plato's charges in *Gorgias*, Aristotle states: “. . . if it be objected that one who uses [rhetoric] unjustly might do great harm, *that* is a charge which may be made in common against all good things except virtue, and above all against the things that are most useful, as strength, health, wealth, generalship” (p. 23). Further centering his rhetoric in audience, and recognizing more explicitly than had his predecessors audiences' abilities to *not* be persuaded by speakers, Aristotle argues that rhetoric's “function is not simply to succeed in persuading, but rather to discover the means of coming as near such success as the circumstances of each particular case allow” (p. 23). The key element of all “circumstances” is, of course, orators' audiences. Indeed, the artistic proofs and three forms of discourse that take up so much of the first chapters of Book One of the *Rhetoric*, are



audience centered—the proofs in terms of how speakers appeal to their audiences, and the three forms of discourse in terms of the position of the audience in relation to the discourse and the orator.

After rendering his famous definition of rhetoric as “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion” (p. 24), Aristotle goes on to discuss the “modes of persuasion,” the “proofs” by which rhetors may persuade their audiences. Of the artistic and inartistic proofs, only the artistic truly belong to the art of rhetoric because they are those “we can ourselves construct by means of the principles of rhetoric” (p. 24). Each of the the artistic proofs—*ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*—are dependent upon action within the audience, the hearers. If *ethos*, for example, is to be achieved “by what the speaker says, not by what people think of his character before he begins to speak” (p. 25), then it is obvious that speakers need to know and account for their audiences’ preconceived notions of them, since what the audience already thinks will play a role in what the speakers will say to reinforce or ally those thoughts. In the case of *pathos*, “persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions” (p. 25). While Aristotle recognizes, as did Plato, that “present-day writers on rhetoric,” the sophists, spend their time nearly exclusively on this appeal, he recognizes the importance of the audience’s emotions even to logical arguments and later goes on to outline ways of stirring those emotions. And the final proof, *logos*, is, of course, largely dependent on structuring a valid argument in the minds of the audience through enthymematic reasoning and, at times, through further use of inartistic proofs.

Aristotle further empowers audiences when, in the midst of his discussion of enthymemes, he asserts that a statement is only persuasive, ultimately, “because there is somebody whom it persuades,” even though “we assume an audience of untrained thinkers” (p. 27). Though thinkers may be mostly untrained, speakers may leave certain propositions of their enthymemes unstated: “if any of these propositions is a familiar fact,

there is no need even to mention it; the hearer adds it himself" (p. 28). Far from being a mere passive receiver, the speaker's audience is active in the discourse process, capable of providing an "unstated" premise because of an active form of identification with the speaker and the discourse.

When Aristotle goes on to discuss the three different kinds of rhetoric, he states that each is "determined by the three classes of listeners to speeches. For of the three elements in speech-making—speaker, subject, and person addressed—it is the last one, the hearer, that determines the speech's end and object" (pp. 31-32). The three forms of discourse that Aristotle discusses—forensic, deliberative, and epideictic—all center on the position of the audience in relation to the discourse, the first two being audiences attempting to make decisions, the last being an audience moved to action by the orator.

Much of the remainder of the *Rhetoric* is dedicated to what has become known as Aristotle's psychology of speakers' audiences. Aristotle examines the young, the old, the wealthy, the powerful, and so forth, attempting to analyze what aspects of audiences' characters speakers may target in order to persuade. While Aristotle's analyses seem relatively unsophisticated by contemporary standards, their lasting influence on rhetoric cannot be argued. Roman rhetoric will turn Aristotle's analyses into formulas that will survive the ages and appear relatively unchanged in twentieth-century rhetorics and handbooks, as Kroll (1984) so well notes; as translated into modern rhetorics and handbooks, Aristotle's advice for audience analysis does often lead to the sort of stereotyping which Long (1980) complains of. And certainly modern rhetors on Madison Avenue agree with Aristotle that youth have more powerful desires, particularly sexual desires, than the old. As simple and uninformed as it may sometimes seem by contemporary standards, Aristotle's treatment of audience certainly remains a major influence on actual rhetorical practice.

## Audience in Roman Rhetoric

### Cicero

Roman rhetoric expands little upon its Greek foundation, instead formalizing and “formulaizing” the rhetoric of Aristotle. In *De Inventione*, the chief Roman rhetorician, Cicero (84 B.C.E./1940), echoes ages-old concerns about the power of rhetoric to do evil, saying that the study of eloquence, an honorable profession, can be abused “by the folly and audacity of dull-witted and unprincipled men with the direst consequences to the state . . .” (p. 11); this is only a greater reason why those of virtue should become masters of rhetoric “in order that evil men may not obtain great power to the detriment of good citizens and the common disaster of the community . . .” (pp. 11, 13). Further echoing Aristotle, Cicero defines the function of eloquence as speaking “in a manner suited to persuade an audience” (p. 15).

In this particular treatise, Cicero deals most directly with audience when speaking of the exordium, that part of the speech “which brings the mind of the auditor into a proper condition to receive the rest of the speech. This will be accomplished if he becomes well-disposed, attentive, and receptive” (p. 41). To do this, rhetors must study which of the five kinds of cases—honorable, difficult, mean, ambiguous, and obscure—they are arguing. While instructing rhetors about different sorts of exordia under the different circumstances, Cicero remains centered on the audience, stating, for example, that “if amity and good-will are sought from auditors who are in a rage, not only is the desired result not obtained, but their hatred is increased and fanned into a flame” (p. 43). Later, he discusses hostile audiences, saying that “hostility arises principally from three causes: if there is something scandalous in the case, or if those who have spoken first seem to have convinced the auditor on some point, or if the chance to speak comes at a time when those who ought to listen have been wearied by listening” (p. 47).

The above passages are typical of much of what Cicero has to say about audience

in *De Inventione*. Never does he achieve even the limited depth of Aristotle's analyses of audiences.

### **Quintilian**

Whereas Cicero embraces and develops the five arts of oratory, Quintilian (95/1921) in *Institutio oratoria* takes on nothing less than the making of the "perfect orator," and the perfect orator is above all else a moral being. Quintilian takes great pains to instruct parents on the moral upbringing of those who would be orators; he further redefines rhetoric as the "practical" art of speaking well, as an art concerned with "action," as an art that accomplishes its "duty" by befitting a "good man" and being a virtue. Centralizing audience as had his predecessors, Quintilian meets head-on the objections of rhetoric's being a tool for evil and argues that it is just as much a tool for good. Quintilian adds little new, however, in terms of specific talk about audience.

### **Audience in Medieval Rhetoric**

The social and political forces in the Western world that brought about the period in rhetoric known as the Second Sophistic have been well documented (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990; Connors, Ede, & Lunsford, 1984; Golden et al., 1989; Murphy, 1983). Rhetoric became subordinated to dialectic, and rhetoric became "a means of applying general rules of argumentation, established by dialectic, to specific cases" (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 423). As a result, rhetoric began to emphasize style over substance, which meant negative movement in rhetoric's view of audience until the time of St. Augustine, whose attempts to embrace an essentially "pagan" rhetoric and adjust it for the use of glorifying God and proselytizing the world put his mind and much of his writing once again on the preacher-orator's audience.

Much of what Augustine considered pagan in the rhetoric that emerged during the Second Sophistic was the almost exclusive emphasis on style and ornamentation. He warns against rhetors' empty flows of eloquence, which make them "more pleasing to

those in [their] audience in those matters which have no expedience, and, as [their] audience hears [them] speak with fluency, it judges likewise that [they] speak with truth” (Augustini, 1930; IV.v.8). He repeats much of the familiar, classical concerns already raised about rhetoric’s ability to work for evil.

But because he wants to adjust this pagan, Ciceronian rhetoric for preaching the gospel, Augustine states:

since through the art of rhetoric both truth and falsehood are pleaded, who would be so bold as to say that against falsehood, truth as regards its own defenders ought to stand unarmed, so that, forsooth, those who attempt to plead false causes know from the beginning how to make their audience well-disposed, attentive, and docile . . . so that the one, moving and impelling the minds of the audience to error by the force of its oratory, now strikes them with terror, now saddens them, now enlivens them, now ardently arouses them; but the other, in the cause of truth, is sluggish and cold and falls asleep! Who is so foolish to be thus wise? (Augustini, 1930; IV.2.3.)

Augustine once again places the rhetor’s audience at the center of the rhetorical act, arguing that a Christian preacher can use rhetoric “to do service for the truth” (Augustini, 1930; IV.iii.3).

Boethius (522/1973) reflects his era’s emphasis on dialectic and on rhetorical style. Working within an essentially Ciceronian tradition, Boethius divides rhetoric into “species” judicial, demonstrative, and deliberative, all of which “depend upon the circumstances in which they are used” (p. 425). Those circumstances are essentially definitions of the positions of the speaker and audience in relation to one another. The goal of an oration, such as persuasion, must be looked for in the audience because the orator “must in truth have persuaded them” (p. 426). The orator’s purpose *and*

technique(s) are therefore mostly determined by who the audience will be and on what occasion, which makes analysis of audience essential as an invention activity. Still, though, Boethius manages to place matters of style in fairly simple, formulaic terms by stating: “unless the author discovers suitable material, clothes it in a good style, arranges it properly, remembers it and delivers it well, he accomplishes nothing” (p. 426). It is important to note that “suitable material” is practically a given, considering the “species” of rhetoric, and that each specie has as a given a certain relationship to an audience. With most matters of audience analysis or accommodation already given, orators spend their time figuring out the best way to “clothe” their material in order to persuade their audience.

Robert of Basevorn (1322/1971) embraced Christianized Ciceronian rhetoric much as Augustine had, citing the preacher’s need to use rhetorical devices to teach and to move audiences. Preachers had available to them 22 “ornaments,” not all of which, as Bizzell and Herzberg (1990) note, are the stylistic devices the word itself conjures. He uses the term, they suggest, in its older sense of “equipment,” those things with which the preacher may equip himself in order to construct a well-composed sermon (p. 440).

The first ornament is the Invention of the Theme, always based on certain lines of scripture. The second ornament, then, is the “Winning-over of the Audience,” how to present these scriptures in the way most calculated to convert or instruct the audience.

The preacher, as far as he can do so according to God, ought to attract the mind of the listeners in such a way as to render them willing to hear and retain. This can be done in many ways. One way is to place at the beginning something suitable and interesting, as some authentic marvel which can be fittingly drawn in for the purpose of the theme. (p. 451)

Robert goes on to suggest that the preacher capture the audience’s attention by frightening them with stories of Christ appearing to hardened sinners or by showing them the

ways the devil is constantly attempting to hinder the word of God (p. 452). From here Robert takes each ornament in turn (among them—division, proof of the parts, amplification, digression) and examines how each affects listeners, how each is intended to work on the audience.

So, as did Augustine and Boethius and Cicero, Robert of Basevorn forwards an essentially audience-centered rhetoric. As did his predecessors, Robert requires that speakers consider their audiences as early as possible in the rhetorical act, as an invention activity. And as did his predecessors, Robert sees much of the speaker-audience relationship and all of the occasion for the discourse as givens, limiting the possible scope and depth of any real audience analysis and providing various set formulae to use in set situations.

### **Audience in Renaissance Rhetoric**

As Bizzell and Herzberg (1990) so well document, what we commonly refer to as the “Renaissance” really meant a period of many Renaissance rhetorics. In early Renaissance Italy, for example, “Rhetoric seemed on the verge of attaining a central function in public life that would justify understanding it as the source of collective social action and perhaps of all human knowledge” (p. 464). The Italian Humanist Petrarch “sought a model for thinking, writing, and acting in society that was faithfully Christian, yet more conducive to the development of individual talents than Scholasticism seemed to be” (p. 465), and so he embraced the Ciceronian concept of *humanitas*—an “ideal of cultivated learning” (p. 465). As Petrarch’s ideas and methods of learning spread, trained, professional rhetoricians actually spread the concepts of Italian humanism to the point where, “as historian Nancy Streuver has argued, [they] could see rhetoric and philosophy as united—and even rhetoric as supreme—because they began to understand meaning itself as historically established” (p. 467).

With meaning historically established, with the humanists emphasizing religious

tolerance and “the quality of personal performance in all intellectual and political action” (p. 468), rhetoric could hardly be the formulaic, stylistic tool it had become in Medieval times. As Bizzell and Herzberg argue, “rhetoric in effect becomes the means by which history gets a purchase on truth. To be actively useful, the responsible citizen must express philosophical insights in language that is convincing in contemporary circumstances” (p. 467). What this means specifically in terms of analysis or accommodation of audiences is difficult to say; no major, specifically-rhetorical theses emerged from this early period of the Renaissance. It seems logical to speculate, though, that the Medieval period’s emphasis on style and ornamentation would no longer hold much stock with a Renaissance rhetorician who recognized the audience’s role in the making of meaning. With meaning itself being an individual matter that is affected by group dynamics, speakers or writers would have to carefully consider their audience’s knowledge or lack of knowledge on a certain matter as well as their historical stance on these matters. The audience remains the center of any rhetorical context, but the speaker/writer’s relationship to the audience is far less the one of absolute authority commonly envisioned by previous rhetorics. In this way, early Renaissance rhetorics look forward to the “social construction” views in Contemporary rhetoric.

As the Renaissance period progressed and political conditions changed, rhetorics, too, changed:

rhetoric began to lose its political importance, and its epistemic function began to slip away. Rhetoric as a method for generating knowledge began to be defined in terms of its defects when compared with dialectic, logic, and, later, science. Rhetoric as a means of generating social consensus began to be understood in terms of a stylistics that charmed or even deceived, with figurative ornaments essentially superficial to the thought conveyed. (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 464)



Agricola, for example, once again subordinated rhetoric to dialectic, in the process reducing rhetoric to a teachable method (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 471).

Erasmus (1512/1978), who was greatly influenced by Agricola, published a stylistic rhetoric that, while taking the need for an accomplished style quite seriously, can also be seen as a protest against the extreme Ciceronianism of the Italian humanists, particularly as their stylistic display gave rise to the deceptively polished eloquence of the courtier. (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 472)

Such speakers, according to Erasmus, “pile up meaningless heaps of words and expressions without any discrimination, and thus obscure the subject they are talking about, as well as belaboring the ears of their unfortunate audience” (p. 502). However, Erasmus very much believes that speakers need to study *copia*, the abundant style, so that they won't bore their “wretched audience to death” (p. 505). But he repeats the Medieval conceit of style as dress:

style is to thought as clothes are to the body. Just as dress and outward appearance can enhance or disfigure the beauty and dignity of the body, so words can enhance or disfigure thought. Accordingly a great mistake is made by those who consider that it makes no difference how anything is expressed, provided it can be understood somehow or other. (p. 508)

Why put people off by our dirty clothing, Erasmus asks, when the underlying form is good? By the same token, why have elegant appearance when what lies beneath it is not good? He deliberately sets out his warnings at great length, he says, because he is “well acquainted with the headlong presumption that marks most mortal men. As soon as they have passed the lowest stages, they immediately choose to rush on to the heights, all unprepared, ‘with unwashed feet’ as the proverb says” (p. 508).

And so Erasmus goes on to set out his “rules for developing variety of expres-

sion” (p. 508), touching upon, among other things, vulgar words, unusual words, archaic and obsolete words, then giving lengthy practical demonstrations of the many different ways of wording sentences (pp. 514-524) and moving on to various methods of variation of statements, such as dividing a whole into its parts, augmentation, inventing propositions.

While the audience’s place in all of this is somewhat implicit—all of what Erasmus discusses is discussed because of how these various techniques affect audiences—Erasmus seldom specifically mentions audiences except in passing: he refers to a speaker wishing to dissuade someone from matrimony (p. 530), to dissuade someone from studying Greek (p. 532), and he mentions that, if the speaker has properly used the abundant style then “the listener always has something definite either to concentrate on now, or to remember, or to look forward to” (p. 533). Never throughout his lengthy and formulaic discussions of the various methods of *copia* is there any indication that serious analysis of audience needs to be considered. The style, really, is all, and so the situational formulae for style may be used regardless of any possible variations in audience.

The “decline” of the power of rhetoric began by Agricola and Erasmus gets carried to its greatest extreme with the work of Ramus (1549/1983). As had his Renaissance predecessors, Ramus subordinates rhetoric to dialectic most completely, pushing rhetorical invention, arrangement, and memory into the realm of dialectic and leaving for rhetoric “the study of stylistic ornamentation, a harmless pastime with which he is little concerned; for serious business, a plain style is best” (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 473). Ramus then places far less importance on style than had Erasmus or Agricola: in Ramus, “style seems to be a kind of applied psychology, a study of the way to frame sentences so as to force certain reactions from recalcitrant, mentally defective audiences” (Bizzell & Herzberg, 1990, p. 560).

Early in his treatise, Ramus limits the scope of rhetoric and, in so doing, severely

limits whatever treatment of audience such a rhetoric might afford. Ramus states that humans are given two universal gifts, reason and speech; to the gift of reason he assigns the provinces of invention and arrangement; to the gift of speech he assigns grammar and rhetoric. Grammar he defines as “purity of speech in etymology, syntax, and prosody for the purpose of speaking correctly, and also in orthography for the purpose of writing correctly. Rhetoric should demonstrate the embellishment of speech first in tropes and figures, second in dignified delivery” (p. 566). To firmly prove his proposition, Ramus constructs the following syllogism:

The parts of the material which belong to the art of rhetoric are only two, style and delivery.

However, the parts of the art of rhetoric are the parts of its subject matter and they correspond completely to one another.

Therefore there are only two parts of rhetoric, style and delivery. (p. 567)

Robbed of any epistemic function or validity, rhetoric can only concern itself with the surface features of discourse. Implicit in this notion is a sense of audience as passive receivers ready to be manipulated in one way or another by a skillful orator or writer who first follows the rigid, dialectical method of Ramus, apparently without regard to audience, and then sculpts the discourse accordingly through various rhetorical tricks. Arriving at knowledge or truth falls within the province of dialectic, wherein there is no need to ever consider the audience for the discourse that will eventually emerge.

Little wonder, then, that Ramus himself displayed so little regard for audience.

Bizzell and Herzberg (1990) cite the

arrogance of Ramus’s style. Not only does he insult his adversaries, but he does not trouble to make arguments supporting his own position. He assumes that readers are thoroughly familiar with his other works in which these arguments are developed.

Indeed, in a contemporary context we could conclude that Ramus needed to consider his audience's knowledge/lack of knowledge about his topic.

### **Audience in British and Continental Rhetorics of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries**

According to Brown and Willard (1990), Hugh Blair, Adam Smith, Richard Whatley, and especially George Campbell

provided the theoretical and practical means to connect discourse to its ends—that is, to its effects upon listeners and readers. In doing so, their rhetorics established (what remains) one of the dominant concepts of communicative acts: audience analysis and adaptation . . . . The audience assumed increasing importance as rhetoric became more epistemological and psychological, more concerned with the mind of the reader-listener, and less hemmed in by the logical demands of the old, subject-centered rhetoric. (pp. 60-61)

Indeed, these rhetoricians' contribution to rhetoric was once again moving the audience back to the center of the persuasive act.

Smith (1750/1963) resurrected classical precepts in his discussions of the purposes of different forms of discourse, foregrounding persuasion while at the same time recognizing that rhetoric may also be used to inform (p. 140). Using some of the rudimentary theories of the faculty psychologists, Smith (1759) recommended that "We must look at ourselves with the same eyes with which we look at others; we must imagine ourselves not the actors, but the spectators of our own character and conduct . . ." (p. 257), in effect recommending that rhetors and critics take on the perspectives of their audiences.

Blair (1862) was also conversant in faculty psychology and in a circuitous way looks forward to the contributions reader-response theorists will make to the treatment of

audience. In his lecture on “Taste,” Blair recognizes how differently readers may react in given discourse situations. Beyond any power of the artist or rhetorician are the matters of a reader’s education, culture, and environment—all of which affect how readers read and react to a given text. While taste operates somewhat independently of reason—and appealing to reason, of course, is the foremost tenet of classical rhetoric—reason can affect it. Taste can be changed, educated, taught. Unlike later reader-response theorists, Blair believes that “inequalities” of taste can come down to what is right and wrong, and that incorrect tastes can be educated away (pp. 16-37). As applied specifically to rhetoric, then, rhetors need to account for the possible varying tastes of their listeners/readers.

Campbell (1823), as noted by Golden et al. (1989), “is often viewed as the benchmark of the psychological-philosophical trend in British rhetorical thought” (p. 204). Campbell (1823) speaks of passion being that which moves people to action and reason being the guide. In order to operate on the passions, the rhetor has to appeal to one or more of the following seven circumstances: Probability, Plausibility, Importance, Proximity of Time (of event to listener), Connection of Place (to the listener), Relation to the Persons addressed, and (the listeners’) Interest in the Consequences.

In order to use these circumstances, to figure out which are available, which should be used on a particular audience, speakers need to analyze their audience and adapt the messages to that particular audience. Thereby, Campbell treats what we’ve come to call the demographics of audiences—education, morality, occupation, political affiliation, religion, geographic location:

Now, the difference between one audience and another is very great, not only in intellectual but in moral attainments. That may be clearly intelligible to a House of Commons, which would appear as if spoken in an unknown tongue to a conventicle of enthusiasts. That may kindle fury in the latter, which would create no emotion in the former but laughter and

contempt . . . Liberty and independence will ever be prevalent motives with republicans, pomp and splendour with those attached to monarchy. In mercantile states, such as Carthage among the ancients, or Holland among the moderns, interest will always prove the most cogent argument; in states solely or chiefly composed of soldiers, such as Sparta and ancient Rome, no inducement will be found a counterpose to glory. Similar differences are also to be made in addressing different classes of men. With men of genius the most successful topic will be fame; with men of industry, riches; with men of fortune, pleasure. (pp.127-128)

Such a treatment remained relatively unchanged in rhetorics and handbooks until very recently, as noted by Knoblauch & Brannon (1984), Kroll (1984), Park (1986), Willey (1990a), and others.

Whatley (1855), who claims to take Campbell's rhetoric "to its logical completion" (p. 4), limited his approach to rhetoric to *argumentation* and categorized arguments into two classes: 1. *a priori*, which is cause/effect reasoning based on experience that accounts for something, and 2. *sign*, which moves in the direction of effect to condition. Testimony is treated as a kind of a sign. *Presumption* and *Burden of Proof* are the two principles Whatley contributes that have carried over into modern rhetoric and touch most directly upon the speaker-audience relationship.

Whatley speaks at great length about a variety of presumptions—ideas or institutions that a speaker's audience will already believe in: presumption in favor of existing institutions; presumption of innocence; presumption against a paradox; presumptions for and against Christianity; among others. In a given rhetorical context, the burden of proof lay with whoever argues *against* a given idea or institution that is commonly accepted by the people—he gives as an example how the burden of proof for Christianity at one time lay with Christ, but now that Christianity exists the situation is reversed. Practicing

## **Audience in Modern and Contemporary Rhetoric**

### **Three Perspectives on Audience**

Most all contemporary views of audience analysis or adaptation fall somewhere within the “Three Perspectives on Audience” outlined by Kroll (1984b): the rhetorical, the informational, and the social.

#### **The Rhetorical Perspective.**

The rhetorical perspective, according to Kroll (1984b) and Willey (1990a), still dominates much of the actual practice of teaching audience. So familiar to us as demographics and as the “Know Your Audience” admonitions of modern rhetorics of all sorts, the rhetorical perspective demands that writers analyze “the audience’s beliefs, traits, and attitudes, so that their messages can be adapted to the particular characteristics of specific audiences” (Kroll, p. 173). Roen and Willey (1988) found that this perspective still makes up much of the advice given to students in a wide range of contemporary texts and rhetorics.

The real weakness of the rhetorical perspective is its “tendency . . . to see nearly all communication as persuasive in intent, with the concomitant conception of the audience as an adversary . . .” (Kroll, 1984b, p. 174). Another limitation “is the [implicit] assumption . . . that in fact the writer either knows, or can find out, a good deal about the audience” (p. 174), an audience that, as the discussion of addressed vs. invoked audiences will reveal below, is often not “real” or “knowable” at all. Readers come to be seen as “‘target receiver[s]’ toward which writers aim their persuasive darts,” and this, as Kroll goes on to say, is “an oversimplified account of the audience. Readers are not passive targets; they use their previous knowledge and active processing strategies to construct the meaning of a text” (p. 175). Indeed, the readers’ role is too often so much oversimplified that in many instances student writers using only a rhetorical perspective as a vehicle of audience analysis end up engaging in a “sort of noxious stereotyping” that

we would never accept in any other contexts (Long, 1980, p. 223).

### **The Informational Perspective.**

From the informational perspective, Kroll (1984b) says, writing becomes “a process of conveying information, a process in which the writer’s goal is to transmit, as effectively as possible, a message to the reader” (p. 176). As Willey (1990a) has noted, this too remains a dominant approach to audience, at least as represented by the instructional techniques in and the organization of many contemporary rhetorics and readers: the rhetorical modes are still often presented one at a time, and much time is spent “on general writing techniques—use of dovetailing, proleptic devices, thematic tags, parallel forms, and so forth—which can reduce a reader’s uncertainty and thus aid comprehension” (Kroll, 1984b, p. 177).

A recent explication of informational principles is presented by Andersen (1987), who examines what she terms the “conventional registers” present in most discourse situations, registers that are defined and placed into three categories by Mailloux (1982): “1) traditional conventions that recognize regularities in action and belief; 2) regulative conventions that regulate action; and 3) constitutive conventions that determine meaning” (Andersen, 1987, p. 112). She attempts to “draw attention to the many features and types of conventional registers and to underscore their relationship to audience considerations . . . knowledge of general audience characteristics is not enough in and of itself to assure that a writer produces a piece suited to each particular magazine [or any particular discourse situation]” (p. 117). As a result, she concludes that “if we are going to teach students to pay attention to audience when they write—whether they are writing letters, business reports, term papers, or short stories—then we should also teach them to be aware of and to look for the contextual and conventional cues implicit in each of these genres” (p. 118).

Indeed, the “conventional cues” implicit in academic prose are very much taught



in those rhetorics and readers that are arranged around the rhetorical modes: defining, comparing and contrasting, cause and effect, arguing, and so forth. The problem, however, as Kroll (1984b) points out, is that too often such instruction amounts to “filling a reader’s head with information,” which is

not nearly as simple as filling a glass with water. Readers “process” messages, transforming linguistic input into a conceptual code that must be integrated with information already stored in memory. Since the goal of writing is to get information into that memory store, a writer needs to understand how the reading process works, paying particular attention to the kinds of difficulties readers encounter in their efforts to extract information from texts. (p. 176)

Our historical fondness for teaching the rhetorical modes and “general writing techniques” in the general vacuum of the classroom is seemingly not the way to help students accomplish this understanding.

#### **The Social Perspective.**

In contemporary composition, the social perspective, in all its various permutations—cognitive-developmental, sociolinguistic, epistemic—has become the dominant theoretical perspective of audience. Attesting to this are the sheer numbers of theoretical and empirical articles, of books, of dissertations, of conference addresses, on audience, on social construction, on discourse communities.

From the cognitive-developmental view of the writing process, for example, “writing for readers, like all human communication, [is] a fundamentally social activity, entailing processes of inferring the thoughts and feelings of other persons involved in an act of communication” (Kroll, 1984b, p. 179). The key process is getting students to “decenter” and escape from their own, limited perspectives. “If we assume that egocentrism is checked and finally conquered through social experiences, then perhaps our

composition students need to experience writing as a form of social interaction” (p. 180).

While more distanced from a strictly cognitive-developmental model of the writing process and working more within a sociolinguistic context, Nystrand (1989) similarly argues for a “Social-Interactive Model of Writing”:

texts do not take the shape they do merely because the writer wants to say something or has something to accomplish. One does not merely “will” a text. And writers do not merely “act on readers.” It is more accurate to say that the shape and direction of discourse are configured by the communicative need of writers to balance their own purposes and intentions with the expectations and needs of readers. (p. 75)

The older models (both rhetorical and informational) of a writer acting upon readers, which Nystrand calls “writer purpose” models, don’t take into account such factors as readers’ knowledge and expectations, previous contacts between readers and the writer, the focusing and limiting force of the emerging text, possible feedback from readers, many other “characteristics of the context that give rise to the communication in the first place” (p. 75).

Hence writer purpose says nothing about the way in which *what writers do* is synchronized with *what readers do* when readers finally read the text.

This is the central reason writing is inadequately characterized as a particular mode of discourse when its form is viewed principally as a function of the writer’s purpose.

Both the rhetorical and informational perspectives of audience clearly, at least from this viewpoint, centralize writer purpose and deemphasize or ignore the other elements of the social-interactive model. Nystrand argues for a stance somewhere between the position that meaning lies within texts and what he calls the “idealist thesis that meaning is in the reader” (see the discussion of Reader-Response below), and instead “affirms the proposi-

tion that meaning is a social construct negotiated by writer and reader through the medium of text, which uniquely configures their respective purposes” (pp. 77-78).

From another social viewpoint, Enos (1990) argues for an “Epistemic rhetoric . . . [that] more than any other modern approach foregrounds style in a holistic way because its focus on writing as a way of knowing requires interaction of writer, subject, and audience through language. . . . we can never dissociate our very selves from the ways in which we open up our view of reality onto the written page” (p. 101). Drawing on the works of several theorists (Bakhtin, 1981; Berlin, 1987; Hart & Burks, 1972; Long, 1983; Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1969), In Enos’ view, the writer projects “a self that invites the readers in, and, if readers identify with this self, they, in effect, become part of that ‘self,’ become the audience, in the process of reading” (p. 102).

Enos further says that in the “familiar pairs” with which we’ve come to think of audience (addressed/invoked; real/implicit), the order is reader/writer; she suggests that if we change the order to writer/reader we will have the pair “audience/reader, which seems to better reflect the process of inventing the text waiting to be read by another inventive process. Thus audience embodies two complementary processes: what the writer, through identification, creates in the text, and how the actual reader, through identification with the writer’s created audience, becomes this audience” (p. 104). (Enos thus adds hers to those voices arguing for a mediation of the addressed vs. invoked debate detailed below.)

Among the many forces and debates that have shaped the social perspective, the more interesting and influential have been contributed by Reader-Response theory, the theories of discourse or interpretive communities that have emerged from it, and the debate over the addressed vs. invoked audience.

### **Reader-Response and Interpretive Communities**

Contemporary compositionists have learned and borrowed much from reader-response criticism, a field of critical theory that, unlike any coming before it, recognizes

the role of the reader in making the meaning of a text. Iser (1974) says that the text only takes on life when it is realized, and furthermore the realization is by no means independent of the individual disposition of the reader—though this in turn is acted upon by the different patterns of the text. The convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence . . . . (pp. 274-275)

As adapted to contemporary theories of composition, it's the convergence of *any* text and its reader that brings that text into existence. This calls for a view of reading quite different from the one that had dominated rhetorical thinking for centuries, which held that readers were decoders of the messages that writers planted in their texts. As encoders, as co-makers of meaning, readers are much more active participants in the rhetorical act, a fact that will necessitate that writers do much different sorts of thinking about audience analysis and adaptation than they did before.

Rosenblatt (1978) begins with the assumption “that the text offers a potentially meaningful set of linguistic symbols . . . .” Readers, then, can adopt one of two stances in relation to that text, stances that will play a part in determining their reactions to the text: a predominantly efferent, or a predominantly aesthetic stance (p. 78). “In the aesthetic transaction, the text possesses an especial importance. In the efferent situation, a paraphrase or summary or restatement—in short, another text—may be as useful as the original text” (p. 86). Readers are “actively involved in building up a poem for [themselves] out of [their] responses to the text. [They] have to draw on [their] past experiences with the verbal symbols. [They have] to select from the various alternative referents that [occur] to [them]” (p. 10).

Of course, reader-response recognizes that not all interpretations of a given text are relative or relatively correct, as has been charged by Abrams (1977), who, in Fish's (1980) words, contends that

authority depends upon the existence of a determinate core of meanings because in the absence of such a core there is no normative or public way of construing what anyone says or writes, with the result that interpretation becomes a matter of individual and private constrictings none of which is subject to challenge or correction. (p. 317)

Fish goes on to point out what an extreme position this is: "The answer . . . is that communication occurs within situations and that to be in a situation is already to be in possession of (or to be possessed by) a structure of assumptions, of practices understood to be relevant in relation to purposes and goals that are already in place" (p. 318).

The text itself, then, does exercise some authority. As Rosenblatt says, the text "may also lead [readers] to be critical of [their] prior assumptions and associations. . . . [They] may discover that [they] had projected on the text elements of [their] past experience not relevant to it, and which are not susceptible of coherent incorporation into it" (p. 11). While what readers make out of a given text is for them *the* poem, *the* text, and no other readers (or even the writer, for that matter), can read the text for them, it is possible for readers to learn about others' reactions to texts (looking forward to Fish's "Interpretive Communities") and through that experience to learn that their own interpretations are "confused or impoverished;" this is knowledge that readers have to arrive at themselves (p. 105).

These theories affect composition theory in many ways. They shed much light on what Perelman (1986) calls the context of the classroom, of the institution, of the interpretive community students represent in the classroom. "Language is always perceived . . . within a structure of norms . . . that is not abstract and independent but social" (Fish, 1980, p. 318). Iser (1974), too, has pointed out that

If interpretation has set itself the task of conveying the meaning of a literary text, obviously the text itself cannot have already formulated that

meaning. How can the meaning possibly be experienced if—as is always assumed by the classical norm of interpretation—it is already there, merely waiting for a referential exposition? As meaning arises out of the process of actualization, the interpreter should perhaps pay more attention to the process than to the product. His object should therefore be, not to explain a work, but to reveal the conditions that bring about its various possible effects. If he clarifies the *potential* of a text, he will no longer fall into the fatal trap of trying to impose one meaning on his reader, as if that were right, or at least the best, interpretation. (18)

This idea of the meaning not already being contained within the text, before and without any interaction with a reader, is most important to this discussion. In the same way that we have come to learn that the process of writing is a process of making meaning, not merely of figuring out ways of best communicating truths that already exist, readers too make meaning of the texts they experience; writers must be acutely aware, then, that they are not simply dictating to readers meaning that already exists—they must be aware that they are interacting with readers in a process of making meaning. Being aware of and experiencing the multiplicity of readers' responses to a text, writers must think of the audiences for their own essays in different ways from those dictated by the “classical norms” of audience awareness—their audience's race, religion, political affiliations, for example, which will be insufficient in many if not most cases of transactive communication between writers and readers in most discourse settings.

Roth (1990) builds in this way upon the foundation already laid, and echoes many of the concerns of the addressed vs. invoked discussion below:

If readers are not simply decoding a text to discover the message the author encoded, then can writers be working to find the most effective way to encode a predetermined meaning for readers? No; just as reading is

not primarily a matter of deducing a writer's intended meaning by determining his or her interests and biases, neither must writers always anticipate the reader's needs, interests, and predilections. The end of authorial dominance need not lead to its opposite, the dominance of the reader's purposes. Rather, it leads to a sharing of control, to a breaking down of the adversarial writer-reader relationship. Instead of designing a product meant to have a specific effect on another person, the writer is engaged in a social process . . . . (p. 181)

Students' attempts to account for actual or imagined readers' level of knowledge about a topic (the perspective of audience that students in Roen and Willey, 1988, and in this study were asked to do) is then a particularly valuable activity. Thinking of what some actual readers external to the text may or may not know about a topic, which of course forces the student to think about what he or she does and doesn't know about a topic and why, gives the student knowledge he or she can then use to create an audience within the text—a knowledgeable audience of insiders, intimate, perhaps, even co-conspiratorial; or an audience of outsiders who need to be educated, informed, led by the hand, perhaps. This particular perspective on audience—on real readers and on readers created within the text—enhances the social, dialogic, transactional nature of writing that so many theorists (Ede & Lunsford, 1984; Hymes, 1972; Phelps, 1990; Roth, 1987, 1990) have been forwarding so forcefully.

Roth (1990) also argues that envisioning many different potential readers forces students to broaden their awareness, to

discover more about [their] subjects and [their] evolving texts so that [they] can compose a piece that many people will want to read. Thought of in this way, the value to the writer of considering audience is more heuristic than predictive: it helps a writer discover more about his or her text,

how it might be perceived, and thus where it might go. (p. 182)

As Bartholomae and Petrosky (1987) put it, “The student has to appropriate or be appropriated by a specialized discourse, and he has to do this as though he were easily and comfortably one with his audience . . .” (p. 279). Even in the composition classroom, students must become interpretive communities conversant in the various forms of academic discourse. This view seriously discounts much of the audience analysis and adaptation advice that has traditionally been given in rhetorics and handbooks. As Rubin (1984) points out,

It is difficult to write in a genre for which one lacks corresponding audience constructs. Construct repertoires are generally adequate for constructing familiar audiences—those associated with informal genres. But many eighteen-year-old, otherwise cognitively mature, college freshmen may lack constructs necessary to represent effectively the type of audience associated with the typical freshman theme. (p. 223)

Traditionally, little if any attempt is made to supply students with the constructs necessary for them to come up with any representation of the audience for those essays that constitute the “typical freshman theme.” Students’ attempts to get to “know” their audience of “real” readers through most traditional means will be frustrated by how little such knowledge of such readers will apply to their rhetorical situation. Park (1982) sheds further light on this issue:

the task of analyzing audience is a matter of identifying the nature of the contexts that are already given by some aspect of the occasion of publication and of understanding the relationship between those that are given and those that must be more explicitly defined within the discourse itself. Another part of the task is understanding how particular contexts are created within the discourse. . . .in public prose [such as student essays], it



is a matter of shaping into a rhetorical situation the potential bits of opinion, knowledge, motives for interest that lie about in the public domain in no particular form. The writer invents, so to speak, their significance and, in doing so, creates an audience. (p. 253)

At this point it is apparent that through their adaptations of reader response theories and in their embracing of interpretive communities, compositionists have also joined in the debate begun by Ong (1975) and so aptly labeled by Ede and Lunsford (1984) as Audience Addressed vs. Audience Invoked.

#### **Audience Addressed vs. Audience Invoked**

Ong (1974) states that writers “must construct in [their] imagination[s], clearly or vaguely, an audience cast in some sort of role. . . .the audience must correspondingly fictionalize itself. [Readers have] to play the role in which the author has cast [them], which seldom coincides with [their] role in the rest of life” (p. 12). This is the point of view of audience that Ede and Lunsford (1984) have labeled “Audience Invoked.” From a strictly “invoked” point of view, writers can’t get to know real readers external to their texts; instead, audience is “a construction of the writer, a ‘created fiction.’ . . .the writer uses the semantic and syntactic resources of language to provide cues for the reader—cues which help to define the role or roles the writer wishes the reader to adopt in responding to the text” (p. 160).

Traditionally, however, according to Kroll (1984b) and others, audiences for written discourse have been viewed as static, “addressed” entities. This view of audience “emphasize[s] the concrete reality of the writer’s audience [and assumes that] knowledge of this audience’s attitudes, beliefs, and expectations is not only possible (via observation and analysis) but essential” (Ede & Lunsford, 1984, p. 156).

Iser also differentiates between the “‘real’ reader, known to us by his documented reactions,” and the

“hypothetical” reader, upon whom all possible actualizations of the text may be projected. The latter category is frequently subdivided into the so-called ideal reader and the contemporary reader. The first of these cannot be said to exist objectively, while the second, though undoubtedly there, is difficult to mould to the form of a generalization. (p. 27)

It is just this sort of hypothetical, ideal reader much freshman composition instruction asks students to analyze, a reader who, according to Iser, cannot even be said to exist objectively.

“Addressed” views of audience still abound in contemporary texts, handbooks, and rhetorics. Roen and Willey (1988) examine the traditional and inadequate audience analysis advice given in many of them. Addressed views are also found in abundance in professional literature. Mitchell and Taylor (1979), for example, do state that

The audience confronting the written product . . . is not a passive recipient, nor, as everyday experience shows us, can any reader be expected to respond like any other. Readers actively contribute to the meaning of what they read and will respond according to a complex set of expectations, preconceptions, and provocations. (p. 251)

Their underlying assumption, however, is that these “general audience characteristics” are researchable, learnable, and that by learning them students may learn to “avoid offending their readers” (p. 251). Writers “should be taught how to discover systematically what the audience requires and how to facilitate reading” (p. 265).

Similarly, Pfister and Petrick (1980) cite Ong and state that “Students, like all writers, must fictionalize their audience. But they must construct in the imagination an audience that is as nearly a replica as is possible of those many readers who actually exist in the world of reality and who are reading the writer’s words” (pp. 213-214). Despite this apparent attempt at finding a middle ground somewhere between the addressed and

invoked points of view, Pfister and Petrick's "Heuristic Model for Audience Analysis in Written Discourse" concentrates almost exclusively on analysis of actual readers external to the text, with the exception of one question: "What is the role I wish to assign to the audience? What role do I want to assume for the audience?" (p. 214).

Real readers, the invoked argument holds, must be a subjective creation of the writer, and so the question arises, how can a reader analyze a subjective creation by the traditional measures of that audience? Even when we're asking students to write essays for an identifiably "real" audience of their peers, such a rhetorically involved audience of peers will be a subjective creation of the writer, since not many of these peers will really care much about one another's essays, at least in the beginning. The "real" reader our students are aiming at is one of the three "contemporary" readers that Iser defines, one who is "extrapolated from the reader's role laid down in the text" (p. 28). These readers are very much a part of what Fish terms an "interpretive community," sharing in a common knowledge, sharing a common set of concerns, a common vocabulary—a community we rarely give our students a chance to form for themselves.

Discounting traditional audience analysis and its emphasis on "addressed" audiences, Park (1986) notes that such analysis has "little practical rhetorical value for us [in composition courses]" (p. 478). He goes on to point out just what a difficult rhetorical position inexperienced students find themselves in, a position where they

must somehow imagine or invent an audience in a situation where no audience naturally exists. Here the primary purpose of audience analysis becomes not the usual one of providing information about an existing audience but rather a means of actually helping students discover an audience. (p. 479)

Using Ong as a springboard, Long (1980) takes the invoked viewpoint further. He reviews traditional rhetoric's assumption that "all organized or prepared uses of language

were either persuasive (rhetoric) or aesthetic (poetic)”; in rhetoric, underlying the structure of the whole is the assumption of an agonistic relationship between speaker (writer) and listener (reader). . . .It also implies that the more precise the writer’s knowledge of his adversary’s likes, dislikes, predispositions, strengths and weaknesses, the more likely that his attempts at persuasion will be successful. (p. 222)

Given such an assumption, Long (1990) claims that traditional audience-analysis incorrectly views the *audience-topic* relationship as static (whereas the current model of the writing process recognizes the constant changeability of the *writer-topic* relationship). “There is no more reason to assume that the reader is rigidly locked into a specific—and identifiable—position vis-a-vis the topic than there is to assume the writer has one and only one posture available to him or her” (p. 79). The audience can assume as many roles as the writer, even within a given text.

Long (1980) feels that we should embrace Ong’s notion of the writer fictionalizing audiences and, rather than having students analyze “real” audiences and then teaching them the different modes of discourse, we concentrate our efforts on analyzing texts for the cues writers leave that invite readers to become certain kinds of audiences.

The examination of methods would lead us particularly to questions of distance between writer and subject, to assumptions forced on the reader by the writer, to interlocking and supportive connotations resulting from particular choices of diction. In effect, this approach would redefine the burden placed upon the writer: not only must he present specific pieces of information and establish certain connections or relationships among them, he must create a satisfactory role for the reader within which the presentation is consistent and coherent. (p. 225)

Long (1980) concludes that writers begin with the question, “who do I *want* my audience

to be?” rather than the more traditional, “who *is* my audience?” (p. 225).

If the beginning writer is to be given meaningful assistance with his or her problems, the originating point must be with the concept of the writer’s responsibility for instructing the reader in his or her proper role. (Long, 1990, p. 82).

Among the voices arguing that writers must both address and invoke their audiences are those of Ede and Lunsford (1984), Park (1982), and Rubin (1984). Park (1982), for example, notes the “two general directions” of the “meanings” of audience—directions that correspond to the addressed vs. invoked points of view—and goes on to theorize that

“audience” really uses a very concrete image to evoke a much more abstract and dynamic concept. Whether we mean by “audience” primarily something in the text or something outside it, “audience” essentially refers not to people as such but to those apparent aspects of knowledge and motivation in readers and listeners that form the contexts for discourse and the ends of discourse. (p. 249)

Even if we try to refer to or analyze actual readers, Park says, those readers make up and become an audience “only in terms of their relationship to the text and the relationship of the text to them” (p. 250). In order to learn how to analyze audience in a given discourse setting, then, Park suggests we replace the question “‘Who is the audience?’” with a set of more precise questions as to how the piece in question establishes or possesses the contexts that make it meaningful for readers” (p. 252).

Ede and Lunsford (1984) also argue that each side in the addressed vs. invoked debate has greatly oversimplified “the act of making meaning through written discourse” (p. 156). Those who forward an invoked viewpoint, Ede and Lunsford point out when discussing Mitchell and Taylor’s (1979) model, do not pay enough attention to the role of

invention, so much do they foreground audience (pp. 157-158). Foregrounding audience more than it should be, according to Elbow (1987) and suggested by Roen and Willey (1988), can be as damaging for students as paying no attention to audience at all. He claims that there are times when students should actually *ignore* audience entirely: he admits that “ignoring audience will usually lead to weak writing at first—to what Linda Flower calls ‘writer-based prose,’[but] this weak writing can help us in the end to better writing than we would have written if we’d kept readers in mind from the start” (p. 51) Ede and Lunsford also point out that the addressed vision of audience “suggests an oversimplified view of language” (p. 159): “Writing is more . . . than ‘a means of acting upon a receiver’ (Mitchell and Taylor, p. 250); it is a means of making meaning for writer *and* reader” (p. 160).

Similarly, Ede and Lunsford (1984) question the addressed viewpoint at its modern source, beginning by questioning, along with Simons (1976), “the rigidity of Ong’s distinctions between a speaker’s and a writer’s audience.” They go on to say that Ong’s “paradigmatic situation,” in which a speaker’s audience is a collectivity acting in the here and now on each other and on the speaker, is “atypical.” They cite the possibility of numerous instances in which speakers may find themselves in situations very much akin to those of writers, where they may face audiences that they lack intimate knowledge of and may also define for their audiences roles they wish those audiences to play in relation to their discourses (pp. 161-162). They go on to show how writers must often need to know the “addressed” characteristics of their audience and at the same time wish to invoke for them certain roles.

Attempting to sketch an alternative approach, then, Ede and Lunsford (1984) go on to state that “It is the writer who, as writer and reader of his or her own text, one guided by a sense of purpose and by the particularities of a specific rhetorical situation, establishes the range of potential roles an audience may play” (pp. 165-166).

The addressed audience, the actual or intended readers of a discourse, exists outside of the text. Writers may analyze these readers' needs, anticipate their biases, even defer to their wishes. But it is only through the text, through language, that writers embody or give life to their conception of the reader. In so doing, they do not so much create a role for the reader—a phrase which implies that the writer somehow creates a mold to which the reader adapts—as invoke it. (p. 167)

In closing, Ede and Lunsford (1984) argue that this middle ground between the addressed and invoked viewpoints is necessary if we are to properly emphasize the roles of reader and writer in the making of meaning.

And Rubin (1984) adds his voice, saying that writers “analyze and invent but in varying ratios depending on the writing task. In any event, any kind of normal composition requires an audience, and this audience must be constructed abstractly in cognition, construed, imagined, fictionalized, represented” (p. 215).

These viewpoints speak quite directly to the rationale for the present study (based upon an earlier study—Roen & Willey, 1988), which attempts to determine *when* student writers might effectively attend to audience and asks them to consider their audience's level of knowledge about their topic. As the section below discusses, while researchers have done much to reveal why and in what ways writers do attend to audience, little empirical work has attempted to answer the questions of when student writers should attend to audience and what sort of audience analysis they should do.

### **Empirical Considerations of Audience**

As researchers have attempted to test and verify the wide range of theories about the composing process in general and about the role of audience in particular, studies have taken off in several directions.

Drawing heavily upon Piaget's theories of cognitive psychology, many studies

have experimentally investigated children's and young adults' development of social-perceptive skills and their abilities to "decenter" from their own perspectives in various discourse situations (among them: Alvy, 1973; Bragg, Ostrowski & Finely, 1973; Clark & Delia, 1976 & 1977; Delia & Clark, 1977; Piche, Rubin & Michlin, 1978—see Rubin & Piche, 1979, for a more complete overview). Such studies are far too numerous to detail here; therefore, several of the more indicative studies are summarized. And while insufficiently explaining the difficulties faced by college-age students as they attempt to consider, construct, or adapt to audiences, these studies lay important groundwork for later treatments and contribute to our understanding of the inadequacies of strictly cognitive-developmental models of the composing processes of those students.

Delia and Clark (1977), for example, tested six-, eight-, ten-, and twelve-year-old boys' abilities to construct oral messages for a variety of audiences and attempted to relate these abilities to levels of cognitive complexity and social perception; they sought to ascertain whether children differing in age and construct system complexity differ in their ability to spontaneously construe differences in the psychological states of listeners and to use those construals in making communicative choices. (p. 329)

The participants' cognitive complexity was first measured through a peer description task in which each child was asked to describe a peer whom he liked and one whom he disliked. The children were then divided into groups defined as relatively complex and relatively non complex. Next, participants were put through a "Multisituation Communication Task" developed by Alvy (1973): the children were asked to construct oral messages directed to varying audiences depicted on pairs of drawings—for example, a smiling, happy man vs. a frowning, angry-appearing man and similar threatening- vs. non threatening-appearing pairs. After constructing their messages, and while again viewing the drawings, children were asked to explain the choices they made. The results "provide



striking evidence for the progressive emergence, with age, of listener-adapted communication across childhood” (p. 339) that follows a developmental course the researchers describe in five “periods”: (1) relevant “characteristics in listeners . . . are not represented due to inadequate developments of social perception skills;” (2) such characteristics are perceived, but “their relevance to the communication task at hand is not drawn;” (3) the relevance of the characteristics is tacitly understood but is not considered to be controlled by the child; (4) “emergence of global, undifferentiated adaptional strategies”; (5) and finally, “global strategies are differentiated and refined as control over the communication code is progressively elaborated and integrated with the capacity to erect more dispositional and more refined understandings of listeners . . .” (p. 340). The researchers conclude that their

study provides persuasive evidence for the importance of differences in children’s cognitive complexity as an indicator of their relative level of development in the interpersonal sphere. Cognitively complex children consistently outperformed noncomplex children of the same age, and the amount of variance attributable to differences in complexity were frequently greater than that associated with age differences. (p. 343)

Including writing in their treatment, Scardamalia, Bereiter, and McDonald (1977), taught children in grades 4, 6, 9, and 11, via a videotaped demonstration, how to play a novel game. Experimental participants were also shown a videotape of one person’s ineffective attempts to explain the game to another person; the researchers thus hoped to sensitize participants to communications difficulties without providing them with any positive guidance or models for their own written task. While experimental participants expressed more essential ideas, the clarity of their presentation was not significantly affected. In addition, younger participants wrote more words, older ones fewer. The “Results suggested that an underlying growth in role-taking capacity manifests itself in

different surface characteristics of writing at different ages.”

Further building on this background, Kroll (1978) theorized that “mature audience awareness does not emerge full-blown” (p. 271) and hypothesized that “writing, because it created increased cognitive demands, lagged behind speaking in level of decentration” (p. 274). Kroll taught fourth-grade children how to play a game, and then asked the children to construct oral and written instructions on how to play the game. His results warranted the conclusion that “decentration in writing tended to lag behind decentration in speaking . . .” (p. 279).

In a later study, however, Kroll (1984a) achieved contrasting results when he studied nine-year-olds’ abilities to adapt persuasive messages to different audiences orally and in letters. The results were that “Few of the letters manifested either gross egocentrism or a blatant disregard for the readers’ needs” (p. 424). An important explanation, Kroll (1984a) considers,

is that the communication task used in this study provided children both with an appealing occasion for writing and with a plausible context for composing more than one message on the same topic . . . .Therefore, conclusions about children’s ability to adapt writing for an audience must be qualified by considering the familiarity and complexity of the tasks they are given to work on. (pp. 424-425)

The children were more comfortable, familiar with, and involved in persuading different audiences to adopt a puppy than they had been instructing different audiences in game play.

In fact, Chesky and Hiebert (1987) specifically tested how students’ familiarity with their topics—defined as low- and high-prior knowledge—affected the quantity and quality of their writing and paired those measures with writing for a peer vs. a teacher audience. As expected, high-prior-knowledge students produced quantitatively and qualita-

tively better essays than low-prior-knowledge students; there were no significant differences for audience.

Rubin & Piche (1979) added experienced adult writers, along with fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students, to their study, examining

the manner in which audience differences, realized as varying degrees of intimacy or familiarity with a writer, affect syntactic and strategic aspects of style in written [persuasive] messages. . . .[and] the extent to which the ability to engage in audience adaptation is a developmental phenomenon.

(p. 297)

Subjects wrote persuasive essays about glass recycling to three target audiences of varying degrees of intimacy to the writer; the essays were ultimately analyzed for their syntactic complexity and persuasive strategies. In addition, participants' social-cognitive complexity was assessed with an adaptation of the Metapersuasion Task (Howie-Day, 1977), "wherein subjects were asked to justify their choices between supplied pairs of persuasive targets" (p. 298). Each task was coded for its depth of social inference (pp. 297-298).

Rubin & Piche's results confirmed many previous findings, in that "Indices of syntactic complexity increased consistently with age. . . . Age produced monotonic increments both in persuasive fluency (number of appeals) and in persuasive repertoire (number of different appeal types)" (pp. 311-312). Target intimacy also affected the sorts of persuasive appeals used, and of particular interest is

the finding that the intermediate intimacy audience engendered the greatest variety of appeal types. It was apparent during elicitation sessions that this target posed a particularly confusing social perceptual task for many subjects. Perhaps engaging in this problem-solving situation had the effect of especially heightening sense of audience. Or perhaps in striving to accommodate to this unusual audience, writers employed a saturation

technique in which they deployed all the resources of their persuasive repertoires in the hopes that at least some of the strategies would prove effective. (p. 313)

This “unusual audience” may very well be a good description of the “general reader,” “educated audience,” “peers and instructor,” definitions of audience so often provided to students. And, of course, deploying *all* resources of any repertoire in any writing situation may not prove to be the best strategy. These findings further reflect the situation of the prewriting group in Roen and Willey (1988; discussed below) and may add to the explanation of its results.

Also delving into the relationship between social-cognitive ability and writing performance, and further considering the effects of discourse type on the results of studies, Rubin, Piche, Michlin, and Johnson (1984), Burleson and Rowan (1985), and Kroll (1985b) conducted studies that built upon and tested one another’s hypotheses. Rubin et al. (1984)

claimed to have obtained results that strongly support the relationship between social cognition and children’s narrative writing skill, asserting that their data “unambiguously sustain the view that social cognitive ability contributes substantially to overall quality of written composition. (Kroll, 1985b, p. 293)

Kroll (1985b) discusses these results within “the broad and multidimensional view of social cognition” that Rubin (1984) forwards, a view that suggests.

some social-cognitive abilities underlie all writing tasks, because all writing involves some sort of audience that the writer must try to understand or construct imaginatively . . . .Rubin’s theoretical perspective would lead one to anticipate relationships between specific kinds of social-cognitive abilities and various types of writing . . . . (p. 294)

Burleson and Rowan (1985), reacting to Rubin et al. (1984), state that social cognition is “the ability to acquire knowledge about the characteristics and qualities of an audience [or the] psychological mechanisms for obtaining knowledge about others” (pp. 39-40). They argue that “certain types of discourse (e.g. persuasion) are particularly dependent on certain types of knowledge (e.g. audience knowledge), and certain cognitive capacities (e.g. social-cognitive abilities) are relevant to the acquisition of the needed knowledge” (p. 41).

Burleson and Rowan (1985) therefore conducted a study that they claim contradicts Rubin et al. (1984); however, as Kroll (1985b) points out, their study is in no way a replication of the one his colleagues conducted: it uses college students rather than fourth-graders; the narrative writing task is self-expressive rather than literary; and the measure of social cognition is different from that used by Rubin et al.—all of which, according to Kroll (1985b), “makes it virtually impossible to draw any specific comparisons between” the results of the two studies (p. 295).

Kroll (1985b) then studied children’s social-cognitive abilities, as measured by a version of Crockett’s (1965) Role Category Questionnaire, and their performance on a variety of communication tasks: expressive/personal writing, literary/narrative writing, referential/expressive writing, persuasive writing, and finally, oral communication. Kroll’s results somewhat echo the findings of both Rubin et al. (1984) and Burleson and Rowan (1985); he found that social-cognitive ability related to oral communication but not to written persuasion, and social-cognitive ability related to performance on the literary/narrative task, but not to performance on the other writing tasks, and he spends some time exploring various explanations, including the different demands the tasks made upon the subjects based upon the relative complexity of these tasks (pp. 301-303). He concludes that

when a writing task taxes an individual’s information-processing capaci-

ties, we may not see social-cognitive competence manifested in performance. And conversely, successful performance (in terms of creating texts that are adapted to readers' needs) may not always reflect social-cognitive competence, because writers probably learn to employ many of the linguistic and rhetorical devices of audience-adapted writing without needing to consider their readers' characteristics, perspectives, or responses. (p. 304)

This is somewhat reflected in the study by Roen and Willey (1988): when students' information-processing capacities are severely stretched, such as they are in the "pre writing" portion of the writing process, the sort of social-cognitive competence called for by considering audience may not be manifested, as the results of Roen and Willey suggest.

Further attempting to draw a "'map' of the development of audience-adapted writing skills between the end of elementary school and the beginning of college" (p. 125), Kroll (1985a) asked students in grades 5, 7, 9, 11, and college freshmen to rewrite a linguistically complex story for an audience of third graders. Kroll read the story aloud to each group, showed a film based on the story to aid particularly in younger students' comprehension of the story, reread the story aloud once again, and then asked students to rewrite the story. The written texts were next scored for their linguistic, lexical, and syntactic complexity and their readability. The researcher also examined the presentation of the complex "moral" of the story in each.

Kroll's findings allow him to draw a "general conclusion" that students at all of the grade levels tended to reduce the complexity of the original story, thereby demonstrating a basic sensitivity to the needs of a young reader. With advances in grade level, however, students made the story increasingly less complex. (p. 136)

More intriguing, however, according to Kroll, was an analysis of students' rewriting strategies, which

suggested that younger students tended to be somewhat "word oriented" in their rewriting, whereas older students tended to be more "meaning oriented." Analysis of the moral section of the rewritten stories supported this distinction between the two types of rewriting strategies. For the students in this study, the shift from word-oriented to meaning-oriented strategies seems to occur in the junior-high-school years, roughly between grades 7 and 9. (p. 137)

Kroll explores several hypotheses as a result, including the possibility of a "decentering" process taking place sometime between grades 7 and 9; perhaps the resulting "enhanced capacity to take a detached view of language promotes a meaning-oriented approach to rewriting" (p. 137).

Having learned much about the development of social cognition and its relation to writing abilities, many researchers have turned their attention to young adults and college freshmen. Looking at students in grade 11, for example, Piche and Roen (1987) achieved results that affirm

the relationship between interpersonal cognitive complexity and audience or "person-centered" adaptedness. . . [as well as] a fairly clear relationship between interpersonal cognitive complexity and abstractness and more precisely normative measures of the quality of the writing, its overall persuasiveness, and its appropriateness of tone. (p. 79)

Rubin and Rafoth (1986) examine college freshmen and whether social-cognitive ability is a predictor of the quality of expository and persuasive writing. As may be expected from the results of earlier studies of discourse type, Rubin and Rafoth found that "social cognition played a more significant role in writing a persuasive message to a relatively

determinate audience” than it did in expository writing, which, the authors are quick to point out, does not mean that social cognition was inconsequential in the expository writing task; in fact, they found that “While composition length was the most powerful predictor of the expository quality ratings . . . the independent contribution of social cognitive ability was only about one-third less” than in the persuasive task (pp. 17-18). And Rafoth (1985) discovered that “proficient [freshman] writers were better able to make use of additional audience information than nonproficient writers” (p. 245); the notion of socio-cognitive maturity, of course, is implicit in any possible explanation. Also of interest, Rafoth found, was that “in the absence of additional audience information, proficient and non-proficient writers more closely resembled each other,” causing Rafoth to conclude that “both groups of writers favor more accessible, low-inference audience information over high-inference information” (p. 245). These results are, of course, similar to those achieved with younger children.

Taking this idea a step further, Hays, Brandt, and Chantry (1988) examined the impact of friendly and hostile audiences on high-school and college students’ argumentative essays. Audience adaptations were related both to overall writing performance and to participants’ levels of Perry Scheme performance, which chronicles the developments of “epistemic cognition” (pp. 392-393). “As expected, Perry Scheme score was a stronger predictor of paper scores than were demographic variables . . . . Also as anticipated, the stronger the essays were in shaping their messages for their readers . . . the higher their holistic scores on both writing tasks” (p. 406).

A number of studies of writers at work has contributed greatly to our understanding of the composing process and enlightened us to the role audience plays as writers shape discourse. At the forefront in examining the composing process have been Flower (1979, 1985) and Flower and Hayes (1980a, 1980b, 1981). For example, based on their observations of writers at work, Flower and Hayes (1980a) state that “A writer in the act



of discovery is hard at work searching memory, forming concepts, and forging a new structure of ideas, while at the same time trying to . . . [attend to] his or her purpose, audience, and language itself" (p. 21). They (1981a) discovered that "At the beginning of composing, the most important element is . . . **the rhetorical problem itself**" (p. 369). Writers must attempt to represent the problem to themselves; they must respond to or solve this complex problem, which includes the rhetorical situation, the audience, and the writer's goals. But because "people only solve the problems they define for themselves. . . . defining the rhetorical problem is a major, immutable part of the writing process" (p. 369). Writers' self-made goals "can be inclusive and exploratory or narrow, sensitive to the audience or chained to the topic, based on rhetorical savvy or focused on producing correct prose" (p. 379). And as they discover, inexperienced writers' goals are often narrow, chained to the topic, and based on producing correct prose.

The ineffectiveness of such goals result in what Flower (1979) terms "Writer-Based Prose," prose that is somewhat characteristic of a writer's thinking about and struggling with a difficult topic. Good writers, she found, eventually revise their Writer-Based Prose into Reader-Based Prose; not until that time do they consider their readers most fully. Poorer writers, she suggests, need to be allowed to produce such "Writer-Based Prose" and then taught to revise such prose while considering audience.

This suggests that audience is often what Flower and Hayes (1980b, 1981a, 1981b) term a "constraint" upon writing, one of the many constraints that affect writers' processes and ultimately shape the final product. Particularly important for inexperienced writers, they suggest, is learning to "juggle" constraints, and among the strategies by which writers may accomplish this is throwing a constraint away; writers may choose to "ignore their audience" (1980b, pp. 40-41). This point of view is echoed by Elbow (1987—discussed above) and empirically tested by Roen and Willey (1988).

Working from the foundation laid by Flower and Hayes (1980a), Berkenkotter

(1981) attempted to look at how expert writers thought about their audience as they worked. She developed a list of 25 “activities” writers engaged in, which she broke down into four categories:

- analyzing and/or constructing a hypothetical audience
- setting goals and naming plans aimed at a specific audience
- evaluating content and style (persona) with regard to anticipated audience response
- reviewing, editing, and revising for a specific audience

While Berkenkotter “had expected rhetorical training to affect a writer’s sense of audience,” she “discovered that two other factors play a more influential role than previous training. These are (1) how the writer perceived the composing task . . . , which determined the kind of discourse he or she produced, and (2) whether the audience was explicitly stated or was implied by the kind of discourse the subject chose” (p. 390). The writers in her study “frequently reconceived their task as they thought about their relationship to their audience . . . [and] developed new goals which changed the nature of their discourse” (p. 391). She further found that “writers who verbalized the goal of *persuading* their audience exhibited the greatest frequency and widest distribution of audience-related activities. . . . [whereas] the writers who decided to narrate their personal history showed the lowest frequency and narrowest distribution” (p. 393).

Kirsch (1990) also studied expert writers at work. In this study, writers composed letters to familiar audiences—one of the intended audiences held a position of authority over the writers, and the writers were in a position of authority over the other. Some of her findings are different from those of Flower and Hayes (1980a) or Berkenkotter (1981). Kirsch uses the term “interpretive frameworks” to describe the “highly individualized ways of approaching writing tasks” the writers in her study displayed (p. 220). She claims that these frameworks

appear to determine writers' sense of writing tasks, audiences, and contexts for writing. What is most striking about these frameworks is their force. Often, writers . . . perceived both audiences in similar terms, despite the difference in degree of authority. Writers were so predisposed to their individual ways of interpreting rhetorical situations that they sometimes neglected to consider differences between the two audiences. (p. 226)

Most striking of all, perhaps, Kirsch found that the "writers' level of expertise had little to do with how much an audience was considered and analyzed," (p. 226), which is a far different picture from that painted by Flower and Hayes (1980a) and Berkenkotter (1981). Indeed, the writers in her study considered audience to greatly varying degrees—one writer barely considered audience at all, at least in her verbal protocol. Kirsch concludes that for these writers at least, "factors such as self-confidence, authority of the writer . . . , perceived disposition of readers . . . , and one's conception of what the act of writing entails. . . all determine writers' degree of audience awareness" (p. 227).

Because, as the theory and research discussed above indicates, writers' awareness of their audience plays a major role in the shaping of discourse, and because inexperienced writers, it would appear, are better off ignoring audience as they generate material and then revising their "Writer-Based Prose" into "Reader-Based Prose," several studies of revision have also contributed significantly to understanding the role of audience in the composing process.

Several studies have shown that revising, in and of itself, does not necessarily improve the quality of inexperienced writers' essays (Bracewell, Bereiter, & Scardamalia, 1979; Bracewell, Scardamalia, & Bereiter, 1978; Bridwell, 1980). Effective revising, according to Flower, Hayes, Carey, Schriver, & Stratman (1986), must be "a distributed process of detection, diagnosis, and strategic action" (p. 53); through this

process, the writer must find insufficiencies and come up with effective revision strategies (de Beaugrande, 1979; Nold, 1981). Bridwell (1980), Faigley and Witte (1981), Monahan (1984), and Sommers (1980) have all confirmed that inexperienced writers revise primarily at the word or surface level. In Bridwell (1980) surface-level revising accounted for more than half of all revising done by students (p. 207); whereas in Faigley and Witte (1981) “About 24% of advanced students’ changes and 34% of expert adults’ changes were” changes in meaning, as opposed to the surface changes of inexperienced writers (p. 407). Both Sommers (1980) and Monahan (1984) noted similar differences between expert and non expert writers.

Rubin & O’Looney (1990) note those differences and suggest a specific course of action. They studied the revising of basic writers and argue that “basic writers’ revision processes can be [positively] affected by providing a mechanism whereby they evaluate their texts from the point of view of a specified audience” (p. 290). Those students who revised using an audience-centered procedural facilitation revealed “unusually sophisticated patterns of revision” (p. 290) for basic writers—that is, revision centered at the syntactic rather than at the word level. They conclude, “Between-draft procedural facilitation, therefore, may be an especially apt intervention . . . for encouraging basic writers to revise” (p. 287).

These studies make clear that attention to audience when revising may be one of the strongest and most effective ways of helping students revise more effectively.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The discussion above shows that despite the bulk of recent theories about the role of audience in composing and despite ongoing controversies over audience analysis, there is little research that has experimentally tested the effects of various forms of audience analysis at various points during composing. In response to this, Roen and Willey (1988) used an experimental design to test how students' explicit analysis of the informational needs of the audience affects the overall quality of students' writing and to determine whether this sort of audience analysis is more effective as a drafting or a revising activity.

Analyses of the results revealed that students who were asked to focus attention on the informational needs of audience as they drafted essays produced early drafts that were judged moderately but nonsignificantly higher in overall quality than early drafts produced by students who were not asked to focus attention on audience as they drafted. Analysis of the results also revealed that students who were asked to focus attention on audience as they revised essays produced revised versions that were judged substantially and significantly higher in overall quality than revised versions produced by students who were not asked to focus attention on audience and by students who were asked to focus such attention as they drafted. (pp. 81-82)

This study, then, is both a replication and expansion of Roen and Willey (1988). The initial study employed three groups: a control group that received no audience questions; a group that received questions before drafting group; and a group that received questions before revising. The present study employs a larger population and adds another experimental group that received audience analysis treatments both as drafting and revising activities. The research questions are as follows:

- (1) What are the effects of giving students a series of questions to answer about audience for their papers?
- (2) Does it make a difference whether these questions are given as drafting or revising activities or both?

## **METHOD**

### **Participants**

Voluntary participants were 76 students enrolled in seven sections of Freshman Composition and Literature, English 111, in the fall semester of 1989 at a small, private University in the Southeast. English 111 is the first semester, "regular-track" course of the university's two-semester requirement. Placement in the course is based on ACT or SAT scores: SAT of 350+, TSWE 35+, ACT 17+, indicate English 111 placement. In addition, a diagnostic essay is done during the first class session, the results of which may move students down into English 103, a basic reading and writing course.

### **Stimulus Materials**

All students in all seven sections received a written assignment (see Appendix A) that asked them to write about a topic they knew about and cared about; to consider an audience of peers; to consider a purpose, which is vaguely outlined on the assignment sheet; to consider modes appropriate to their purposes and topics; and to pay attention to the appearance of their essays.

Each student also received a set of directions that guided them through the drafting and revising of their essays and four questions all students answered in written responses (see Appendix B). In addition, one-fourth (19) of the students received four additional questions that focused their attention on their audience's knowledge as they drafted their essays; one-fourth (19) received the same questions for use as they revised their essays; and one-fourth (19) received the same questions for use both before and during drafting and revising.

### **Procedures**

Each of the 76 students was randomly assigned to one of 4 treatment groups: 1) No Audience Questions, 2) Audience Questions During Drafting, 3) Audience Questions During Revising, and 4) Audience Questions During Both Drafting and Revising. All 4

groups received identical directions and questions for both drafting and revising.

I distributed and read through the assignment and the drafting directions and questions in each of the seven sections and answered the few questions the students had. At this time as well, half the students received audience questions (those randomly assigned to the During Drafting and During Both Drafting and Revising Groups). I pointed out to students that they would undoubtedly notice that some students had four questions while others had eight, and assured students that that was as it should be. To attempt to minimize further any interference that could come about from students examining one another's question sheets, I assured the students that many of them would receive eight questions when I distributed new questions to them after the completion of the first versions of their essays.

After students had completed the first versions of their essays, which were evaluated by peers and instructors and graded and returned by instructors, I distributed a set of directions and questions for revising (see Appendix C), at which time those students randomly assigned to the During Revising and During Both Drafting and Revising groups received the additional four audience questions.

Every student in the study answered, in writing, every question that he or she received. This guaranteed that every student did receive the assigned treatment.

With both first and second versions of essays, I collected the essays from the instructors on their due dates, photocopied each essay, and returned them to the instructors on the same day. In this way the study did not interfere with instructors' normal classroom and grading procedures.

### **Design and Analysis**

The study employed a repeated measures design with one trial factor (version: original and revision) and one grouping factor (treatment: No Audience Questions, Questions During Drafting, Questions During Revising, Questions During Both Drafting



and Revising). To analyze data for the study, I used a one way analysis of variance of gain scores.

### Scoring

Two experienced college composition instructors used a six-point scale to score the essays holistically for overall quality. In addition, the instructors used the same six-point scale to rate each essay on organization, structure, development, grammar and mechanics, and attention to audience.

Essays were mixed so that during each of two grading sessions scorers would read a mix of original and revised essays, never scoring two versions of the same essay during one session. All identifying marks (students' names, instructors' names, dates, etc.) were removed from the essays, and each essay was assigned a control number, the meaning of which was not revealed to the scorers.

I did anchoring sessions before each of the two grading sessions at which the scorers and I discussed each of the variables they would be scoring. Attention to audience was the most difficult variable to agree upon, but the scorers finally settled on looking for such things in students' essays as direct pronoun references to the reader ("you" and "we"), and definitions and explanations of key terms and concepts the writer couldn't assume the reader would know (which most directly relates to informational needs the audience questions asked students to attend to). Many other possible measures of how "Attention to Audience" may be defined in an essay were discussed, but the scorers settled on these measures as being the most readily identifiable.

Also during the anchoring session, I had the scorers read and score four essays in common, then compare and discuss their scoring to try to ensure that the scorers were looking for the same things in the essays.

Scores from the two judges on each measure were added together to create a composite score, which was later subjected to statistical analyses. Pearson Product-

Moment Correlation coefficients indicated relatively weak interrater reliability for holistic scores on both original essay versions,  $r = .50$ ,  $p = .000$ , and revised versions,  $r = .23$ ,  $p = .021$ .

The rationale for holistically scoring for overall quality is as stated in Roen and Willey (1988): this scoring scheme is consistent with the grading practices of all instructors in the students' courses—instructors grade on the overall quality of students' papers. Because of the results of Roen and Willey (1988), however, I wished to attempt to identify which of the variables in a composition were most affected by attention to audience—organization, structure, development, grammar and mechanics, and attention to audience—and so employed the holistic scoring of these discrete elements despite the arguments against such “analytic reductionism” discussed by Cooper (1977), Myers (1980), White (1984), and cited by Roen and Willey (1988) to explain why that study didn't measure these variables.

## RESULTS

ANOVA results of the scores reported in Tables 1-6 revealed no significant main effect for version,  $F(3, 72) = .3324, p = .8020$ ; for structure,  $F(3, 72) = .1099, p = .9541$ ; for organization  $F(3, 72) = .3780, p = .7691$ ; for development  $F(3, 72) = .6377, p = .5932$ ; for grammar  $F(3, 72) = .1868, p = .9050$ ; or for audience  $F(3, 72) = .4697, p = .7043$ .

**Table 1**  
**Mean Holistic Scores for Treatments and Versions**

Treatment	n	Version					
		Original		Revised		Gain	
		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
<b>No Audience</b>							
Questions	19	6.26	1.45	6.58	1.30	0.32	1.34
<b>Questions</b>							
Before	19	6.42	1.92	6.63	1.21	0.21	1.65
<b>Drafting</b>							
Questions	19	6.37	1.92	6.84	1.42	0.47	1.87
<b>Revising</b>							
Questions at	19	6.42	1.87	7.16	1.64	0.74	2.00
<b>both times</b>							
Marginal		6.37	1.79	6.80	1.39	0.43	1.71

**Table 2**  
**Mean Holistic Scores for Variable and Version**

Treatment	Structure						
	n	Original		Revised		Gain	
		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
<b>No Audience</b>							
Questions	19	6.32	1.34	6.58	1.26	0.26	1.63
<b>Before</b>							
Questions	19	6.37	1.98	6.74	1.52	0.37	1.54
<b>Drafting</b>							
Questions	19	6.21	1.93	6.79	1.81	0.58	2.24
<b>Revising</b>							
Questions at	19	6.26	2.00	6.79	1.47	0.53	2.12
both times		—	—	—	—	—	—
Marginal		6.29	1.81	6.72	1.51	0.43	1.88

**Table 3**  
**Mean Holistic Scores for Variable and Version**

Treatment	Organization						
	n	Original		Revised		Gain	
		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
<b>No Audience</b>							
Questions	19	6.37	1.30	6.53	1.58	0.16	1.80
<b>Questions</b>							
Before	19	6.16	1.98	6.68	1.57	0.53	1.61
<b>Drafting</b>							
Questions							
During	19	6.11	2.11	6.74	1.91	0.63	2.45
<b>Revising</b>							
Questions at	19	6.05	2.20	6.95	1.54	0.89	2.62
both times		—	—	—	—	—	—
Marginal		6.17	1.90	6.72	1.65	0.55	2.12

**Table 4**  
**Mean Holistic Scores for Variable and Version**

Treatment	Development						
	n	Original		Revised		Gain	
		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
No Audience							
Questions	19	5.95	1.65	6.21	1.32	0.26	1.63
Questions							
Before	19	6.21	1.90	6.47	1.31	0.26	1.48
Drafting							
Questions							
During	19	5.89	2.10	6.89	1.88	1.00	2.65
Revising							
Questions at	19	6.74	1.88	6.95	1.84	0.21	2.27
both times		—	—	—	—	—	—
Marginal		6.20	1.88	6.63	1.59	0.43	2.01

**Table 5**  
**Mean Holistic Scores for Variable and Version**

		Grammar					
Treatment	n	Original		Revised		Gain	
		<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
<b>No Audience</b>							
Questions	19	6.00	1.89	6.79	1.23	0.79	1.69
<b>Questions</b>							
Before	19	6.16	1.61	6.53	1.35	0.37	2.03
<b>Drafting</b>							
<b>Questions</b>							
During	19	6.11	1.45	6.79	1.51	0.68	2.16
<b>Revising</b>							
Questions at	19	6.32	1.95	6.79	1.36	0.47	1.84
both times		—	—	—	—	—	—
Marginal		6.15	1.72	6.72	1.36	0.58	1.93

**Table 6**  
**Mean Holistic Scores for Variable and Version**

Treatment	Audience						
	n	Original		Revised		Gain	
		M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
<b>No Audience</b>							
Questions	19	7.05	1.72	7.21	1.44	0.16	2.09
Questions Before	19	6.68	1.97	6.63	1.50	-0.15	1.96
Drafting Questions							
During	19	6.89	1.59	7.58	1.89	0.68	2.36
Revising Questions at	19	6.95	1.68	7.26	2.05	0.32	1.38
both times		-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Marginal		6.89	1.74	7.17	1.72	0.25	1.95

A Student-Newman-Kuels a posteriori contrasts test indicated that while the Questions-Before-Drafting group had a slightly higher mean score than the other two groups on the original version of the essay, that difference was not significant. However, the Questions-During-Revising group had a significantly higher mean score on revised versions than the No-Audience-Questions group,  $p < .01$ , and the Questions-Before-Drafting group,  $p < .05$ . The Questions-Before-Drafting group, however, did not have a



significantly higher mean score on revised version than the No-Audience-Questions group.

## DISCUSSION

Building on the original experiment by Roen and Willey (1988), this study further tests the hypothesis that focusing students' attention on audience at any time during composing would affect the overall quality of their essays. This study also attempts to test the hypothesis that focusing attention on audience will differentially affect the overall quality of first and revised versions of essays. Since Roen and Willey (1988) found statistically significant results for their audience-during-revising group over their audience-during-drafting group, I also wished to determine the effects on an audience-during-drafting-and-revising group.

There are many possible factors contributing to the paucity of significant results in the present study. Foremost among statistical explanations is the low interrater reliability measures. A probable explanation is the scorers' lack of experience with holistic scoring. While each scorer is an experienced college composition instructor, both were new to holistic scoring. The original study by Roen and Willey (1988) used composition instructors with much experience holistically scoring freshman entrance exams at the University of Arizona. I had to spend a lot of time at the outset of the first scoring session discussing the concept of holistic evaluation with the scorers. During each anchoring session the scorers took much time and discussion agreeing upon scores for the uncommon readings, particularly those scores for attention to audience and grammar. Despite the thoroughness of each anchoring session, the scorers' lack of experience could have played a significant role in the results.

In addition, Roen & Willey (1988) asked their raters only to holistically rate each essay for overall quality, a scheme, as they argue, quite in keeping with the way essays are actually rated by composition instructors. The attempt to use holistic evaluation, then, to rate discrete elements of the written texts could also have played a significant role in affecting interrater reliability here. The raters, inexperienced with holistic scoring to

begin with, faced the difficult task of being asked to simultaneously ignore discrete elements of the essays to give an overall quality rating and to attend to certain discrete elements of the text that would explain their overall ratings. This does in a sense violate the purpose and strength of holistic evaluation, which, according to Cooper (1977), Myers (1980), and White (1984), “serves to reject analytic reductionism—the view that the whole is nothing more than the sum of its parts” (Roen & Willey, 1988, p. 80). Because of the number of previous studies that examined, for example, syntactic complexity, and other elements of compositions, my desire to see how awareness of audience affected elements of students’ essays was not entirely mislead; however, had a different set of raters been used, less confusion and greater interrater reliability may have been achieved.

A difference in the raters’ teaching experience may also have been a factor. One rater taught full-time at a small university with rather rigid entrance requirements; the second rater was an adjunct faculty member at an open-admissions community college. While impossible to measure, the second rater’s scores could have been higher than the first’s because of the raters’ differences in perceived quality of essays.

Setting aside for a moment the question of interrater reliability, there is also the possibility that there is less audience effect to be measured in the present study. To begin with, there was a great difference in uniformity of instruction between instructors who participated in each study. Roen and Willey (1988) drew their subjects from classes taught by graduate assistants who were all teaching from the same text and syllabus. Aside from the common text and syllabus, a rigorous and supportive preceptorship and supervisory program at the University of Arizona ensured a fairly uniform instructional approach among the many sections of freshman composition. Students from section to section were not just given the same assignment, then, but each instructor’s approach to that assignment was nearly the same.

No such uniformity existed at the university where this study was done. Two of the three instructors were using the same text (the *St. Martin's Guide to Writing*) and syllabus; the third used a different text (Elbow and Belanoff's *A Community of Writers*) and syllabus. While all three instructors agreed to use the same initial assignment, the fact is that the two instructors who used *St. Martin's* ended up pushing their students into narratives, which fit more neatly into their and the text's overall plan for the semester, while those students whose instructor taught using *A Community of Writers* ended up writing essays in more expository modes. I would like to look at differences yielded by mode; however, the number of students writing in expository modes in each of the treatment conditions is not nearly great enough to warrant inclusion in the present study.

Another possible explanation is similar to that discussed by Mangelsdorf, Roen, and Taylor (1990), whose replication of Roen and Willey (1988) using ESL students also failed to achieve significant results. As a best-case scenario, it is possible that the instructors in the present study, their texts, and their syllabi, deal more, more directly, and more thoroughly with audience than did those of Roen and Willey (1988). When Roen and Willey gathered their data the text in use was Crews' (1984) *Random House Handbook*; precious little is said about audience in this text. The syllabus in use at the time didn't dictate much in the way of peer revising groups or other collaborative activities that, it can be argued, increase student writers' awareness of their audience. Such activities were left to the discretion of individual instructors, and there is no way of knowing how many, if any, of the instructors involved in that study made use of any of these activities.

All instructors involved in the present study made much use of collaborative learning techniques. The two texts used by the instructors deal far more with such techniques and with audience directly than did Crews (1984); in addition, all three instructors' syllabi set aside considerable instructional time for peer revising groups. Indeed, peer revising groups were used by all three instructors on the essays gathered for this

study.

So there is a possibility that audience was already so much a part of these students' instruction that the four informational questions could yield no significant results between treatments. Through the variety of collaborative techniques employed by these instructors, students in all treatments were likely exposed to the informational needs of their readers throughout the writing process.

I would consider this the best-case scenario among the possible explanations because it would suggest both our texts and our instructional techniques have changed for the better during the last six years or so.

## Appendix A

### Essay Assignment for English 111, Fall 1989

Usually, people only write well about subjects they know and care about. Writing aims at making something already important to the writer important to the reader, too. For this essay, you are responsible for choosing the topic. You will decide what you most want to write about. Furthermore, you are responsible for sustaining the reader's interest in what you have to say. This is why most people, even professional writers, consider writing hard work: writers constantly have to earn their reader's attention and respect.

Your professor, of course, is one of your readers. English 111 is required by the university, and your writing will be evaluated. Remember, however, that your professor represents a wider, educated audience, which includes other members of your class. Your professor's comments are intended to inform you of your writing's effectiveness in terms of the expectations of educated readers. Readers appreciate clear, correct, lively writing that matters—first to you, and finally to them. So, your purpose is not simply to fill up the suggested number of pages; your purpose is to fully develop your ideas so that other people will understand them.

The subject matter of English 111 gives you access to ways of generating and organizing your ideas to explore and clarify them for yourself and ultimately to capture and keep your reader's attention. After you've generated ideas on your topic, you may discover that you have thought about your subject in several different ways. Given these patterns of thought, you may need to do one or more tasks. You may describe the details of an experience and then make observations and draw inferences to make its meaning clear to the reader. You may define terms essential to your subject so that your reader can understand exactly what you're writing about. You may classify different examples into types or divide your subject into parts so that you can explain it more effectively to your reader. You may illustrate an idea with specific examples to help your reader understand

why you think the way you do. Your essay will most likely include only some of this generative thinking. Through experimenting with various ways of approaching your subject, you will find the approach which best serves your intentions. This approach (through a mode or a combination of modes) will help you organize your points and details to support your central idea (assertion or thesis statement).

The finished essay should be about 700 words (three typed, double-spaced pages with one-inch margins). Your title should indicate the essay's subject and catch the reader's interest. Put essential information in the upper left-hand corner: name, course and section number, professor's name, and date.

## **Appendix B**

### **Before-and-During-Drafting Questions for Control and Revising-only Groups**

Please read this paper very thoroughly and follow all directions carefully.

While preparing to write this essay, you have considered several important factors. You've been asked to write about a subject you know well. You've considered several modes of composition, and have chosen the mode or combination of modes best suited to your topic. You've considered the purpose for writing this essay on this particular topic, and you've probably defined and done some thinking about the audience for your essay.

There are several more points that you can turn your attention to which can be of great help in the planning of your essay. Below you will find four questions that you should consider before you begin composing. Answer briefly but as specifically as possible the following four questions. Begin your written answers on the blank space at the bottom of this sheet, moving to the back of the sheet when necessary. Please answer all four of these questions before you begin assembling a draft.

1. Why did you choose this particular topic?
2. What is it about this topic that interests you enough to write about it?
3. How do you know what you know about your topic? (Experience, research, etc.)
4. Why do you feel that this topic is worthy of writing an essay about?



## Appendix C

### Before-and-During-Drafting Questions for Drafting-only and Both Groups

Please read this paper very thoroughly and follow all directions carefully.

While preparing to write this essay, you have considered several important factors. You've been asked to write about a subject you know well. You've considered several modes of composition, and have chosen the mode or combination of modes best suited to your topic. You've considered the purpose for writing this essay on this particular topic, and you've probably defined and done some thinking about the audience for your essay.

There are several more points that you can turn your attention to which can be of great help in the planning of your essay. Below you will find four questions and four additional points that you should consider before you begin composing. First, answer briefly but as specifically as possible the following four questions. Begin your written answers on the blank space at the bottom of this sheet, moving to the back of the sheet when necessary. And please answer all four of these questions before moving on to points five through nine.

1. Why did you choose this particular topic?
2. What is it about this topic that interests you enough to write about it?
3. How do you know what you know about your topic? (Experience, research, etc.)
4. Why do you feel that this topic is worthy of writing an essay about?

When the four questions above have been thoroughly answered, you should now focus on several features of your audience that may affect the writing of your essay. Again, please address these concerns as completely as possible on this sheet before you begin composing your essay.

5. Make a list of those things your readers most likely already know about your

topic.

6. Now list those things that your readers probably don't know, but which they will need to know in order to understand your essay.
7. Briefly explain how you decided what your audience's prior knowledge or lack of prior knowledge was about your topic. Try to explain how you knew what your audience did or did not know.
8. Now take a few moments to really consider your answers to points 5, 6, and 7 above. Now that you have focused on these concerns, how will you adapt your essay to accommodate your readers?

## **Appendix D**

### **Before-and-During-Revising Questions for Control and Drafting-only Groups**

Please read this paper very thoroughly and follow all directions carefully.

Now that the rough draft of your essay has been returned to you and you are set to begin revising, there are many things for you to consider to determine how best to revise your essay. Central among your concerns will be your professor's comments. Taking the time to carefully examine and consider all comments will help you along to a successful revision of your essay.

The following questions are designed to help you get focused on some of the important aspects of revision. Consider all these points before you begin revising, and place your written responses on this sheet.

Respond briefly but as specifically as possible to the following four questions. You may begin your written responses on the bottom of this sheet and go to the back when necessary.

1. Are there ideas you need to alter, add, or leave out? Briefly explain why or why not.
2. Do you need to make any dramatic changes in the essay's overall organization? Explain why.
3. Do you need to reorganize any of the paragraphs? How and why?
4. How aware do you need to be of mechanics, punctuation, and grammar as you begin your revision?

## **Appendix E**

### **Before-and-During-Revising Questions for Revising-only and Both Groups**

Please read this paper very thoroughly and follow all directions carefully.

Now that the rough draft of your essay has been returned to you and you are set to begin revising, there are many things for you to consider to determine how best to revise your essay. Central among your concerns will be your professor's comments. Taking the time to carefully examine and consider all comments will help you along to a successful revision of your essay.

The following questions and points are designed to help you get focused on some of the important aspects of revision. Consider all these points before you begin revising, and place your written responses on this sheet.

First, respond briefly but as specifically as possible to the following four questions. You may begin your written responses on the bottom of this sheet and go to the back when necessary.

1. Are there ideas you need to alter, add, or leave out? Briefly explain why or why not.
2. Do you need to make any dramatic changes in the essay's overall organization? Explain why.
3. Do you need to reorganize any of the paragraphs? How and why?
4. How aware do you need to be of mechanics, punctuation, and grammar as you begin your revision?

Next you should focus on several features of your audience that may affect your revision. Again, address the following points as thoroughly and specifically as possible, using the back of this sheet, before you move on to your actual revising.

5. Make a list of those things your readers most likely already know about your topic.

6. Now list those things that your readers probably don't know, but which they will need to know in order to understand your essay.
7. Briefly explain how you decided what your audience's prior knowledge or lack of prior knowledge was about your topic. Try to explain how you knew what your audience did or did not know.
8. Now take a few moments to really consider your answers to points 5, 6, and 7 above. Now that you have focused on these concerns, how will you adapt your essay to accommodate your readers?

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