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The Role of Audience Instruction in English 111 Portfolio

Composition and Audience Awareness and Adaptation in

Selected First-Semester Student Writing at Middle Tennessee

State University

Julie Dell Lumpkins

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
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Abstract

The Role of Audience Instruction in English 111 Portfolio

Composition and Audience Awareness and Adaptation in

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by Julie Dell Lumpkins

One of the most difficult challenges facing novice

writers is the conceptualization of audience. Students

tend to direct papers to their instructors whom they regard

as the primary audience as graders of their work. As a

result, they compose essays that are inappropriate for

achieving their writing purposes. Writing instruction that

focuses on audience as a central component of successful

writing is a means of addressing students' disregard of

audience.

Identifying audience awareness and adaptation as one

of five criteria for effective writing, the English 111

Portfolio Composition Program at Middle Tennessee State

University encourages first-semester students to adapt

their writing to chosen audiences. This study evaluates

the program's success at producing audience-centered

writers.

Julie Dell Lumpkins

Focusing on the place of audience in composition

theory and practice, the first chapters of the study review

the history of rhetoric from classical to modern times,

examine the teaching of writing in nineteenth- and

twentieth-century America, and survey the attention to

audience in selected composition textbooks. Subsequent

chapters examine the place of audience in writing

instruction in the MTSU Portfolio Composition Program and

report the results of an analysis of audience in the

writing of 145 students enrolled in Portfolio English 111

in 1998.

By expecting students to create audience-centered

essays, the MTSU Portfolio Composition Program reflects

current composition theory. Students in the program in

1998 demonstrated the ability to identify their audiences;

however, they did not always write to those specific

audiences in their essays. Student and teacher reflective

writing combined with more specific advice to students on

how to adapt language and content to targeted readers is

recommended.

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The inspiration for this dissertation came from English Professor Ayne Cantrell, who not only introduced me to the world of writing portfolios, but had a large part in shaping my teaching philosophy. I credit her with making me the teacher that I am today and I admire her both personally and professionally. I owe an enormous amount of gratitude to Dr. Cantrell for the many hours she spent making this dissertation readable, and to English Professor Bene Cox for her efforts in reading and scrutinizing this text.

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Glenn and Pearl Lumpkins, who sacrificed so much to assure that I achieved my educational goals and believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that I could do it.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Research suggests that one of the most difficult challenges facing first-semester English composition students in the conceptualization of audience for their papers. Students may demonstrate some awareness of various audiences for different types of writing, yet they are prone to direct papers to their writing instructors whom they regard as the primary audience as graders of their work. As a result, they compose essays that are misdirected or inappropriate for achieving their writing purposes. A means of addressing student writers' need to reconsider or expand their idea of audience is through writing instruction that focuses on audience as a central component of successful writing.

Students often use what Piaget would refer to as "egocentric speech" even in the earliest stages of composition (Rankin 75). Through this "egocentric speech," inexperienced writers are often preoccupied with themselves and with pleasing the writing instructor's scrutinizing eye, trying to find the right words, determining the right order to put those words together, and meeting the requirements of a writing assignment. With this pressure, many inexperienced writers in first-year composition

courses experience difficulties in reaction to the unfortunate pressures of their assumptions to compose only to meet an instructor's needs, not an audience's needs. Robert J. Bracewell, Marlene Scardamalia, and Carl Bereiter in "The Development of Audience Awareness in Writing" suggest that the conceptualization of audience occurs in children as young as four years of age as children are able "to adapt their speech in sophisticated ways depending on whom they are talking to" (3). Research on audience awareness in student writing is limited, but studies of collegiate literature classes indicate that students modify their writing depending on audience characteristics (Bracewell, Scardamalia, Bereiter 2-3). While students do show evidence of some audience awareness, their awareness is rather limited as they are able, for example, to "use a more informal style of writing for an audience of peers than for an audience of adults" (Bracewell, Scardamalia, Bereiter 3). Writing for the *Maryland English Journal* in 1997, Martha Rowe Dolly argues that the reason students find themselves overwhelmed by audience problems is that writing instructors and current writing texts have "settled for addressing only the basics of audience rather than exploring its complexities" (29). This superficial

treatment of audience does little to help students with the complex challenges of writing in composition classes and beyond, especially in the workforce.

The treatment of audience in writing classrooms and in current writing texts is cursory, addressing audience as a "perfunctory, preliminary 'step,' leaving any further analysis to students rather than helping them grapple with the particulars of their own writing situations" (Dolly 31). When asked to specify an audience, students often use the "general public" since it appears to be an easy group to target because students erroneously believe its members all share the same characteristics. Addressing the "general public" often leads to two potential problems, a lack of a defined writer's role and an undefined purpose because writers cannot be all things to all people. Since audience is an essential part of writing, without clearly defining audience, the remaining components of the rhetorical triangle--the writer and message--suffer equally.

The treatment of audience in current textbooks is equally as ambiguous as current audience instruction in the classroom, suggests Julie Drew in "Guessing Games: Envisioning Audiences for Dialogic Pedagogies." She argues

that current writing texts treat audience almost exclusively as a "homogeneous group" made up of "predominately middle-class white students who are presumed heterosexual" (63). The treatment of audience in textbooks is often reinforced by instructors who teach from textbooks and thus teach students (directly or indirectly) that audience is a unified, totalized group. Drew notes that since most students believe that "standard English" is the English of the educated, economically and politically powerful, then "everyone" fits into one audience (64). Students most likely recognize their audience as one group of people who represent the same beliefs, customs, and socioeconomic background.

Efforts have been made to address composition students' disregard for audience in their writing and to dispel the practice of defining audience as one homogeneous group. Since the 1980's, many writing teachers have combined a rhetorical composition theory that privileges audience with a writing-as-process pedagogy that teaches writing as prewriting, writing, and rewriting. Placing emphasis on the composing process of writing, instead of the finished writing product, has the potential of directing the student writer's need to define and adapt to

audience in the early stages of composing and to consider audience at all levels of revision.

A recent development in writing assessment also serves to promote the consideration of audience among student writers. The use of writing portfolios measures student achievement in collected writing (usually, but not always, a number of revised essays that students present as representative of their best work). A typical writing portfolio contains work with varying purposes directed at different audiences and includes writing that has undergone several drafts. Turning away from standardized testing and individually graded writing assignments, writing portfolio classes were created with the hopes of shifting classroom focus from written products to writing processes. It was this aim that eventually led Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff to create one of the first writing portfolio systems at the State University of New York. More portfolio instruction was to follow as colleges and universities across the United States adopted similar programs in hopes of creating a student-centered writing environment. A major benefit of this new type of instruction was the critical attention given to the rhetorical writing triangle of writer, message, and audience. Through the writing process,

portfolio writing courses aimed not only to put emphasis on what students were writing, but to whom they were writing as well.

Identifying audience as one of five criteria for effective writing, the English 111 Portfolio Composition Program at Middle Tennessee State University encourages first-year students to recognize the role of audience in the composing process and to adapt their writing to chosen audiences throughout five essay genres over the course of a semester. This program, co-created by English Professors Ayne Cantrell and Sushil Oswal, focuses on writing as process and emphasizes student-centered learning. Over the course of the fifteen weeks, students submit works in progress and teachers respond without the penalty of grades. Students then have an opportunity to address their writing inadequacies, including audience issues, on subsequent drafts for their writing portfolios, which are submitted for a grade at the end of the term. This study is the first attempt to measure the MTSU Composition Portfolio Program's effectiveness in teaching its students to be audience-centered writers. In order to evaluate the progress in this regard, the remaining chapters of this study will (1) focus on the role of audience in writing

instruction, generally, and in the MTSU's English 111

Portfolio Program, specifically, and (2) report the

findings of a study of student writing completed during

Fall and Spring 1998.

Chapter II, "The Role of Audience in Writing

Instruction," surveys the role of audience in the

rhetorical tradition. This chapter focuses on the

treatment of audience as a vital component in oral

discourse beginning with the fifth century B.C.E. and

continuing through the twentieth century and on the

attention to audience in textbooks that inform classroom

instruction. Chapter II also explores the theoretical and

practical aspects of teaching audience by reviewing the

literature on audience in the field of composition studies.

Chapter III, "Audience as a Component of Effective

Writing in the Portfolio Composition Program at Middle

Tennessee State University," chronicles the history of the

MTSU Portfolio Composition Program, including how the

program began, the requirements of the program, and the

specific aims the program seeks to accomplish. The chapter

concludes with an emphasis on the role of audience in the

program's pedagogy by examining the five ways audience

awareness is promoted.

A case study of two semesters of the English 111 Portfolio Composition Program at MTSU is detailed in Chapter IV, "A Study of Audience in Student Writing, MTSU Portfolio Composition Program 1998." With the approval of the MTSU Institutional Review Board, the research for this study is drawn from 145 randomly sampled student writing folders including their final portfolios, and the chapter attempts to determine if Portfolio Composition at MTSU plays a significant role in students' awareness of audience in their development as writers (See "IRB Approval Letter," Appendix 1, p. 138): This chapter examines how well students target and adapt to audience in their initial drafts, how writing teachers respond to students regarding audience issues in teacher responses to early drafts, and the extent to which, after receiving teacher feedback, students are able to revise their works in progress to achieve audience-centered writing. The theoretical basis is drawn from studies of researched sources about the role of audience awareness and adaptation in first-year writing programs.

In Chapter V, "Audience Instruction for the Future," the results of the study of student writing are analyzed to determine how Portfolio Composition instruction at MTSU can

be tailored to better meet the needs of the program's goal
of audience-centered writing. In light of current research
in composition theory and pedagogy, the steps of teaching
audience at MTSU are analyzed to determine aspects of the
program which require reinforcement or modification.
Finally, the last chapter addresses how the results of the
study are applicable to future portfolio writing
instruction at MTSU.

Chapter II

The Role of Audience in Writing Instruction

"Adopt an appropriate audience." Perhaps, these words
are the most overused and misunderstood in composition
writing courses by both instructors and students. Dean
Baldwin, scholar of rhetoric and composition, suggests that
audience analysis for first-year students is often a
confusing task since most students struggle to "exchange
certain [. . .] speech habits for parallel conventions
appropriate to college-level writing" (222). Many students
feel comfortable in using everyday speech in different
rhetorical situations; therefore, as they remain rather
unaware of other options for adapting their writing, they
write in the same manner they speak. Their writing
reflects their informal spoken language. While students
adapt unconsciously to different audiences when speaking to
a teacher, parent, friend, and the like, most first-year
writers lack the knowledge and experience of adapting their
writing to an appropriate audience. Even when students
acknowledge the need to define their readers, the
uncertainty of clearly defining an audience results in
their addressing only the basics, for example age and

gender, rather than exploring the complexities of targeted readers and effectively adapting to them. Instructors often become complacent with what Martha Rowe Dolly refers to as "students' superficial understanding and with current textbooks' cursory treatment of audience and purpose" (31).

Writing for the *College Composition and Communication* journal in 1979, Lisa Ede argues that composition instructors should place a strong emphasis on "the role of audience in discourse" ("On Audience" 291), yet as Peter Elbow explains using an address to a hostile audience as an example, situations exist when the timing of audience awareness becomes crucial in the scheme of writing:

> Admittedly, there are some occasions when we benefit from keeping a threatening audience in mind from the start [. . .]. Most commonly, however, the effect of audience awareness is somewhere between the two extremes: the awareness disturbs or disrupts our writing and thinking without completely blocking it. ("Closing My Eyes" 51)

Elbow suggests that writing becomes tangled if writers consider an audience too early in a writing situation, as

in their writing to someone who is intimidating. In this case, students often start thinking defensively and, thus, their minds are filled with thoughts of criticism by an audience; therefore, their writing is softened to avoid further confrontation (52). Elbow's claim for ignoring audience is not meant to undermine the need to write for an audience. Writing without an audience in mind produces weak writing, Elbow admittedly suggests, but the timing of audience awareness is the crucial consideration. Elbow describes audience as "a field of force," for the closer students come to writing, the more they think about audience, the stronger the pull the audience exerts on the creativity of students (51).

With a review of significant, available research from a wide range of teaching eras and pedagogies, the role of audience in writing instruction can be better understood. What is the role of audience in the rhetorical tradition? What is the role of audience in writing instruction in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America? What are the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching audience? How have contemporary composition textbooks shaped audience instruction in first-year writing courses?

Audience and the Rhetorical Tradition

The treatment of audience as a vital component in oral discourse has a long tradition in public affairs and education dating as early as the fifth century B.C.E. in Greek democratic courts in which the success of orators depended on audience persuasion. These orators were trained for their public careers by philosopher-teachers such as Aristotle (384-322 BC), who is known today as the "father of rhetoric." Since Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (c. 335 B.C.), the rhetorical tradition has always considered the nature of audience and motives most likely to influence a given audience.

Introducing three significant types of rhetorical discourse, Aristotle's outline of audience components and emphasis on the need for audience awareness serve as a cornerstone for all rhetorical theory. Outlining the major occasions for rhetorical speech (the legal, political, and ceremonial), he notes that rhetoric always includes an audience, whether a speaker is aware or not. Aristotle suggests that a common feature of all speakers is "magnitude [. . .] when praising or blaming and when prosecuting or defending themselves" (173). Part of Aristotle's motivation for creating *Rhetoric* was to counteract Plato's underestimation of rhetoric's persuasive

art. Even while still a pupil at Plato's Academy,
Aristotle opened his own school of rhetoric. His purpose
was to answer his contemporaries who accused rhetoricians
of being more concerned with words than with matter. Thus,
he sought to prove that rhetoric was a true art worthy of
being taught and considered as a vital discipline.

According to Edward P. J. Corbett, in *Classical
Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, Aristotle's approach to
rhetoric "is the recognition that probability is the basis
of the persuasive art" (599). An orator often based his
arguments on opinion, what people believed to be true.
While Plato found this theory to be a defect in the art of
rhetoric, Aristotle found opinions to be a necessity in
rhetorical situations. Aristotle's view of audience works
much in the same way, as he believed that people should
address others with opinion in a persuasive manner.
Patricia Bizzell, Bruce Herzberg, and Nedra Reynolds note
that Aristotle still seeks the most general, rhetorical
explanation for audience analysis as Aristotle's theory
"helps chiefly to determine the kinds of emotional appeals
that might be used" by a speaker or writer (3).
Aristotle's audience awareness lies within his rhetorical
theory: the three modes of proof—*pathos*, the appeal to

emotion; *logos*, the appeal to reason; and *ethos*, the appeal of the speaker's character. He suggests that all three appeals to an audience must be met for a speaker to be considered successful. Even with Aristotle's oversimplified juxtaposition of human nature, such as youth to old age, or lack of wealth to noble birth, he still maintains a continuing influence that can be seen in many contemporary authors' research and writing on audience.

Commenting on Aristotle's theories, scholars, such as Anne Scrivener Agee, note, "It is no exaggeration, then, to say that rhetoric is rooted and grounded in audience" (8). Agee's dissertation study "The Concept of Audience as a Tool for Composing and Interpreting Texts" (1989) directly links audience to Aristotle as he "would realize the Platonic philosophy of addressing the higher faculties while not overlooking the practical necessity of taking action in an imperfect world" (8). As noted by Agee, Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is the classic "culmination of a long series of developments in rhetorical theory," audience development being one of his most important contributions (70). While Aristotle's philosophic theory based on opinion, rather than truth, is somewhat simplistic, his rhetorical system of audience, subject, and rhetor

significantly captures the concept that Andrea A. Lunsford and Lisa Ede refer to as "dynamic, interlocking forces" (44). In "Audience: An Introduction to Research," Ede suggests that while Aristotle remains an authority of audience through his common sense and knowledge, modern researchers of audience have discovered "information about the audience directly, through controlled experimentation" (142). The end result is the same in most cases: audience is best learned through observation and practice (Ede 142).

The most obvious questions may be "What is meant by audience?" and "What are assumptions about the nature of audience?" In *Writing Without Teachers*, Peter Elbow proposes this thought about audience to student writers:

> Imagine you are blind and deaf. You want to speak better. But you are in perpetual darkness and silence. You send out words as best you can but no words come back. You get a few clues about your speaking: perhaps you asked for something and didn't get it; or you got the wrong thing. You know you did something wrong. What you aren't getting is the main thing that helps people speak better: direct feedback [. . .] a

sense of how different people react to the sounds

you make. (76)

Thus, not only is audience an important part of presenting

information, but audience response is equally important in

making sure a message has not only been received, but

received correctly, the way the speaker intends. Elbow's

point reflects Aristotle's idea that writers will seek to

serve their audience's self-interest as well as their own,

but the writer still has little control over how his/her

audience will react since audience members may perceive

their self-interests differently (*Rhetoric* 22).

In Aristotelian terms "audience" points to a concept

that Douglas B. Park refers to as the "final cause for

which form exists, to the purposefulness—or its lack—that

makes a piece of prose shapely and full of possibility or

aimless or empty" (247). In an "'Eternal Golden Braid':

Rhetor as Audience, Audience as Rhetor," Theresa Enos

suggests that the concept of audience and purpose are

classical approaches that are at the beginning of writing

and of thinking (100). In this respect, audience awareness

could be described in Lev Vygotsky's terms "one's inventive

universe [. . .] in which comes a generative ethos that

makes possible interlocking identification among writer,

subject, and audience" (Enos 100). Plato, in the *Phaedrus*, holds true to classical values of audience as he describes an audience as "types of souls" who are affected by emotion, logic, and ethics (147).

Following Ancient Greek ideas, the major part audience played in rhetorical discourse remained much the same for the Romans, varying only with Cicero's expansion to a six part discourse (the *exordium*, *narratio*, *partitio*, *confirmation*, *refutatio*, and *conclusion*), which became the theory for the Middle Ages and thereafter. When he was only nineteen years old, Cicero (106-43 B.C.), a Roman politician, philosopher, and great orator, composed at least seven treatises and numerous epistles and orations. For Cicero, rhetoric was not merely based in opinion as noted by Aristotle, but in political science, to broadly include all arts (Lindemann 44). Perhaps Cicero's greatest addition to the school of rhetoric is believed to come from *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, a work credited to Cicero for centuries. In *Rhetorica* Cicero suggests three levels of style: high, middle, and low. With these styles the orator was to choose the appropriate style to suit occasion and audience. Cicero's rhetoric was concerned with audience, as Charles Sears Baldwin's reading of Cicero's *De Oratore*

(55 B.C.) indicates: "The three styles of speaking arise from the orator's three objects: to prove, to please, to move. Aptness, then demands adjustment, not only to the speaker and the audience, but also to the object" (57). While Cicero was concerned with an orator's understanding of emotions, audience was only a primary concern in selected instances when the minds of the audience should be excited by powerful oratory. Audience, in this respect, had a much more limited role in Roman, Ciceronian rhetoric than in Aristotelian theory.

In the medieval era when Christianity became a central focus of the Western Hemisphere, the role of a rhetorical audience shifted from an Aristotelian style with an emphasis in audience participation to a more speaker-directed style; this change was due to an absence of public occupations and the influence of the Church. Christianity contributed a significant understanding of audience as scripture provided the source of invention. The characteristics of an audience were determined by vices and virtues, whereas rhetoric was more of a procedure than a means of persuasion. The medieval rhetoricians tended to emphasize style due to the influence of Christianity, where

"biblical truths were inspired or invented by God"

(Lindemann 46).

The most influential rhetorician during medieval times

was Saint Augustine (A.D. 354-430). As Augustine converted

to Christianity in 386, he became a monk and at first used

his rhetorical training to defend Christian doctrine.

According to Erika Lindemann, Augustine "not only upheld

classical learning but also put it to use in the study of

Christian texts, thereby redirecting rhetoric from being a

public, oral form of persuasion to a private, written form

of literary interpretation" (46). This private form of

persuasion changed the role of audience from an

Aristotelian notion of a participatory audience to a

medieval notion of audience as simple receptor. During

this time, Augustine argued that rhetoric could enhance

biblical interpretation. Specifically in *De Doctrina*

Christiana (A.D. 396-427), Augustine challenges his

audience to use rhetoric as a useful tool for interpreting

spiritual truths (Lindeman 46).

Perhaps one of the greatest developments during this

period was the treatment of rhetoric both as an art and an

academic subject. Since Augustine had read Cicero and was

familiar with Plato and Aristotle, he challenged the

thought that there was "no value in pagan, classical learning" (Lindemann 46). Augustine became instrumental in the treatment of rhetoric. As art, rhetoric served clergy during the medieval period and became a practical tool in court and diplomatic transactions. As an academic subject, rhetoric focused on two arts: letter writing and preaching. These two arts dominated Western civilization throughout the Renaissance, until the eighteenth century.

The next major shift in the concept of audience occurred in the eighteenth century. Stuart C. Brown and Thomas Willard's study of rhetorician George Campbell's contribution to audience suggests that Campbell (1719-96) reshapes the classic definition of audience as supplied by some of the great Western thinkers such as Aristotle and Plato (58). Likewise, scholar James Berlin believes that Campbell becomes the new Aristotle, "America's philosopher of rhetoric in the nineteenth century" (18). While upholding many ideas of classic rhetoric, Campbell was the first to lend a scientific approach to rhetoric by incorporating behavioral sciences.

Campbell is best known for reconnecting a relationship between rhetoric and psychology, "between the arts of eloquence a speaker uses and their effect on an

audience"(Lindemann 49). Campbell's *Philosophy and Rhetoric* (1776) established rhetoric as a process of change in an audience, and noted that rhetoricians must analyze the audience they hope to influence. According to Corbett, Campbell was significant because he "ventured the notion that rhetoric could have an end other than to persuade" (623). Campbell, in this respect, advanced the idea that rhetoric, or "eloquence" as he calls it, should enlighten, please, move, and influence. Mirroring much of Cicero's ideas, Campbell is perhaps best remembered for establishing the criterion for good writing as "reputable, national, and present," that is, writing that adapts to different audiences and successfully reaches its purpose (Corbett 623). Berlin believes that a large part of the still popular product oriented way of audience instruction known as current-traditional rhetoric (writing instruction that emphasizes product, not process) is due in large part to Campbell's rhetorical movement (18). Current-traditional rhetoric, like Campbell's theory, suggests that writing should adapt to its end. In other words, a writer should be concerned with the final writing product and the audience's emotional outcome, instead of the writing

process and the audience's thoughts while still engaged in reading.

The link between classic and twentieth-century rhetoricians comes from a combination of rhetoric and poetics, best demonstrated by Hugh Blair (1718-1800), Regius Professor of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres at the University of Edinburgh. Blair was a part of a rhetorical movement in which rhetorical principles were not illustrated through Greek and Latin models, but through the interpretation of English literature. Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres* (1783) was widely popular as he presented classical and contemporary rhetoric, reviewed grammar, and explained rhetorical principles through the prose of Swift. According to Lindemann, perhaps Blair's greatest addition to the school of rhetoric is the fact that he never focuses "merely on style, plain or ornate, but on culture, on human beings and how they use language to communicate with different audiences for different purposes" (51).

Campbell and Blair's significant additions to rhetorical theory shaped the thought of twentieth-century rhetoric. Twentieth-century scholars have concentrated on using rhetorical traditions, while reinterpreting them to

signify the role of human communication. Two of the most significant scholars of the century are Kenneth Burke and James Kinneavy. Philosopher Kenneth Burke (1897-1993) had the greatest impact on twentieth century rhetoric as he asserted that "rhetoric is a function of language that enables human beings to overcome the divisions separating them" (Lindemann 54). In *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1969), he expands the concept of rhetoric to include means of cooperation among people and is concerned with giving motives to human actions. Using the term "motive" as synonymous with "situation," Burke approaches human motivation through the analysis of drama using act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose for examining human motivation. In connection with audience, Burke is the first to examine human relations in terms of spoken language and nonverbal communication. He suggests that adapting to an audience through language is as equally important as connecting using nonverbal communication. According to Lindemann, Burke's major contribution to rhetoric is "his attempt to broaden its scope and to connect all acts of language to the social fabric of the culture in which they concern" (55). Most importantly, Burke focuses on rhetoric's importance through an age of technological advancements.

He suggests, that human beings act out the drama of life with one another, using language purposefully to communicate thoughts to an audience (Lindemann 56).

Much like Burke, James Kinneavy stands out in the twentieth-century as a rhetorician who brings together classical and contemporary rhetoric. His Aristotelian theory replaces the word *rhetoric* with *discourse*. In *A Theory of Discourse* (1971), he revises the traditional classification of mode to include description, evaluation, classification, and narration. He suggests that people purposefully practice discourse in order to successfully communicate ideas to a specific audience. Highlighting aims of rhetoric, Kinneavy suggests that a writing purpose determines everything about discourse. For Kinneavy, rhetoric represents the use of language to realize certain purposes in communication.

Audience and the Teaching of Writing in American Colleges

A. Writing Instruction in 19th and 20th Century America

The role of audience in writing instruction can best be understood by examining writing instruction in American colleges in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Perhaps there has been no greater influence on current writing curriculum than that of Roman rhetorician

Quintilian (A.D. 35-100). Much in the same school of thought as Cicero, Quintilian's insistence on morality as well as intellect has dominated writing instruction from the Middle Ages throughout the twentieth-century. The first two books of *Institution Oratoria* (96 A.D.) detail a model for training ideal orators of strong moral character. To practice strong moral character, orators were schooled in grammar, taught by imitating models and speaking correctly by interpreting classic works. Quintilian instituted a method of instruction beginning with grammar and progressing to rhetorical theory. His influence on curriculum has been so great that many contemporary writing courses in American colleges continue to use his hierarchy of instruction in the classroom.

In "A Brief History of American Composition Studies," R. Gerald Nelms notes the social changes in education during the mid-nineteenth century that caused "significant pedagogical problems" in the classroom and in academia (355). According to Nelms, the growing enrollment rate, lack of trained teachers, and division of curriculum into individual departments created different expectations on students in all academic areas. Gone were the days before 1800, where one teacher taught a class of ten young men in

all disciplines (Nelms 355). Perhaps, composition studies
were impacted by this "belletristic movement" most of all
as the late nineteenth century brought an era in which the
purpose of obtaining a college degree was no longer for
leadership, but for social advancement" (Nelms 355-56).

Early in the nineteenth century, a lack of emphasis on
oratory discourse and audience awareness occurred with a
focus that Nelms describes as the seven main features of
current-traditional rhetoric: the product, the reduction of
the textbook, the absence of theoretical rationale, the
analysis of discourse, the division of prose, the
classification of discourse, and the emphasis on grammar
(356-57). Another key factor that influenced the decline
in the emphasis of classical rhetoric was due in part to
the changing academic profile of composition instructors.
Prior to 1975, most collegiate English instructors were
trained in literature not in rhetorical theory, a
rhetorical principle illustrated through Hugh Blair's
Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres (Nelms 357).
Harvard College, which had established the Boylston
Professorship of Rhetoric and Oratory in 1806, became the
model for other colleges to emulate. Not only did
rhetorical instruction at Harvard shift from speaking to

writing, but there was an "increased attention to literary exempla" from which rules for correct grammar, style, and organization "were taught more and more prescriptively as the century went on" (Bizzell, Herzberg, and Reynolds 4). The study of literature as a separate discipline adopted the focal point of English studies at Harvard when Harvard's first English Professor, Francis Child (1850), spent over twenty years developing a literature curriculum; consequently, composition at Harvard became a "second-class subject and [. . .] rhetoric was hardly mentioned in the English Department" (Bizzell, Herzberg, and Reynolds 4). This growing emphasis on teaching literature rather than rhetoric shaped writing instruction in American colleges for the remainder of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century.

The separation of literary studies and writing instruction in departments of English was complete by the 1940's (Bizzell, Herzberg, and Reynolds 6). Concurrently, departments of speech in American colleges were increasing and adopting the responsibilities of teaching historical rhetoric and its concerns, including "response to audience" (Bizzell, Herzberg, and Reynolds 5). Writing instruction was greatly influenced by New Criticism since there was an

emphasis on analyzing literary texts as complex structures

of meaning (Bizzell, Herzberg, and Reynolds 6-7). Also

with the 1940's came a concentration on the current-

traditional model which treated the relation between

language and thought too mechanically (Bizzell, Herzberg,

and Reynolds 7).

During the late 1940's with the creation of the

Conference on College Composition and Communication came an

effort to include semantics and linguistics as an essential

part of national English Ph.D. programs. At the same time,

the conference sought to improve working conditions for

part-time graduate teaching assistants who were beginning

their teaching careers. Thus, the beginning of modern

composition studies with an emphasis in New Criticism led

to a return to classical texts in the 1960's, which had

been studied only rarely in English departments until this

point. A renewed interest in the rhetorical classics led

to an increased interest in the stages of writing,

specifically the classical model consisting of invention,

arrangement, style, memory, and delivery (Bizzell,

Herzberg, and Reynolds 7). This attention to the classical

model led to Gordon Rohman's reemphasis in the pre-writing

stages of an essay. Invention and arrangement became

preliminary stages of writing once again, and students were encouraged to "personal writing styles that were honest and unconstrained by conventions" (Bizzell, Herzberg, and Reynolds 8).

The 1970's created an interest in psycholinguistics, a perspective in which the "writing" process was changing to the "composing" process due to the pioneering work of Janet Emig who studied the composing processes of twelfth graders. A new emphasis on the cognitive activities of writing was encouraged, and a number of writing invention techniques were created to guide a student "through the optimal composing process" (Bizzell, Herzberg, and Reynolds 8). New research discovered that there was, in fact, more than one successful way of composing and the composing process no longer seemed as linear as previously thought. Instead, composing became much more recursive and hierarchical (Bizzell, Herzberg, and Reynolds 8).

In the 1980's, writing scholarship focused on a social theory of writing, which gave greater emphasis to audience. James Kinneavy's modes of discourse (1971) served as an important approach to rhetoric in which he classified rhetorical situations "according to their emphasis on the writer (expressive), audience (persuasive), subject matter

(referential), or verbal medium (aesthetic) (Bizzell, Herzberg, and Reynolds 10). Kinneavy's theory became the most influential work in the 1980's. Historical studies of rhetoric also became important during this decade. Scholars, such as Andrea Lunsford and Lisa Ede, drew from Aristotle's theory of argument that offers ethical, logical, and well as pathetic appeals (Bizzell, Herzberg, and Reynolds 11).

Late twentieth-century scholarship demonstrates a change from the pedagogy of current-traditional rhetoric to new rhetoric in many composition classrooms across the United States. The transformation from current-traditional rhetoric to new rhetoric created a shift from writing seen as a product with an emphasis on form and correctness to a focus on writing as process. This paradigm shift, occurring in the 1980's, was a result of educators' recognition of writing process theory and the results of teaching the writing process in the classroom. Current-traditional instruction had created teacher-centered classrooms where audience, purpose, thesis (the global components of writing) were teacher-centered with less freedom given to a writer and students wrote for their teacher, what Linda Flower and colleagues refer to as

"writer-based prose, instead of reader based" (*Reading-to-Write* 5). Prior to the shift out of the five classic divisions of rhetoric (invention, arrangement, style, memory, and delivery), the major focus of writing instruction was on style with an emphasis on correct grammar. After the shift, new rhetoric reclaimed Aristotle's invention as the key component of writing instead of style as previously taught in current-traditional pedagogy.

B. Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Teaching Audience

As early as 1970, major universities across the United States began to challenge the pedagogy of current-traditional rhetoric and move toward a pedagogy of the new rhetoric. A collection of essays entitled *Options for the Teaching of English: Freshmen Composition* published in 1978 was one of the first of its kind to draw rhetorical perspectives of teaching composition from over eighteen major universities and colleges in America. While now outdated by almost twenty-five years, composition programs of study at that time shared one common idea: "The only way anyone ever learns to write is by writing a great deal for a clearly defined audience" (Neel v).

What has been and continues to be expected of students as far as audience analysis is concerned? Russell C. Long in "The Writer's Audience: Fact or Fiction?" suggests that audience instruction remains traditional but unrealistic as students are often told to write to an audience, but consider that audience to be "the teacher who puts the grade on the piece of writing and ultimately on the student's performance in the class as a whole" (73). Writing instructors share similar expectations of how audience should be addressed by their students. Helen Rothschild Ewald refers to this idea as "the crucial component of a rhetorical situation" in which students are expected to recognize that "the reader may do as much to make meaning as the writer" (147). Using Linda Flower and John Hayes' audience research, Ewald agrees that reading is a constructivist process rather than a receptive process, whereas the reader is equally responsible as the writer for a meaning in writing (147-48).

In determining to what degree writing instructors should stress audience awareness to first-year writers, Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford's in their 1984 article "Audience Addressed/Audience Invoked: The Role of Audience in Composition Theory and Pedagogy" distinguishes two

audience types: invoked and addressed (155). In regard to the "audience addressed" perspective, Ede and Lunsford see this method as a reaction against the current-traditional paradigm in which there is a shared assumption that the writer's knowledge of an audience's "attitudes, beliefs, and expectations is not only possible (via observation and analysis) but essential" (156). Instructors who incorporate the "audience addressed" method in their classrooms have set the expectation of "real-world" writing for their students (156).

Another expectation of writers about audience is through a process which Ede and Lunsford describe as "audience invoked" (160). Those who envision an audience as invoked "stress that the audience of a written discourse is a construction of the writer [. . .] but [. . .] that writers simply cannot know this reality in the way that speakers can " (160). Walter Ong's "The Writer's Audience Is Always Fiction" theoretically outlines the idea of an "invoked audience." According to Ong, an instructor wants his or her students to create an audience cast of some type, and likewise the audience must fictionalize itself, "play the role in which the author has cast him" (12). Ong notes it is quite misleading for an instructor to expect

students to "deal with an audience," since a writer does not quite address an audience, but instead writes to or for readers (10-11). He notes an essential difference between audience and readers:

> "Audience" is a collective noun. There is no such collective noun for readers, nor, so far as I am able to puzzle out, can there be. "Readers" is a plural. Readers do not form a collectivity, acting here and now on one another and on the speaker as members of an audience do. (11)

Despite his emphasis on fictional narrative rather than on expository writing, Ong's argument suggests that students collectively consider all members of their audience to be demographically alike. Thus, students believe by identifying, for example, a group of female adults between the ages of twenty and forty that all women in that category share the same characteristics. With audience expectations placed on them, students are often not able to recognize that the "intended readers of a discourse, exists outside of the text," conclude Ede and Lunsford; in other words, as Ede and Lunsford suggest, students are not always taught how to anticipate readers' needs, know their biases, or defer to their wishes ("Audience Addressed" 167). It is

only through the text, "through language, that writers embody or give life to their conception of the reader" ("Audience Addressed" 167). Thus, a complete understanding of audience for teacher and student, according to Ede and Lunsford, involves "audience addressed, with its focus on the reader, and audience invoked, with its focus on the writer" (167).

Turning from a theoretical discussion of the concept of audience to the practical aspects of teaching audience and audience revision, three key components of audience instruction must be considered: (1) students' audience awareness and analysis, (2) their identification of and adaptation to audience in their writing, and (3) their ability to revise audience choices. Awareness, adaptation, and revision are challenges for students in a first-year writing course since they are inexperienced writers and usually seek to please their writing instructor. Writing for the *Journal of Basic Writing*, David Rankin in "Audience and the Composing Process" (1981) notes that most inexperienced first-year writers in traditional classrooms are "too often and too quickly preoccupied with what is assumed to be the ultimate audience: usually the teacher, imagined as a critic set to correct what is about to be

written" (75). Since the traditional classroom often holds
learning as teacher-centered, despite efforts of students
to be creative, they "still feel the pedagogic eye peeking
over their shoulder" (75). In this respect, students only
recognize their teacher, ultimately, as their audience.
Thus, their awareness of audience is limited to a sole
audience member, the teacher.

While instructional methods for teaching writing often
differ from teacher to teacher, a student's struggle with
audience is often much the same as other students. In
Writing with Power, Peter Elbow notes that first-year
writers often find it difficult to write for an audience
especially those who perceive their audience to be experts.
Using a metaphor of swimming, Elbow claims

> When you write for a teacher you are usually
> swimming against the stream of natural
> communication [. . .] but in writing an essay for
> a teacher, your task is usually to explain what
> you are still engaged in trying to understand to
> someone who understands it better. You seldom
> feel you are writing because you want to tell
> someone something. (219)

Furthermore, Elbow suggests that the writing-to-the teacher approach to composing is a basic process, one in which the students are participating in "audience-oriented" writing (*Writing with Power* 191). Audience-oriented writing is instruction aimed toward leading students to produce a particular effect in their writing. Elbow describes this effect in hypothetical terms as "get-the-results writing" where "unless the words have that effect, you won't get the money or the contract or the job, you won't get into college, no one will come to the meeting" (*Writing with Power* 192). He notes the opposite extreme as being the "get-it-right" approach in which a writer does not care if his or her readers like the prose or not (192). This composing process sometimes allows students the satisfaction of knowing they need only please themselves. Elbow comments that in using the "get-it-right" technique "Maybe the writing will in fact go to the readers; maybe they'll like it; that's nice. But if they don't, that's their problem, not yours" (192). Both "get-the-results" writing and "get-it-right" writing are pragmatic, but a problem can occur if an instructor is not willing to allow students to experiment between the two writing styles or if students write only to please their instructor. Either

way, the result will be the same: a clear need for audience awareness.

Writing teacher Carol Berkenkotter outlines one particular case study of the way in which students are able to create and revise their audience choices. Her study presents an important factor about teaching audience adaptation to students that is most often overlooked by academia. Berkenkotter suggests that audience adaptation for students depends on a writer's personality, maturity level, and his or her ability to recognize and correct writing problems (2). Writing for the *Journal of Basic Writing*, Ann E. Berthoff comments that most students see revision of audience or any global writing issue as "taking another swing at the ball or shooting again for the basket" (19). She suggests that language is often viewed as a window, which keeps the writer from enjoying the immediate vision. Her corollary is that the best writing instructors "can do is to teach window washing, trying to keep the view of what is 'really there' unobstructed by keeping the prose clean and clear" (19). So, how can instructors teach a "clean and clear" prose without becoming an editor? Also, how can audience and the revision process become a natural part of classroom instruction?

Once students begin to recognize audience awareness in their composing processes, the ways in which they analyze an audience for and adapt to an audience in their writing become the next challenges. Audience instruction is a key component in helping students to recognize the importance not only of identifying an audience but adapting to that audience as well. According to Ong, one specific way audience adaptation is taught in American colleges is by referring to an audience as a fictional group of people who become representative of one group; in other words, the same characteristics are thought to be shared by the same group (10). Approaching audience as a fictional whole, audience is taught in composition by a method of answering questions such as "What is the educational level of my audience?" "What age, gender, and race is my audience?" "How much does my audience already know about my topic?" This group of questions is aimed at an audience's collective traits, but as James Porter suggests, this approach "nevertheless focuses on actual readers external to the text or what reader-response critics have termed the 'real reader'" (2).

Porter's audience analysis study *Audience and Rhetoric: An Archaeological Composition of the Discourse*

Community (1992) outlines the most common way that audience has been and still continues to be taught. He notes that a common dictum in composition and rhetoric is based solely on audience demographics, a common sense treatment that "relies on a speech communication model that views audience as the physically real receptors of the [speaker's] discourse" (4). Porter claims that a problem in teaching audience in such a fashion is "That while it may adequately describe interpretive activities (e.g., reading, voting), and be suitable for speech occasions, it does not describe audience from the point of view of the writer or speaker producing discourse" (4). Porter further notes a mistake that many contemporary composition texts and instructors make is in assuming that the construction of the audience image is an imaginative activity. Such approaches, he says "assume that the writer has considerable imaginative capability to begin with—that, in effect, the writer already possesses the image of the audience that the questions are designed to help the writer reconstruct" (5). In other words, questions can only be answered by writers who already know the answers (Porter 5-6). This common teaching method, referred to as "real-reader heuristics" by Porter, is common in composition classes. Using this

approach, the instructor proposes audience analysis questions, and students try to answer the questions. Yet, as Porter acknowledges, "the quality of those answers is only as good as their [students'] prior understanding of audience" (6).

Another pedagogical approach in American classrooms to teaching audience is a concept referred to by Ruth Mitchell and Mary Taylor as "the audience-response model" (250). Writing for *College English* in November 1979, Mitchell and Taylor outline the "audience-response method" of instruction that still remains a vital part of speech and composition classrooms. Believing that English composition was being treated as a "stepchild" in English departments in the late seventies, Mitchell and Taylor "reinvented" the audience-response model as a way of encouraging writing instructors to reexamine their teaching methodologies (249). Using research from psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology, and paleneurology, Mitchell and Taylor recreate a model in which

> All writing is directed towards an audience and
> is to be regarded as the written medium of a
> transaction. Writing will therefore be
> classified according to its effects, not

according to its conformity with extrinsic

standards. (250)

Using the model, the audience is considered first, even

though the audience is logically the receiver, not the

transmitter of a communication. The approach supports the

belief that not only does an audience judge writing, but

also motivates it (250). The model begins with a writing

challenge requested by the instructor and meant for an

intended group of readers. Then, having received the

writing challenge, the writer begins the composing process,

a process to which Mitchell and Taylor refer as

"circulation" (251). Next, the writer determines how his

or her prose is understood through the circulation method

and depending on how the material is received, the writer

continues to revise actively. The result of this teaching

methodology is a "product which may be delivered in every

possible state of completion and polish, depending on the

relationship between the writer and the motivating

audience" (251). Finally, the audience confronting the

written prose ends the circulation process. However, the

audience should not be treated like passive recipients.

Readers should have the opportunity to contribute actively

to the meaning of what they read and respond to a set of expectations and preconceptions (251).

Mitchell and Taylor note that, while the "audience response model" is not the only effective way of teaching audience in the writing classroom, the model does stress the relationship between the audience's response and the writer's performance. A writer's performance is not only a direct result of his or her writing instruction, but his or her writing ability before entering a first-year writing course. Scholars, like Carol Berkenkotter, Lisa Ede, Andrea Lunsford, Barry Kroll, Linda Flower, and Douglas B. Park, have studied the importance of audience awareness among graduate students, first-year writers, and professional colleagues, but little has been studied with application of audience revision to undergraduate developmental writers.

Patricia McAlexander's 1996 article, "Ideas in Practice: Audience Awareness and Developmental Composition," concentrates solely on developmental writers' conception of audience awareness; her pedagogical classroom theory is one used in many academic settings in the United States. McAlexander uses human cognitive research of Piaget and Vygotsky to describe two types of students

present in most first-year classrooms: decentered and egocentric. "Decentered writers" are students attuned to the academic expectations of their "teacher-audience"; at the opposite end of the spectrum are "egocentric writers." Seldom considering an audience at all, egocentric writers are involved almost completely in their own thoughts and language and as a result write inappropriate content (29). Psychologists and researchers, like Piaget and Vygotsky, says McAlexander, suggest that the movement from egocentrism to decenteredness is based on human development. Egocentrism, in time, should give way to "social cognition," thereby creating a sensitivity to others (29).

Using decenteredness and egocentrism as a backbone to her study, McAlexander suggests four types of subskills used to teach audience awareness in order to steer students from being too entrenched in either perspective. Adapted from Don Rubin's article, "Social Cognition and Written Communication" (1984), McAlexander surveys the importance of incorporating subskills in any first-year classroom setting. Using Rubin's method, four subskills are outlined: "clear execution," "adequate content," "differentiation," and "role taking" (29). In almost every

introductory writing class across America, the method of "clear execution" is taught as students are expected to write error-free prose with clear organization. However, according to McAlexander, sometimes lack of audience awareness can contribute to problems of mechanics, grammar, and execution (30). By teaching "clear execution," she argues, students can, in fact, improve grammar and mechanics as they imagine how readers will respond to the construction of an individual sentence (30).

As the same with "clear execution," having adequate audience-aware content "means that the writer draws, from his or her knowledge base, facts and details sufficient to communicate the text's message effectively to readers" (McAlexander 30). One specific way that the subskill of adequate content is taught consistently is through marginal comments, such as "give more specific examples" or "incorporate more quotations in your paper." McAlexander notes that most first-year writers often have trouble with audience-aware content because they do not think of their outside readers and, thus, sometimes omit needed information or terminology since it is assumed the audience is already aware (30). Omitting adequate content links directly to the subskill of "differentiation," whereas

students display an egocentric attitude in believing "Of course, I'm right, and everyone thinks the same way I do" (McAlexander 30). A sign of weak perspective differentiation may be a student's writing away from an assigned topic and, instead, writing about whatever he or she decides. First-year students need to be given writing guidelines with audience options and perhaps a model to emulate.

With regards to individual learning styles, the fourth essential subskill includes "role taking." According to McAlexander, "Writers reveal role-taking ability when they can predict a reader's emotional and intellectual response to their writing and shape vocabulary, content, and imagery accordingly" (30). In order to "inspire a more conscious and systematic focus on audience awareness," McAlexander suggests that instructors follow a few simple pedagogical activities such as peer review, audience questionnaire, storytelling, and role switching. In such instances, students can read their papers aloud in order to gain reader responses, and subsequently, adapt their concept of audience according to their audience questionnaire outcomes. Also, students can practice audience adaptation through role-playing by using literary characters, and

students can read a story and then re-write it from a different point of view, or perhaps students can role switch into different characters representing different world views (32).

Writing for *Conference on College and Communication*, Fred R. Pfister and Joanne F. Petnik suggest that perhaps the most effective way for teaching audience is through a heuristic model in which the mystery of audience awareness is lessened through a short series of steps. Pfister and Petnik's long term goal is to provide "an effective heuristic that could be taught to students, practically used by them, and eventually internalized so that it would become an integral part of their composition process" (214).. The heuristic model for audience analysis in written discourse includes "the environment of the audience," "the subject interpreted by the audience," the relationship of the audience and the writer," and "the best methods the writer can use to achieve identification with the audience" (214). The first part of the model explores the common characteristics of the audience by using a questionnaire to identify the environment of the audience (216). The second part of the model examines the relationship that exists between audience and subject,

while part three makes a correlation between the audience
and writer (216). Finally, the fourth part examines the
relationship between audience and form, which causes a
writer to think about the best methods he/she can use to
achieve cooperation, persuasion, and identification with
the audience (216). Pfister and Petnik acknowledge most
students initially approach the heuristic model with some
anxiety, but their heuristic study with first-year writers
proves that the model has helped students learn to isolate
and write about a single subject with the opportunity to
become familiar with multiple audiences (217).

The final step of writing to a targeted audience is
audience revision. Once students have become familiar with
a connection between writer and audience, have composed
their papers, and have received feedback from their
instructor, the question "now what?" might arise.
Sometimes revising an audience choice for a paper can be
just as challenging as creating one in the first place.
Writing for *College of Composition and Communication* in
1976, Richard Beach acknowledges that one consistent
problem with first-year writers and their revision
processes is due to their

[. . .] difficulty in evaluating their own

writing, difficulty in describing and judging

strengths and weaknesses of a draft, defining and

predicting necessary changes for a subsequent

draft, recognizing whether those changes were

actually made on the subsequent draft, and

judging the worth of those changes. (160)

Thus, it is the responsibility of the writing instructor to

provide marginal comments that help students evaluate their

writing and thereby prompt effective revision.

Approaching audience from a theoretical perspective,

Linda Flower and colleagues in "Detection, Diagnosis, and

the Strategies of Revision" offer two key variables in the

instruction of revision in a writing classroom: "knowledge

and intention" (19). *Knowledge*, according to Flower,

occurs when a writer chooses to eliminate simple redrafting

and is able "to recognize conceptually complex features of

a text, such as its argument, and detect weak ones, as well

as recognize more explicit errors such as a comma splice"

(19). *Intention* refers to if and how a reviser will use

his or her gained "knowledge" and will enter the writing

process in two ways: in the form of an initial problem

representation and in the form of goals and criteria (20).

Flower contends that revision depends on a "dynamic interplay of knowledge and intention" (20).

In order to successfully emphasize audience revision, teacher comments need not be "text-specific," offering specific comments about how an audience can be revised in terms of race, age, gender, and geographic location (Sommers "Responding" 2). As Fran Lehr in "Revision in the Writing Process" notes, for the novice writer, "revision appears to be synonymous with editing or proofreading" (Lehr). In order to keep students from treating revision as a means of editing, global changes, such as audience awareness, should be emphasized by encouraging students to rewrite, add and delete parts to a paper, and create multiple drafts (Lehr). Analyzing an audience, according to Douglas Park, involves

> Identifying the nature of the contexts that are already given by some aspect of the occasion of publication and understanding the relationship between those that are given and those that must be more explicitly defined within the discourse itself. (253)

A student's ability to translate teacher feedback into his/her own conceptions and then use those conceptions in revising requires critical thinking (Beach 164).

Kathleen Black's research on audience analysis and persuasive writing at the college level suggests that "teachers need to know if students who have information about their audience can adequately apply audience analysis to their writing using adaptive strategies [. . .]" (231). When a lack of adaptation occurs, students may struggle in revising their papers towards a new audience. Questions that students might discover during this process include "Do I have to change my entire paper for a new audience?" "How do I correct this without an entire rewrite?" and "What is wrong with the audience I have chosen?" Without comments from readers, as Nancy Sommers notes, "Students assume that their writing has communicated their meaning and perceive no need for revising the substance of their text" ("Responding" 149).

The task of revising audience requires students to evaluate how well their message is being received by their readers. Likewise, writing instructors have the difficult challenge of explaining to students the importance of understanding audience, and they also have to maintain

patience in encouraging students not only to consider an audience but adapt to that audience as well. By teaching audience through subskills, students usually will feel comfortable in experimenting with their audience choices.

Since most students believe that problems in their essays can be solved by rewording, their approach to revision could be labeled as a "thesaurus philosophy of writing" (Sommers, "Revision Strategies" 381). Students enhance their language through substituting a few words, viewing the revision process as requiring "lexical changes" not "semantic changes" (Sommers 382). The issue of audience revision remains paramount since students internalize an audience "whose existence and whose expectations influence their revision process" (Sommers 382).

C.   A Review of Audience Instruction in Selected Composition Textbooks

The previous section has discussed the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching audience by examining key components of audience instruction. Since the basis for audience instruction in American colleges comes largely from composition textbooks and handbooks chosen for writing

classes, a study of approaches to teaching audience is not complete without some attention to these texts.

As early as 1907, the first "modern" handbook of mechanical correctness was created. With handbooks numbering in the thousands by the twenty-first century, mechanical correctness is still a significant lesson taught at the first-year writing level. Audience is given some consideration in most handbooks, but very little attention is given to audience awareness since an assumption is made that audience is not a key consideration of mechanical correctness. Numerous writing textbooks have also been created since the early twentieth century when writing was taught by imitation. While audience is treated as a separate section in most composition textbooks, the degree of attention given to audience awareness varies from book to book.

First printed in 1991, Muriel Harris' *Prentice Hall Reference Guide to Grammar and Usage* is a handbook widely used in American colleges today. In the preface of the third edition, Harris posits a practical aim to encourage writers "to view the various suggestions and strategies as possibilities to try when planning, writing, and revising and to select those that are most appropriate for them"

(xiii). In her preface, written specifically to students, Harris suggests

> All writers need to be aware of the various
> writing processes they use, but every writer is
> different from every other writer [. . .]. All
> writers struggle with writing [. . .]. All
> writers make the final choices and decisions
> about their writing, but writers also benefit
> from interacting with others who read their
> writing and offer feedback. (xxi)

With these words, Harris introduces the handbook's eight separate parts: "the writing process," "sentence accuracy, clarity, and variety," "parts of sentences," "punctuation," "mechanics and spelling," "style and word choice," research and documentation," and "ESL concerns."

Included in Harris' section one is a brief statement on audience written in the form of questions: "Who is my intended audience? (Peers? A potential boss? A teacher? Readers of my local newspaper? Colleagues in an office? People who are likely to agree with me? Or disagree? Or are neutral?)" (4). Likewise in a subheading referred to as "revising," Harris reiterates these same questions in a "revision checklist--higher-order concerns" (10). The

section covering argumentative papers is the only other
instance in which audience awareness is mentioned in the
handbook. In this section, Harris offers this advice to
students:

> You need to formulate in your mind the audience
>
> for a particular piece of persuasive writing. If
>
> you are writing to an audience that already
>
> agrees with you, you need to decide what your
>
> purpose will be. What would be accomplished if
>
> your readers already agree with you? If you
>
> audience is likely to disagree, you need to think
>
> about how to acknowledge and address reasons for
>
> disagreeing. (317)

While Harris only includes audience awareness in three
sections of her handbook, she does offer audience
instruction in the pre-writing stage, writing stage, and
revision stage of composing. Not all handbooks give equal
treatment to audience revision in that respect.

Perhaps one of the most popular handbooks used in
American colleges is John C. Hodges' *Harbrace Handbook of
English*. This handbook, first printed in 1941, was a
result of Hodges' study of tabulated corrections made by
sixteen writing instructors over a one year span. The

result of Hodges' research was the creation of a system of numbered and lettered sections still used by most modern handbooks today. Hodges' thirteenth edition contains thirty-five chapters.

Written as "a guide to the correction of student themes," the handbook focuses on audience eight times. The section on audience is divided as follows: "essays, gender-specific, general, multiple, research papers, specialized, tone and word selection." A general audience is given the most attention in the handbook as Hodges suggests that "a general audience consists of readers not expert on your topic but presumably willing to read what you have to say about it" (329). The eight-page section devoted to writing to audiences when students are writing expressive or expository essays advises

> understanding your audience will help you decide
> on the length and depth of your essay, the kind
> of language to use, and the examples that will be
> the most effective. Audiences vary considerably,
> and so do writers [. . .]. At some point,
> however, you must think clearly about who will be
> reading your writing and ask yourself if your
> choices are appropriate for this audience. (327)

The section on audience not only offers advice to the writer, as demonstrated above, but also offers two exercises to allow students to practice audience awareness. One particular exercise has students choosing a recent class and writing a description of it that would be read by a teacher or family member or dean of the school. Thus, students have to adapt to different audiences during the exercise.

While *The Harbrace Handbook* is thought to be one of the classic composition resources on the market and retains its popularity in classrooms across America, Joseph Trimmer's *Writing with a Purpose* (2001) is considered a classic rhetoric textbook. With the thirteenth edition currently in print, Trimmer's goal in this edition is to "strike a balance" between the "traditional reading and writing instruction" while adapting to electronic classrooms across the United States (xxv). Trimmer's section on audience includes four parts: "analysis," "revision," "writing for multiple audiences," and "yourself as audience." He creates a large section in his text on what he refers to as writing to one's own self. Trimmer claims

> The most immediate audience is you. You write
>
> not only to convey your ideas to others but also
>
> to clarify them for yourself. To think of
>
> yourself as an audience, however, you must stop
>
> thinking like a writer and begin thinking like a
>
> reader. (10)

However, he suggests that the main drawback to considering

one's self as an audience is an inclination to expect

perfectionism, creating the perfect paragraph and sentence.

Trimmer personifies audience as a "nebulous creature,"

a reader who does not know how much time and energy has

been invested in writing or cares about how many choices

were considered and rejected (11). In this respect, he

suggests that a number of audiences need to be considered

for every written paper. He illustrates his point through

an example: "Suppose [. . .] your experience purchasing

books, clothes, and tickets on the Internet suggests that

'online shopping' might make an interesting subject, but

you are finding it difficult to restrict your topic" (11).

Trimmer notes in this example, that there are three

possible audience choices: (1) those that shop the Net, (2)

those that refuse to shop the Net, and (3) those who refuse

electronic commerce (11). He extends his discussion to

suggest that there are challenges in choosing an appropriate audience for any writing at any level.

Trimmer ends his audience discussion by offering general guidelines for analyzing audiences. These guidelines are offered in the form of questions that allow the writer to probe the possibilities of audience awareness. He divides the guidelines into five general questions and subheadings under each question. The questions are designed to make a writer think of a reader's age, gender, education level, economic status, expertise, and emotional attachment.

Like Trimmer's work, Rise B. Axelrod and Charles R. Cooper's *St. Martin's Guide to Writing* (1997) continues to be a widely used composition textbook in classrooms across America. The approach to audience awareness is included in eleven sections throughout the text. Instead of treating audience in general terms, they specifically outline audience lessons for each paper, "remembering events, remembering people, writing profiles, explaining a concept, taking a position, proposing a solution, justifying and evaluation, speculating about causes, and interpreting stories."

Axelrod and Cooper include a section entitled,
"purpose and audience" after each paper genre section. To
cite the "writing profiles" section as an example, in the
writing profile section, they offer this advice:

> A profile writer has one further concern: to be
> sensitive to readers' knowledge of a subject.
> Since readers must imagine the subject profiled
> and understand the new information offered about
> it, the writer must carefully assess what readers
> are likely to have seen and to know [. . .].
> Profile writers must also consider whether
> readers are familiar with the terminology they
> want to use. Because profiles involve
> information, they inevitably require definitions
> and illustrations. (130)

Another main difference in the construction of Axelrod and
Cooper's text versus other composition texts is the
conclusion of each genre chapter. Each chapter contains a
section at the end that helps writers through the writing
process and audience adaptation entitled "planning and
drafting," "critical reading guide," "revising," and
"editing and proofreading." These sections offer students
yet another opportunity to view their work with critical,

not harsh eyes. By organizing and categorizing the text by purpose and audience, Axelrod and Cooper offer students audience adaptation tips for multiple writing genres.

One of the newest composition texts on the market, Ronald F. Lunsford and Bill Bridges' *Guide to Writing* offers students a text that describes theory "as one that views writing as rhetorical, personal, and communal" (xvii). The general information on audience awareness and adaptation is listed under the index heading of "readers" in the text. Lunsford and Bridges offer these questions about audience to students: "What do my readers already know about this topic? What do I want them to know, understand, or learn from reading my writing? Why do I want them to know this?" (33). They further suggest that answering these questions can help a writer focus on the drafting of a paper by "identifying things you want to cover and why you want to cover them" (33).

The next section on audience awareness includes three writing sample paragraphs from two students and one professional writer in which the questions above are used to identify whether an appropriate audience was in fact targeted. One significant appeal of Lunsford and Bridges'

text is that after each paper genre the rhetorical triangle is presented.

The rhetorical triangle offered throughout the book includes "reader," "subject," and "writer." The reader section of each paper offers sample audiences and probes questions for audience considerations. Using the problem/solution essay as an example, Lunsford and Bridges suggest that for audience awareness, someone that can solve the problem and take action would be most suitable. They propose the following questions for audience consideration:

> Who can solve the problem? Who has the power or authority to change things? What is this person's role in the problem? Did he create the problem? What does he already know about the problem? Is he likely to see it as a problem? What does he need to know to take the action you think he should? How opposed is he likely to be to your solution? Why? (426)

The section concludes with the advice that a specific audience can help sharpen a writer's focus throughout the writing process (426).

While composition texts vary in design and in assignments for writing genres, most share rhetorical

strategies of writing. As evident in the five examples cited here, audience and audience awareness are considerations for effective writing. However, the degree of treatment given to audience in popular college texts varies from book to book.

The role of audience in writing instruction is a key component in composition classes in American colleges and universities. Factors that shape audience instruction in writing classrooms include text selection, teacher and writer experience levels, the way in which a writing course is designed, and the significance that the writing program gives to audience as a criterion for affective writing. The remainder of this study will focus on one writing program's attempt to produce audience-centered writers.

Chapter III

Audience as a Component of Effective Writing in the

Portfolio Composition Program at Middle Tennessee State

University

Portfolio Composition Programs are growing in number

in American colleges and universities since one of the

first classes occurred in the late eighties. This type of

writing class postpones the grading of student writing

until the end of the term, allowing students time to

develop essential writing skills which they can showcase in

writing portfolios. This chapter will examine the current

pedagogical trends of portfolio writing classes and will

examine specifically how audience is taught by portfolio

writing instructors and, likewise, how audience is

incorporated by students into their writing. Audience will

be examined as a major component of effective writing in

the Portfolio Composition Program at Middle Tennessee State

University. Middle Tennessee State University, founded in

September 1911 and located in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, has

a student population of 20,073. The student population is

cross sectioned with over 50% women and over 10% African-

American students represented. Of the 19,121 student

population, 18,345 are native Tennessee residents; 1,458

are out-of-state residents, and 270 students are foreign.

Most of the student body represented in Portfolio English

111 courses are native English speaking students of

traditional age.

Portfolio Assessment of Writing

A recent advancement in the instruction of writing is

the use of classroom student writing portfolios, which are

collections of self-selected and revised writing submitted

to the teacher for evaluation as a whole body of work to be

evaluated. In the 1980's, portfolio assessment was created

in response to increasing calls for state-wide writing

assessment for public school systems, and by 1991,

portfolio practice had become so popular that a book-length

work which dealt solely with portfolios was published, Pat

Belanoff and Marcia Dickson's *Portfolios: Process and

Product* (Cantrell, "Challenges of Re-Inventing" 3). In the

twenty-first century, portfolio assessment continues to

grow as a useful, viable approach to improving students'

writing as the system meets needs in elementary, secondary,

and higher education.

Portfolios have dominated the first-year college

writing curriculum since the mid 1990's and can be seen as

an extension of direct-writing assessment in the process-

driven classroom. According to Gail Stygall in *New Directions in Portfolio Assessment*, portfolios can be seen as a "move away from indirect writing assessment through multiple-choice grammar and style instruments and the concomitant move to direct assessment through holistic scoring [. . .]" (1). The main distinction between portfolio assessment and other means of direct writing assessment entails the holistic assessment of a body of work (the portfolio) versus the assessment of individual pieces as they are written, which has been the traditional means of writing assessment in college courses.

The words "portfolio assessment" conjure up a number of definitions and ideas since the early 1990's when Miami University (Ohio) was one of the nation's first colleges to implement the program as a component of their college entrance requirement (Cantrell, "Challenges"). Since then, portfolios continue to evolve as a means of writing assessment. Because the use of portfolio assessment often varies from institution to institution, it is important to identify, the common grounds of the practice: the theory behind portfolio assessment and the pedagogy that drives it.

One idea that has remained constant in portfolio assessment is the emphasis on the process of writing. Through the process of writing, students should be able to practice their writing technique without feeling pressured to "make the grade." The theoretical foundation for portfolio assessment is based on process rather than product; that is, students are given the freedom to write and rewrite without the penalty of grades. Students are then evaluated holistically at the end of the semester rather than being evaluated piece by piece. According to Edward White, a leading authority on writing assessment,

> Portfolios offer to the world of assessment a view of student learning that is active, engaged, and dynamic [. . .]. Furthermore, portfolios bring teaching, learning, and assessment together as mutually supportive activities, as opposed to the artificiality of conventional tests. (27)

As White argues for the use of portfolios, he also emphasizes the need for the portfolio system to have clear objectives and goals to eliminate a course in which students are not productive.

A strength of the portfolio system is that it offers student writers opportunities for revision and for

reflection. White refers to revision "as the heart of writing," and portfolios offer the opportunity to measure the writing process through all of the writing stages (34). Like most writing classes, a portfolio-based classroom is designed with multiple writing genres in mind. In her research on portfolio pedagogy, Sharon Hamilton highlights some common features of many portfolio-based writing classrooms. Hamilton outlines the minimum portfolio requirements for freshman-level writing courses, specifically first-semester composition: a two-page reflection, personal narrative and writer's statement, expository essay and writer's statement, and reflections upon the process of writing and writer's statement (159). Students create multiple drafts of their papers and receive feedback from their teacher and their peers. Revising multiple drafts from teachers' and peers' marginal comments allows the student to be participatory in his/her own work and the work of others as well. Reflective writing allows students the opportunity to view their writing from another perspective. Students are able to "step-back" and evaluate their writing strengths and weaknesses and their peer's strengths and weaknesses as well.

Students' writing revisions and reflections about
their writing processes in a portfolio composition
classroom promote a student-centered environment. Indeed,
James Berlin in "The Subversions of the Portfolio" suggests
that a central feature of teaching portfolio-based
composition is "reclaiming the classroom for student-
centered learning" (61). The student-centered method
allows teachers to develop students' writing maturity
levels as they differ from student to student. In other
words, the weakest and strongest writers in the classroom
can benefit by creating a self-paced learning environment.
Many portfolio teachers would argue that the portfolio
system allows them to be writing coaches in the classroom.
This role gives teachers the opportunity to facilitate
student-centered learning much in the same way that
athletic coaches help their charges set goals and develop
skills by trial and error.

The basis of portfolio writing programs is writing-as-
process pedagogy. Since this pedagogy teaches that good
writing is rewriting, portfolios that contain revised
writing seem to be the ideal way to measure student writing
achievement. MTSU's portfolio program offers students the
opportunity to concentrate on the process of writing and to

revise their writing before they submit it for a grade.

Not only do students receive feedback form their teacher;

they also receive feedback from their peers. A goal of the

program is to build a community of writers where students,

with the advice of teacher and peers, take charge of their

own writing and learn to see themselves as writers.

A Description of MTSU's Portfolio Composition Program

In the fall semester of 1994, Middle Tennessee State

University Professors Ayne Cantrell and Sushil Oswal

introduced the first portfolio composition pilot program to

the MTSU English Department. Professor Cantrell, the

Director of Lower Division English at that time, and

Professor Oswal, a member of the English faculty, created

the program in response to some faculty's dissatisfaction

with the composition folder method, primarily a grammar

check system, that had been used in the freshman writing

program at MTSU for many years. The portfolio method of

assessment was created to compliment process pedagogy, to

prevent penalizing students with grades before they acquire

important writing skills, to accommodate graduate teaching

assistant training, and to build a community of writing

teachers (Cantrell and Donovan "Portfolio Practice").

Professor Oswal had first-hand experience with portfolio

assessment since he had participated in a similar program at the University of Cincinnati. With thirty-one sections of English taught using portfolio assessment in Fall 1994, the pilot was successful; a second pilot followed in Fall 1995, and the program was officially adopted in Fall 1996 for all sections of English 111 taught by first-year graduate teaching assistants and some sections taught by volunteer full and part-time faculty.

The program was designed to encourage prewriting, writing, and rewriting along with providing constructive feedback to students throughout the semester; the program also aims at helping writers obtain both personal and professional purposes through writing (Cantrell and Oswal 3). There are six goals that motivate the English 111 Portfolio Composition Program at MTSU, according to Program Director Cantrell:

> (1) To extend the scope of process pedagogy to our assessment practices by evaluating student writing as an ongoing process of learning, practicing, and maturing as writers.

(2) To generate dialogue over our grading standards and to develop some communal standards for freshmen writing.

(3) To shift our students' attention from a reductive view of writing (earning letter grades) to a more responsible view of writing (active process of learning and writing).

(4) To initiate new graduate teaching assistants into the community of the department's composition teachers and to offer them a site to discuss composition theory, practice, research, and disciplinary lore.

(5) To provide writing teachers with an open forum to explore, comment, question, and critique the assumptions of the department's writing program, our teaching pedagogy, and our overall community.

(6) To develop resources and opportunities for writing teachers to carry on composition intensive research by drawing upon the collective expertise of the community of portfolio teachers. ("Writing Teachers")

These goals are designed to create a student-centered classroom, which emphasizes the writing process, and to involve teachers in the ongoing development of the program.

MTSU's Portfolio Composition English 111 requires students to write five essays, four drafts each. Both student peers and teacher respond to early drafts of each essay. Midway through the semester, students turn in one out of two papers with a reflective cover letter for an informational grade. The mid-semester submission gives students practice in revising work for a grade. While the mid-term grade is not binding, it offers students the opportunity to see how their Final Portfolio will be assessed. At the end of the semester, students then choose three out of five revised essays that best reflect their progress as writers and submit them with a cover letter as their Final Portfolio, which counts 75% of their course grade.

Since this study evaluates MTSU Portfolio Program writing samples from the Spring and Fall Semesters of 1998, the following will outline the program as created and practiced that year. While some changes have occurred to the program since then (change of texts and writing assignments), the set-up of the program still remains

virtually the same since its creation in 1994. In the Fall
of 1998, MTSU saw a peak in enrollment to nearly 18,500
students and the MTSU English Department, the largest on
campus that year, employed 110 faculty members, many of
whom taught in the first-year writing program (Cantrell,
"Challenges"). Eighty-seven sections of English 111 were
taught during the Fall of 1998. Out of those sections,
forty sections were taught using portfolio assessment by 24
graduate teaching assistants, 17 full-time faculty, and 4
part-time faculty (Cantrell, "Challenges").

During the 1998 Spring and Fall semesters, Rise B.
Axelrod and Charles R. Cooper's fifth edition of *The St.
Martin's Guide to Writing*, the 13th edition of John Hodges'
Harbrace Handbook, and Ayne Cantrell and Sushil Oswal's
second edition of *Portfolio Composition: A Student's Guide
and Reader For English 111 Portfolio Sections* were the
texts used for all forty sections of Portfolio English 111.
Over the span of fifteen weeks, students wrote four drafts
of five essays: two personal perspective essays
(remembering an event, remembering a person), a profile
essay, justifying an evaluation, and a summary/response to
another essay.

The first step in the writing process taught in Portfolio English 111, Spring/Fall 1998, was the creation of the first draft based on invention strategies, such as listing and clustering. These discovery drafts gave students an opportunity to create, formulate, and experiment with their initial ideas. The next draft, the peer draft, was the first opportunity students had to share their work with others. This draft, which was to be typed, was accompanied by a coversheet (See "Essay Coversheet," Appendix 2, p. 139) that asked students to define the rhetorical context of their writing: their purpose, their writer's role, audience, expected response from their audience, thesis, and their status as an insider on their particular given subject. Accompanying the peer drafts were writers' questions that students asked each other during their three-member peer group sessions. During peer group sessions, students responded orally to all members' essays and then responded to one member's paper by completing a peer group worksheet. These worksheets were then returned to each writer and later used during the revision process for draft three. Draft three and coversheet were submitted to the teacher not for a grade, but for marginal comments. Finally, draft four was revised

based on the teacher's comments. The student made the ultimate decision which three out of five papers were submitted for assessment in the Final Portfolio.

Throughout the course, students were coached on their writing purpose, audience, organization, development, and language usage in the form of teacher feedback sheets (See "Teacher Feedback Sheets," Appendix 3, pp. 140-45). Marginal comments were also made on the form, as well as the essays, and occasionally an instructor requested that students receive additional tutorial help in the University Writing Center. Students not only received feedback in the form of marginal comments throughout the semester, but they also met outside of the classroom with their instructor to discuss their writing assessments. This process allowed students to reflect on their writing process and faculty to reflect on their assessment procedures. Final portfolios were evaluated holistically according to how well the writer responded to the five objectives of effective writing:

(1) Does the writer follow through on the requirements of the writing assignments and achieve the purposes of the essay?

(2) Does the writer define appropriate audiences for the essays and then meet the needs of the audiences?

(3) Does the writer provide sufficient and appropriate materials to develop all ideas?

(4) Does the writer produce well-focused, unified essays and organize material appropriately?

(5) Does the writer come through as a dependable and credible person in the overall presentation of ideas, in the tone of the writing and attitude towards the audience, and in the professional attitude towards revision and editing out of sentence and phrase-level errors, including faulty grammar and mechanics? (Cantrell and Oswal 173) (See "Final Portfolio Evaluation Sheet," Appendix 4, p. 146).

Students were rated on a scale of "exceptional achievement," "above average," "average," and "unsatisfactory" on the final portfolio evaluation sheet. An unsatisfactory in any one of the areas resulted in a failed portfolio.

During the Spring/Fall 1998 semesters, faculty team
assessment played a crucial role in the MTSU Portfolio
Composition Program. Twice a semester, portfolio teachers
met to norm portfolio assessment standards. The first
meeting occurred at mid-term when three faculty members
read their own portfolios and then shared failed and
borderline portfolios in addition to sample letter grade A,
B, and C portfolios. The second meeting occurred at the
end of the semester as team members once again shared
failed and borderline portfolios in an attempt to confirm
their grading decisions. The classroom teacher, however,
had the final word on his/her students' portfolio grades.

The Role of Audience in MTSU's Portfolio Composition
Program's Writing Instruction

Audience awareness and revision are key factors in any
first-year writing class that is based on rhetorical
axiology and writing-as-process pedagogy. Since portfolio
assessment encourages students to revise their writing,
audience awareness, purpose, and thesis writing are
facilitated because the portfolio system, which delays the
grading of writing, "allows students to put aside, at least
temporarily, the paralyzing effect of grades and
concentrate instead on improving their writing" (Weiser

225). For many students in traditional writing classrooms, looking at a grade on a paper is all they do with no particular regard to the teacher's marginal comments. Students in the portfolio system differ in this respect since there is an obvious emphasis on their improvement through opportunities for multiple drafting and revision. Through the practice of writing portfolios, students are able to explore their ideas, practice their writing, and draft their prose to fit audience needs.

Striving to promote writing success, one of MTSU's Portfolio Composition Program requirements is that a writer "defines purpose and audience and adapts material to the audience" (Cantrell and Oswal 5). Among the twelve steps in completing essay assignments, a thorough description of an intended audience is required (Cantrell and Oswal 8). The program promotes audience awareness in five specific ways: formal instruction, student invention writing, completion of the coversheet, peer evaluation, and teacher's coaching.

Through formal instruction, instructors in the Portfolio Composition Program teach audience as a part of the rhetorical triangle: writer, message, and audience. Instructors use the rhetorical triangle and activities to

teach students about how content and style differ from one audience to another. Methods of teaching audience through formal instruction include completion of exercises on audience, such as students writing two letters to two different audiences about the same subject. For example, students may be asked to address the problem of parking on · campus in a letter to a friend and then in a letter to the university president; these letters are analyzed for differences in content, language, and tone. Also some instructors require students to bring magazines to class to discuss differences in content and style as far as targeted readers are concerned. Then, too, formal instruction covers what program textbooks generally say about audience. For example, *The St. Martin's Guide to Writing* offers students advice about how to create an audience in the introductory chapter of the text: "How a text works is a function of what it is for—its purpose and audience" (Axelrod and Cooper 5). At the end of each chapter that assigns a different genre of writing is a section entitled "Purpose and Audience." This brief section is used in audience instruction as a check-off list for students to follow in choosing and analyzing an audience. Likewise, sample papers for each essay genre are given in the text

with commentary that describes the thesis, audience, and purpose of each.

Student invention writing is another means that MTSU Portfolio Composition Program promotes audience awareness among its student writers. Through the process of invention, students are asked to draft their audience in terms of race, age, and gender. Beside the basic criteria, Portfolio Composition students are asked to consider geographical location, economic status, and education levels of audience members. Students are asked to draft their audience choice, along with their tentative purpose and thesis. Much like a rough draft, the students' first attempt at considering their audience is also a rough draft as well. The *St. Martin's Guide to Writing* outlines the importance of audience awareness during the beginning stages of writing by offering students a series of questions to consider: Who are my target readers? What age group do they belong to? What are the demographics of my audience?

Invention is not only essential in writing a paper, but important in creating and adapting to an audience. In Portfolio Composition, the *St. Martin's Guide to Writing* aids students during their audience invention process. At

the end of each chapter that describes the essay genre assignment, a specific section on planning and drafting is outlined to help students with their planning process. As far as audience is concerned, the section informs writers that they should create writing goals and to consider their readers by answering the following questions: "What do I want my readers to think about the subject as a result of reading my essay? Should I assume I am introducing readers to the subject? How can I gain my readers' confidence? What tone would be appropriate for my audience" (Axelrod and Cooper 322-23). The "Critical Reading Guide" at the end of each chapter of the textbook also asks students to focus on their readers. By calling students' attention to the questions and suggestions at the end of each chapter, instructors are able to reinforce the importance of audience awareness.

A third way that MTSU's portfolio program encourages audience awareness is the essay coversheet (See "Essay Coversheet," Appendix 2, p. 139). Students are required to submit essay coversheets for their second, third, and fourth drafts of their essays. The essay coversheet is an important component in English 111 Portfolio Composition

because as the *Portfolio Composition Student Guide* explains

to students,

> It is the step where you formally state what your
>
> intentions are in terms of audience, purpose, and
>
> thesis—the three major considerations of all
>
> writing situations. Additionally, you re-examine
>
> your writer's role in the essay, an important aid
>
> for establishing your tone. (Cantrell and Oswal
>
> 9)

In the process of completing the coversheet, students

consider to whom they are writing, about what, and for what

specific purpose. In this respect, the coversheet actually

serves as a contract in which students make certain

promises to themselves and to their readers about their

essays (Cantrell and Oswal 9). Students are encouraged to

revise their coversheets with each draft as their

approaches to the essays change. The essay coversheet asks

students to consider eight important areas of their essay

during their drafting period. In terms of audience,

students are asked to "describe their audience in specific

terms: class, gender, race, age, educational level,

geographical location, and the like" (Cantrell and Oswal

61). Furthermore, the coversheet asks students to indicate

the purpose that a writer wants to achieve in writing the essay for a specific audience and the expected response from readers once they have read the essay. Thus, students must consider how their audience might initially feel after reading their essay.

Another component of the coversheet deals with the writer's role. The coversheet requests students to identify the role they are playing in the essay: the role of a parent, a university student, an employee, or perhaps concerned citizen. Identifying a writer's role is another way for students to make a direct connection to their audience. Obviously writing from the perspective of a new parent, for example, to other new parents is an initial audience connection before writing ever begins. Another key component that the coversheet encourages is for students to consider the value their essay holds for its readers. In other words, how will readers benefit from reading an essay? While drafting the coversheet does not necessarily make audience awareness any easier for students to grasp, it does demand that students consider their audience.

Peer response groups is the fourth way audience is taught in the MTSU Portfolio Composition Program. Peer

response is designed for students to participate both in oral and written discourse. Orally, students are asked to prepare writer's questions about the content of their papers, such as "What other examples could I use to appeal to my teenage audience?" (Cantrell and Oswal 11). Students have the opportunity to hear a peer's paper and make first impressions, to allow for initial response. Finally, students remark about one peer's essay using a peer response sheet. On this sheet, students comment about the writer's purpose, thesis statement, and audience. For example, the response sheet asks the peer respondent, "To what audience is the essay directed, and is this audience appropriate for the subject?" and "List two examples that demonstrate how the essay appeals to this specific audience" (Cantrell and Oswal 143). The peer response sheets also question the effectiveness of a writer's tone, kind or level of words, format, and illustrations as far as audience is considered. Thus, the peer respondent has to consider audience effectiveness not only in his/her paper but peers' papers as well.

Teacher feedback on draft three of students' essays is the final means of the teaching of audience in MTSU's Portfolio Composition Program. Through the use of teacher

feedback sheets, instructors are able to comment on the effectiveness of the writer's purpose, audience, thesis, development, organization, and language usage. Specifically, the teacher feedback sheet asks if the writer designated a specific and appropriate audience for the essay and adapted both content and language to the designated audience. Likewise, the feedback sheet draws attention to language usage as it asks if the writer chose language that expressed an appropriate tone toward the subject and audience and avoided grammatical and mechanical errors that detract from the essay's message (Cantrell and Oswal 170). At the end of each feedback sheet is a section for the teacher to make a general response. By coaching students on draft three of their essays, attention is drawn to the writer's audience.

MTSU English Professor Linda Badley, an advocate of the portfolio program since 1995, suggests that the portfolio program allows students to become familiar with audience at an early start in their academic careers. She recalls not having a good grasp of audience awareness in her own teaching methodology until portfolio composition came along:

My first real encounter with audience awareness

as a writer came when I was revising a chunk of

my dissertation to present at my first conference

and I realized I couldn't read what I had

written—that is, aloud and to a real audience,

without boring them to death.

Likewise MTSU English Professor Maria Clayton, a member of

the portfolio program since the pilot in 1994, acknowledges

that using the portfolio method has increased her own

awareness of audience in the classroom:

Additionally, a huge benefit to me has been the

realization that my own composition instruction

(and writing) needs to be as fluid, as recursive

as the process I'm attempting to get across to my

students—always room for change, always room for

improvement, always room for something new.

Finally, I am also aware that as I promote the

all-important rhetorical element of audience for

my students, I also raise my own consciousness of

it as vital in all writing.

Raising a consciousness of audience in writing, however, is

not an easy task in any writing program.

Not every student makes a connection between a writing

audience and their essays. Clayton and Badley both agree

that essay three, the profile essay, is perhaps where students first get their greatest understanding of the important role audience plays in writing. Because the profile essay "requires that students provide information about and create a dominant impression of a place or activity," Badley emphasizes audience by stressing the difference in writer's role from essays one and two and announces that students will be taking on the role of a reporter for essay three. Likewise, Clayton teaches audience by a series of questions that prompt the writer to think, for example, "Who would be interested in or need to know about married student housing at MTSU?" Badley acknowledges that she helps students to revise their audience through student/teacher conferences in which she has students read their essays aloud and responds as if she were a member of their designated audience. While Badley works with audience revision as an oral exercise, Clayton offers written feedback in the form of marginal comments on students' works in progress and/or on their teacher feedback sheet to get students to see how they have engaged or failed to engage the audience they have identified in their coversheets.

Another strength of the MTSU Portfolio Composition Program, according to Badley and Clayton, is the structure for teaching a student-centered class and the means of writing assessment that entails holistic scoring. Both agree that a student-centered classroom and portfolio assessment promote an increased awareness of audience and of the revision process as a whole.

Audience consideration is in fact a key component of the MTSU Portfolio Composition Program. The program defines successful writing in part by the writer's ability to consider and adapt to intended audiences. Students are required to target specific audiences for each of their five essay assignments and to adapt content and language to those audiences; the students' ability to consider audience is a factor in evaluating their portfolios. While the program aims at including audience instruction in their curriculum, the success of the program has never been formally studied. How successful is MTSU's Portfolio Composition Program in helping students write to audiences? To answer that question, the next chapter will determine the effectiveness of audience instruction in the program as revealed in the sampling of student writing from the Spring and Fall 1998 Semesters.

Chapter IV

A Study of Audience in Student Writing,

MTSU Portfolio Composition Program 1998

In 1994 MTSU's portfolio method of assessment was
created to prevent penalizing students with grades before
they acquired important writing skills. Furthermore, the
program was created in an attempt to build a community of
writers in the classroom and to encourage prewriting,
writing, and rewriting, shifting students' attention from a
reductive view of writing to a more responsible view of
writing as an active process of learning and writing. The
program more specifically asks students to define the
rhetorical context of their writing: their purpose, their
writer's role, audience, expected response from their
audience, thesis, and their status as an insider on their
subject.

At MTSU the Portfolio Writing Program is designed to
make students more aware of audience by having them target
an audience on their essay's coversheet and by encouraging
them to adapt to those readers' demographics of race, age,
gender, economic status, and geographical location.
Instructors are given opportunities to comment about
audience in marginal comments on draft 3 of works in

progress and on teacher feedback sheets, essay coversheets,
and final portfolio evaluation sheets; students are
expected to revise their writing as needed to improve their
audience choices and audience adaptation efforts. With
audience-centered writing as a major objective, the program
seeks to make students to think about writing to an
audience as an ongoing process of learning, practicing, and
maturing as writers. How well does the program achieve
this goal? To answer these questions, student writing
completed in 1998 was examined.

<u>The Writing Samples</u>

By the year 1998, Middle Tennessee State University's
Portfolio Composition Program had been in existence for
three years. In the Spring and Fall Semesters of 1998,
nearly one-half of English 111 Composition classes (43%)
were taught through the Portfolio Composition Program.
Portfolio Program classes were taught by full-time faculty,
part-time faculty, and graduate teaching assistants (See
Chart 1).

Portfolio Composition Faculty 1998

Chart 1

	Full-Time	Part-Time	GTAS	Total # of Teachers
Spr. 1998	3	4	16	23
Fall 1998	6	2	13	21

During the 1998 Spring and Fall Semesters, a total of 1,168 portfolios were submitted for assessment: 898 portfolios submitted were from students taught by graduate teaching assistants, 270 from students taught by full-time and part-time faculty. Students were required to submit English Folders, a departmental requirement, which contained all ungraded drafting on major essay writing and the Final Portfolio of Writing, which the students submitted for a grade. For this study, 15% of the English Folders were randomly sampled. All 1,168 English Folders were numbered using a random numbered table and then 15% of the folders were randomly chosen. After all folders had been randomly sampled, 175 folders remained. Out of the 175 folders, only 145 fit the needs of the study. The other 30 folders were eliminated because they were incomplete; the students failed to complete all writing requirements for class credit.

<u>The Portfolio Writing Assignments for 1998 Spring and Fall</u>

<u>Semesters</u>

During 1998 all students participating in the Portfolio Composition Program were required to write five essays, four drafts each. Since the first two essays were personal narrative assignments (remembering an event and remembering a person) and therefore naturally less audience-centered than the remaining papers, essays three, four, and five were used for the study. The assignment for Essay 3 was entitled "Profiling a Place or Activity" and was designed to "provide readers with new information about a place or activity" (Cantrell and Oswal 6). The information presented in the essay was based on the writer's firsthand research conducted through observation and through an interview. Students were able to profile a profession, an interesting and unusual hobby or sport, or a campus or community club, organization, program, or place. The assignment length was 550 to 650 words and MLA documentation was a requirement. For this assignment, students were given audience qualifications on the essay handout (See "Essay 3 Assignment," Appendix 5, pp. 147-48). They were to write to an audience composed of readers of either a real or fictional publication appropriate for

their profile subject. Students were still encouraged to narrow their reading audience down by race, age, and gender if relevant, and they were encouraged to write from an objective, investigative reporter's perspective.

For the Essay 4 assignment, entitled "Justifying an Evaluation," students were asked to evaluate a subject, such as a movie, television program, book, magazine, computer game, music album, or performance. The 550-650 word essay required that the students' judgment be supported with a convincing argument based on standards of value that their readers would likely accept. Required skills for this paper included firsthand observation, critical and logical thinking, development of a well-supported argument, use of a reasonable tone, and documentation of secondary sources (See "Essay 4 Assignment," Appendix 6, pp. 149-50). For their audience selection, students were encouraged to write for an audience of limited knowledge about their topic. Thus, students were asked to consider the demographics of their audience and how little or how much they would know of the evaluated topic. Students, once again, were encouraged to narrow their audience selection by race, age, and gender if

necessary and educational level and to write for a publication appropriate to their topic.

Essay 5, also 550-650 words, was the last paper written during the semester; the assignment was entitled, "Summarizing and Responding." This essay required students to summarize and respond to a selected reading that was chosen from an essay reader entitled *Who Are We? Readings on Identity, Community, Work, and Career.* Students were asked to read selected essays critically in order to analyze, interpret, and evaluate another writer's position on a controversial topic. Students were further asked to quote, paraphrase, and summarize the writer accurately and then present a logical and well thought out response while using MLA documentation (See "Essay 5 Assignment," Appendix 7, p. 151). For an audience selection for essay five, students were told that an assumption could not be made that all readers had read the piece being responded to; therefore, students were encouraged to provide readers with sufficient detail for the author's position to make sense. Once again, students were encouraged to consider race, age, gender, economic level, and education level of their chosen audiences and to write for a publication appropriate to the

topic, this time the publication where the original essay was first published.

Assessment of Audience Awareness and Adaptation in Essays 3, 4, and 5

For each of the three essays, students submitted draft three with a coversheet to the teacher for feedback but not for a grade. Students were then asked to consider the teacher's comments and revise the coversheet and essay again for the final draft, which if resubmitted, was graded as part of the student's Final Portfolio. As students submitted these drafts, instructors had four opportunities to comment about their audience awareness and adaptation: (1) on the Teacher Feedback Sheet, (2) on the Essay Coversheet, (3) through marginal comments on the third essay drafts themselves, and (4) on the Final Portfolio Evaluation Sheet.

After students submitted their third drafts of Essays 3, 4, and 5, instructors were given the opportunity to offer feedback on the Teacher's Feedback Sheet (See "Teacher Feedback Sheets," Appendix 3, pp. 140-45). Besides commenting on format and submission requirements, instructors offered responses to the students' work specifically in the areas of purpose, audience, thesis,

development, organization, and language usage, while also offering a general response at the end of the feedback sheet. More specifically, instructors commented about the students' audience selections by assessing "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" in regards to the question "Does the writer designate an appropriate audience and adapt content and language to that audience?" (Cantrell and Oswal 168). The Essay Coversheet asked students, using two to four sentences, to describe their target audience in specific terms: class, gender, race, age, educational level, geographical location and the like (Cantrell and Oswal 61). Also at the third draft stage for each essay, teachers could give feedback on audience issues directly on the drafts in the form of marginal comments. Finally, at the end of the semester, instructors were given yet another opportunity to offer comments about audience on the Final Portfolio Evaluation Sheet and to determine how well the writer "defined appropriate audiences for the essays and then met the need of the audiences" (Cantrell and Oswal 173). Thus, students and instructors, alike, were given many opportunities to consider audience for each paper.

To determine the effectiveness of audience instruction in the MTSU Portfolio Composition Program, this study of student writing completed in 1998 attempted (1) to measure the quantity and quality of comments teachers gave to students regarding their attempts to analyze and adapt to targeted audiences in their writing and (2) to measure the quantity and quality of students' subsequent revision of audience issues in their writing in response to their teachers' feedback. Also, the study examined the teachers' responses regarding audience on the Final Portfolio Evaluation Sheet where students received their grade for the writing portfolio and the students' portfolio coverletters where they had an opportunity to reflect on global issues in their writing, including audience.

A series of questions were used as a rubric to collect data from the 145 writing samples:

(1) What comments about audience did instructors make on Teacher's Feedback Sheets for Essays 3, 4, and 5?

(2) What changes, if any, regarding audience did students make on the fourth draft according to teacher's suggestions on Teacher's Feedback Sheets 3, 4, and 5?

(3)   What comments about audience did instructors make on Essay Coversheets for Essays 3, 4, and 5?

(4)   What changes, if any, regarding audience did students make on the fourth draft according to teacher's suggestions on Essay Coversheets for Essays 3, 4, and 5?

(5)   What marginal comments concerning audience did instructors make on the third draft of Essays 3, 4, and 5?

(6)   What changes concerning audience did students make in the fourth draft of Essays 3, 4, and 5 according to teachers' marginal comments?

(7)   What comment audience did instructors make on Final Portfolio Evaluation Sheet?

(8)   What comments about audience did students make in their Final Portfolio coverletters?

Applying these questions, all 145 folders were examined to identify if MTSU Portfolio English 111 students were making a connection between their audience and their writing.

The Results of the Study

In order to present the wide scope of the study's results, concerning audience in sampled student writing Portfolio English 111 in 1998, selective teacher comments and student responses will be used to represent the data collected in five areas: (1) teacher feedback sheets, (2) student essay coversheets, (3) teachers' marginal comments on students' essay drafts 3, (4) final portfolio evaluation sheets, and (5) student portfolio coverletters.

1.   Teacher Feedback Sheets—Comments/Student Responses

The third drafts of all three essays were accompanied with a Teacher's Feedback Sheet when they were submitted to the instructor. The Teacher Feedback offered instructors the opportunity to specifically comment on issues of   ˙ audience, purpose, thesis, development, and mechanics for the first time. Chart 2 outlines the number of Teacher Feedback Sheets which contained comments made by instructors about audience and the number of corrections students made for Essays 3, 4, and 5.

Teacher Feedback Sheets—Audience Comments

Chart 2

Essay #	Number of Essays	Total # of Feedback Sheets with Teacher Comments	Total # of Corrections Made by Students
Essay 3	145	70	16
Essay 4	145	14	14
Essay 5	145	71	16

Of the 145 Essay 3 third drafts, 119 of students received a satisfactory check for audience, 26 received unsatisfactory marks. In addition to this general assessment of their achievement for audience, 48% of the 145 sampled folders contained comments for the student, given by the instructor, on the teacher feedback sheet for Essay 3. Out of the 48%, only 2% of the comments were positive, that is, statements which suggested to the student that audience was being adapted to correctly. Positive comments given on the third feedback sheet included comments such as "good job with adapting to audience in this essay" and "I can tell you put a lot of

hard work into this essay, especially in addressing the needs of your audience."

The remaining comments were given to help students identify and adapt to their audience on the coversheet and in the course in their essays. Out of the 48%, 23% of the folders were corrected according to the teacher's comments. For example, one student, who was profiling the field of radio broadcasting, claimed that she was writing to "late teen male or females in Middle Tennessee who enjoy contemporary hit music." Her instructor commented, "Are they necessarily interested in a broadcaster's job? If so, how and why?" Another comment made by the instructor on the student's paper suggested that her targeted audience of "people interested in music" needed to be more specific. Her instructor again advises, "Show some evidence of how you connect interest in broadcasting to your audience. Remember to be more specific about broadcasting instead of just listening to the radio." In her later draft, the student demonstrated the ability to adapt more appropriately to her audience according to her instructor's comments as she revised her opening from "Listening to the radio is a favorite past time for people of all ages and broadcasting is one exciting part of the field" to "Radio

broadcasting is a job that requires organization and timely off-air activities, while under constant risk of job loss." Thus, the student was able to make a larger audience connection, seeing her audience in her final draft as potential broadcasters who want to know more about the field.

Of the 145 Essay 4 third drafts, 65 of students received a satisfactory check for audience, 25 received unsatisfactory marks, while 55 contained neither satisfactory nor unsatisfactory. A smaller number of instructor comments occurred on Essay 4 feedback sheets in comparison to essay three. Only 10% of the 145 folders contained teacher comments about audience on the feedback sheet. Comments ranged from "work on your audience" to "give your audience more consideration as we discussed." The lower number of teacher comments about audience for Essay 4 stemmed in a large part from the way that particular paper was assessed. For both the Spring and Fall 1998 semesters, Essay 4 was a conference essay in which the teacher gave the student verbal feedback instead of written feedback. Out of the 10% of comments made about audience on the feedback sheets, almost every comment was

used by the students in their revisions. Only two students showed little or no regard to their instructors' comments.

Like Essays 3 and 4, the same process for collecting data regarding audience adaptation was applied to Essay 5. Of the 145 Essay 5 third drafts, 125 received a satisfactory check for audience, 20 received unsatisfactory marks. Out of the 145 folders, 49% contained instructor comments regarding audience on the fifth essay. Since this paper assignment was to summarize and respond to a given article that had appeared in a publication, students were instructed to write as if they were writing for the same publication. Thus, their writers' roles were to be guest reporters for a publication. Out of the 49% of instructors' comments, over three-fourth of the comments were reminders to students to write for a publication. According to the comments on the folders, many students either forgot to include a publication or simply were not able to make the connection between their writing and the article they were responding to. The following teacher's comment is indicative of the majority of instructors' comments: "Have your readers read the essay? Where are these men reading your article? What age group of *Newsweek* readers are you trying to target? What about gender? Does

gender make a difference since the original article is about a gender issue?"

At least 23% percent of the students were able to make a clear audience choice for Essay 5. For example, one student who summarized and responded to an article entitled "The Value of Fraternities" chose a primary audience of "readers of the college newspaper who are college freshmen in US colleges who are considering joining a Greek organization." Her secondary audience included "the readers of *Newsweek* who are parents of potential fraternity/sorority members (college) that are unsure what Greek life has to offer." In her essay, this particular student addressed both students' and parents' concerns about what the original article said in regards to fraternity lifestyles on college campuses. Overall teacher responses on the Teacher Feedback Sheet for Essays 3 and 5, the two essays when students received only written feedback, suggested that only one half of the students had made the right connection between audience and their writing in their third draft for the assignment.

2. Coversheets--Teacher Comments/Student Responses

The third drafts of all three essays were submitted with a coversheet and then as the works in progress were

revised and resubmitted at the end of the semester, so were
new coversheets for each of the fourth drafts. Chart 3
outlines the number of third draft coversheets which
contained instructor comments regarding audience and the
number of corrections students made for Essays 3, 4, and 5.

Essay Coversheets--Audience Comments

Chart 3

Essay #	Number of Essays	Total # of Coversheets with Teacher Comments	Total # of Corrections Made by Students
Essay 3	145	35	26
Essay 4	145	14	14
Essay 5	145	56	49

For Essay 3, 24% of draft three coversheets contained
teacher comments about audience for the students to
address; out of the 24%, three-fourths were corrected. For
Essay 4, about 10% of the folders contained comments to be
addressed by students on their coversheets. Of these, 100%
of the students attempted to correct the problems. Again,
since most comments for Essay 4 were given verbally in
conferences, the low number of written teacher responses
may not account for all teacher comments regarding
audience.

For the third draft coversheets for Essay 5, nearly 40% of the folders contained comments about audience. Out of the 40%, nearly 35% of the problems were corrected. Comments on all coversheets varied very little. Most comments reminded students to narrow audience by race, age, or gender as deemed necessarily. For example, one instructor wrote, "What is the age group of your readers?" Another commented, "Should all races be included or are you specifically targeting African-Americans? I think you are targeting only African-Americans, should you be?" Another instructor suggested, "Consider including not only men in your audience, but women, too. Think of how both men and women would respond differently to what you are profiling. Is there a difference?" While there was close to a 100% correction rate on the coversheets according to instructor comments, students were not always able to make the connection between coversheet and the actual paper. For example, the student who changed his audience to include both men and women on his coversheet, according to his instructor's comments, did not successfully change the essay's content or language to appeal to both men and women.

3. Marginal Comments--Teacher Comments/Student Responses

Instructors were given yet another opportunity to give comments about audience to their students through marginal comments written on the third drafts of Essays 3, 4, and 5 where they also gave remarks about other rhetorical matters such as purpose and thesis, and about grammatical and mechanical problems.

Marginal Notes—Audience Comments

Chart 4

Essay #	Number of Essays	Total # of Drafts with Teacher Comments	Total # of Corrections Made by Students
3	145	46	23
4	145	13	13
5	145	57	17

As indicated in Chart 4, for Essay 3, about 32% of draft three essays contained teacher comments about audience for students to address; out of the 32%, half of the instructor comments were addressed. For Essay 4, about 9% of third drafts contained comments to be addressed by students in the form of teacher marginal comments on draft 3; of these, 100% of the problems were addressed by the students. For Essay 5, nearly 39% of the folders contained

teacher marginal comments on draft 3; out of the 39%,

nearly 29% of the instructors' suggestions were used and

the problems were corrected.

Only about one-third of all third drafts for Essays 3

and 5 contained teacher feedback on audience in the form of

marginal comments. Most marginal comments took the form of

Harbrace Handbook numbers indicating grammatical and

mechanical errors. Occasionally, as in the following

example, a teacher did comment in the margins of the draft

on audience: "Consider using a writer's tone appropriate to

·the young audience you list on your coversheet. Since you

are writing to teen-agers, use specific language and

content that teen-agers would understand."

4.   Final Portfolio Evaluation Sheet—Teacher Comments

The Final Portfolio Evaluation Sheet (Appendix 4,

p.146) is the last opportunity instructors have to make

written comments to students in regards to their overall

performance in the writing class. This study reveals,

however, that few instructors addressed audience issues on

the Final Portfolio Evaluation Sheet other than to mark the

students' level of achievement (See Chart 5).

Teachers' Evaluation of Audience Criterion in Students'

Portfolio Writing

Chart 5

Total # of Folders	Exceptional Achievement	Above Average	Average	Unsatisfactory
145	18	49	51	27

On the Final Portfolio Evaluation Sheet, audience

achievement is assessed using a rubric of "exceptional

achievement," "above average," "average," or

"unsatisfactory." As Chart 5 notes, the great majority of

students (81.3%) scored average or better on the audience

component of their portfolio writing; this high percentage

indicates that portfolio teachers were satisfied with their

student's ability to target and adapt to multiple

audiences. Over 19% of the student writers, received an

"unsatisfactory" for their audience usage in their

portfolios. Very few writing portfolios, around 12%,

received an "exceptional achievement."

What appears to be most surprising is the lack of

comments on the Final Portfolio Evaluation Sheet,

especially on the writing folders that contained

"exceptional" and "unsatisfactory" for their audience

usage. In other words, when students received their final portfolio grade, very few comments explained why that evaluation, for audience, had been given. About 12% of the Portfolio Evaluation Sheets included positive remarks about students' audience revision throughout the course of the semester. For example, one teacher wrote,

> Your writing has improved considerably over the course of this term. I was pleased to see that you had made significant changes to your audience selection for at least two of the three papers. Your attention to audience and thesis has paid off.

Negative comments about audience were noted, but little was said about why a decision of "average" had been reached on the Final Portfolio Evaluation Sheet. Only a few portfolios that received "satisfactory" on audience contained a marginal comment as an explanation. One instructor remarked,

> Your portfolio shows a beginning writer who is at entry-level for English 112. Two notable problems I want to mention that you should consider as you progress into your next writing class: clearly define your audiences and watch

about using comma splices over and over again.

Your audience problem is a serious one as you

never define to whom you are writing to or why,

causing your purpose not to clearly make sense.

While such comments on the Final Portfolio Evaluation Sheet

were given after portfolios were graded and students no

longer could revise their writing (which may explain why so

few teachers commented on audience), the students were

still given the opportunity to hear one last time from

their instructors regarding the importance of audience

centered writing.

5.   Portfolio Coverletters

At the end of the semester, students were asked to

write a 250 word coverletter for their portfolios

expressing their thoughts about the writing experience.

Students were told that the purpose of the letter was not

to critique the writing program and that the letter was

designed for students to critique their own writing

strengths and weaknesses (See "Introduction Letter to the

Final Portfolio," Appendix 8, p. 152). One specific part

of the coverletter asked students to remark about global

changes they made concerning writing over the course of the

semester, including audience, purpose, and thesis. The

great majority of students sampled (over 117 students) did

not give any attention to audience in their coverletters

(See Chart 6).

Audience in Student Portfolio Coverletters

Chart 6

Total # of Coverletters	Total # of Student Comments on Audience	Taught by Full-Time and Part-Time Faculty	Taught by GTA's
145	28	16	12

However, 28 students, 20% of the sampled population,

addressed audience on their final coverletter. One student

commented that "At the beginning of the semester, I did not

consider myself to be a very good writer. However, I have

improved over the semester. I believe that I am better at

describing my topic and informing my audience, which is

something I had never considered before." Reaching a

similar conclusion, another student wrote in her

coverletter: "I choose these particular pieces for my

portfolio because I felt they represented my best work

among all essays. Among revising these essays, I found

myself having to rethink my audience and purpose." While

both of these students have identified audience in their

coverletters, they were not able to express how or why they

had to "rethink" their audience; likewise they were not able to express how they, at the end of the semester, were able to "inform" their audience in a better way.

Some students who mentioned audience in their coverletters made a significant discovery about audience and were likewise able to express it in writing. One student wrote,

> While reading these final drafts of my essays, I hope evaluators will put themselves into the position of a movie-goer in essay 4 and view it as an entertaining, yet informative review about an upcoming film. Finally, in essay 5, I hope the evaluators will put themselves in the place of my audience, people who constantly use the Internet and its instant messaging capabilities.

Similarily, another student made a strong identification of audience:

> I made many changes while revising. First, I made sure each paragraph related back to the thesis statement in some way. Second, I revised my audience selection because I felt I wasn't truly targeting a specific group. I put myself in the place of my audience members and then

> reread my essay as if it were the first time I
> had ever read.

Again, this student, like the previous one, was able to make a strong statement about becoming an audience-centered writer.

Implications of the Study

In an effort to determine the effectiveness of the . audience component in Portfolio English 111, teacher responses to student works in progress and the writing itself were examined. What do these results say about the level of attention to audience overall? What do these results suggest about students' awareness of audience? and What do these results suggest about MTSU's instructors' awareness of audience?

In order to interpret the results of the study accurately, an acknowledgement must be made about how writing in the Portfolio Composition Program is judged. The Writing Portfolios are assessed holistically; all three essays that are submitted at the end of the semester are examined holistically as evidence of the student's overall writing skill. For a student to fail the portfolio, he/she must show a lack of skill, such as audience awareness/ adaptation, in more than one essay. Prior to submission of

portfolios, teachers read each essay as it is produced and comment on the five skill levels separately: purpose, audience, development, organization, and language. Instructors offer general comments on the Teacher Feedback Sheet that direct students' attention to marginal notes on the coversheets and third drafts and students are expected to revise their works in progress as suggested by their teachers. A weak link in this method of teacher response to works in progress, as the results of this study suggest, is the failure of teachers to follow up general responses regarding audience on the Teacher Feedback Sheet with specific advice about audience issues in the margins of the student's third draft of the essay.

Instructors of Portfolio English 111 in 1998 expected students to target appropriate audiences, but insufficient marginal comments indicate they did not always follow up to assess if students were in fact adapting to the age, gender, race, and educational level of their specified audiences in their essays. Most marginal comments made to students dealt with grammar and mechanics in the form of *Harbrace Handbook* numbers. Brief comments are sometimes made on the Teacher Feedback that direct students to specific problems, but the specific comments are often

unclear or the Feedback Sheet only says, "See paper for comments," as in the case of one specific example. The brief comment on the Feedback Sheet suggests that much more specific comments are to follow; however, as in the case of the example above, very few specific comments followed. The most specific marginal comment that was offered stated, "Rethink your audience here." No guidelines or specifics were offered to the student about how to "rethink" the audience choice.

A lack of teacher suggestions for how to adapt the writing to the targeted audience is where MTSU's Writing Portfolio Program seems to fall short. Comments are offered on all drafts, coversheets, and Teacher Feedback Sheets, as indicated in the results of the study, but very little specific advice on how to correct audience problems are ever offered. In other words, saying "work on your audience" is not enough; students need specific suggestions: not only should teachers identify the audience problem; they should give specific instructions on how to correct the problem.

Another problem that occurs on Teacher Feedback Sheets, Essay Coversheets, and through marginal comments deals with the value of comments made by instructors to

reinforce audience-centered writing. Not only do comments about writers' oversights and failings ("work on your audience") need to be explained to students, but positive comments ("good job adapting to audience") to reinforce their good writing practice do as well. These comments leave students wondering, "What is so good about what I did here?" "How can I repeat my good audience choice?" and "How do I know when I have a good audience myself to help others in my peer group?" Sometimes only a "good" can be just as frustrating to understand as a negative comment.

This study also shows that only the most experienced instructors (full-time and part-time faculty) took advantage of writing marginal comments about tone, transitions, and language. Other audience issues were especially sparse in the writing samples taught by graduate teaching assistants. Chart 7 presents a breakdown of numbers of drafts with marginal comments made by graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) versus those made by full-time and part-time faculty. Even though there were about twice as many GTAs teaching in the portfolio program in 1998 than full and part-time faculty, Chart 7 shows that GTAs gave considerably fewer marginal comments regarding audience on students' third drafts than the more experienced teachers.

Marginal Notes—Audience Comments

Graduate Teaching Assistants vs. Full and Part-Time Faculty

Chart 7

Essay #	Number of Essays	Number of Drafts with GTA Comments	Total # Drafts/ Full & Part-Time Faculty Comments	Total # of Drafts with Marginal Comments
3	145	9	35	46
4	145	2	6	13
5	145	15	49	57

Out of the 116 third drafts with teachers' marginal comments about audience, 90 were responded to by full or part-time faculty members. Out of the remaining 26 drafts read and commented on by graduate teaching assistants, only 10 contained teacher comments that specifically targeted audience issues and offered specific advice for student corrections. In contrast, of the 90 full-time and part-time faculty comments, at least 75 were specific. The GTA's failure to write sufficient marginal comments may stem from their lack of knowledge on how students should adapt their message to their targeted audience, instead of their disregard of audience as a major component of the rhetorical situation. Assessing a student's ability to

provide transition between paragraphs and to create a thesis and maintain focus on the thesis and noting problems in specific ways to adapt content and language to a targeted audience takes much writing assessment experience.

At MTSU, graduate teaching assistants are required to take two semesters of teaching preparation classes, the second semester dealing specifically with portfolio instruction. Thus, graduate teaching assistants are still "learning the ropes" as they teach two classes of portfolio composition. Making grammatical and mechanical marks on a paper is less demanding than writing marginal comments about the writer's audience awareness and adaptation. As novice writing instructors, graduate teaching assistants are still learning how to help students achieve audience-centered writing.

Not only were audience comments rather limited from instructors, but from students as well. Students were given the opportunity at the end of the semester to assess their overall writing, but, surprisingly, few students commented about audience on their coverletters. The 250 word coverletter, written at the end of the semester, served as a reflective writing piece for the student to self-evaluate him/herself and for the instructor to

evaluate the needs of the student. Only 20% of the sampled population addressed audience in their final coverletters. When writing the coverletter, students were asked to comment about their usage of global issues. The global issues, however, were not defined as audience, purpose, and thesis. Thus, students may not have been aware of what the question was indeed asking as one student wrote on his coverletter in regards to global issues, "I didn't use global issues in my paper. I talked about local issues, such as parking problems at MTSU, and *Sidelines* [MTSU's campus newspaper]. I didn't write about global issues like the ozone or the economy." As evident, this particular student did not recognize what global issues were in regards to writing and therefore was unable to make a clear judgment about his audience usage. Writing a clear thesis and adapting at an audience takes writing practice. While the global issues of writing are outlined in most writing texts and most instructors discuss these issues in class, students are not always able to identify these issues in their own paper.

The implications of this study of audience in sample student writing from the English 111 Portfolio Composition Program in 1998 highlight a prominent concern in the

teaching of composition at Middle Tennessee State
University. Since most students who enrolled in the
program in 1998 began their first-semester study of writing
with no conception of audience, other then "the teacher,"
the fact that over 81% of the sampled students (118
students) achieved a "satisfactory" or higher on the
audience criterion for their portfolio evaluation is
remarkable. The sampled teacher feedback and student
writing shows that both teachers and the majority of
students are aware of the need to target appropriate
audiences for writing. This study also shows, however,
that students who did demonstrate the ability to choose
appropriate audiences did not always write to those
specific audiences in their essays by adapting language and
content in the essay to meet the needs of those audiences.
The problem was identified in the students' works in
progress at the third draft stage. In their feedback to
these drafts, many teachers failed to follow up their
general judgment of "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" for
the audience component of the writing with marginal
comments on the drafts themselves; hence, they failed to
take advantage of the opportunity to teach the students how
to adapt to audience in their writing. These instructors

possibly believe that since they marked "satisfactory" or "unsatisfactory" on the Teacher Feedback Sheet that this assessment is sufficient. Overall, the English 111 Portfolio Composition Program effectively emphasizes audience-centered writing in program materials, including evaluation checklists, but teacher feedback to students' works in progress can be improved in this important area of audience instruction.

How can assessment be improved? Which steps need to be reinforced? Which steps in teaching audience at MTSU need to be modified? And what, overall, do the results mean for years of portfolio instruction at MTSU to come? These questions will be addressed in the next, and concluding chapter.

Chapter V

Audience Instruction for the Future

This study of audience awareness and adaptation in student writing raises important issues that will aid MTSU first-semester composition instructors in evaluating their audience instruction in English 111 Portfolio Composition. Likewise, this study proposes growing concerns that will benefit writing instructors who are looking for ways to teach audience. The results are significant for writing teachers because it provides a close look at how students use or do not use audience as a major component of their writing. More specifically, the results of Chapter IV, "A Study of Audience in Student Writing, MTSU Portfolio Composition Program 1998," identify several key concerns in the teaching of English 111 Portfolio Composition at MTSU. In conclusion, this chapter will consider four questions: (1) Which steps in teaching audience in the program need to be maintained? (2) Which steps in teaching audience in the program need to be modified? (3) How can program assessment of audience in student writing be improved? And (4) what, overall, are the implications of this study for the future of portfolio instruction at MTSU?

<u>Which steps in teaching audience in the English 111</u>

<u>Portfolio Composition Program need to be maintained?</u>

Composition specialists Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford identify the "audience addressed" method of audience instruction as the most efficient way of teaching first-year writing. They suggest that instructors who enforce the "audience addressed" method are creating the expectation of real-world writing for their students (156). The English 111 Portfolio Composition Program at MTSU is enforcing the idea of "audience addressed." This method of audience instruction needs to be maintained since by requiring that students to identify audience for all of their essay writing assignments and by encouraging instructors to teach audience in terms of race, age, gender, and the like, the program stresses the importance of the students' addressing an audience and for teachers' instruction to aid the students.

Ways that the program reinforces the idea of addressing an audience include use of the coversheet, use of teacher marginal comments on student works in progress, and employment of the Teacher Feedback Sheet. The results of this study suggest that the coversheets for Essays 3, 4, and 5 combined contained over 105 teacher comments

concerning audience which were to be addressed by students in their writing. MTSU instructors are taking advantage of the opportunity to reinforce audience awareness on the coversheet primarily through marginal comments and use of the Teacher Feedback Sheet. While the study indicates that although a great number of audience comments given by instructors lack specific revision advice, audience is, in fact, a major pedagogical consideration in the program.

Writing teachers Fred R. Pfister and Joanne F. Petnik posit that the future of audience instruction is through a model that creates audience awareness through writing. They stress audience invention and collaborative reinforcement as the key components of the heuristic model (214). Utilizing discovery drafting of not only essays, but of global issues combined with peer collaboration, the MTSU Portfolio Composition Program is in fact working in the right direction for improving audience instruction. The MTSU Program focuses on Pfister and Petnik's heuristic model that seeks to provide "an effective heuristic that could be taught to students, practically used by them, and eventually internalized so that it would become and integral part of their composition process" (214). The

four-step model of audience awareness is being reinforced

in MTSU's Writing Portfolio Program.

Which steps in teaching audience in the English 111

Portfolio Composition Program need to be modified?

Since its beginning in 1994, MTSU's English 111

Portfolio Program has evolved and still continues to

develop. Formally in regularly scheduled workshops and

informally in conversations and debates, the program's

participants are encouraged to provide constructive

feedback to each other about the level of instruction

provided to students in order to make the program a

stronger one that adapts to the growing changes in

composition studies. Perhaps one of the most important

steps that needs to be addressed is a lack of reflection on

the part of students and instructors about audience

considerations and the relationships of writer and

audience, particularly as it concerns the purpose or intent

of the writing. During 1998, when students submitted their

works in progress (drafts 1, 2, and 3) along with

coversheets, instructors required little or no self-

reflection from students about their concepts and choices

made while composing their papers. In other words,

students submitted their papers without writing their

thoughts regarding the assignment, the process of creating the assignment, and the challenges of completing the task.

Professional writer and writing teacher Donald M. Murray suggests that self-reflection is a satisfying part of teaching composition as "The teacher must give the responsibility for the text to the writer, making clear again and again that it is the student, not the teacher, who decides what the writing means" (34). Through the process of self-reflection, students are able to take more responsibility for their writing, and their reflections serve as a means for instructors to receive truthful, candid thoughts from students about their assumptions and choices employed in their writing. Thus, to become more critical of their audience considerations, when students submit the third draft of their essays, they should also submit a brief reflective writing piece that answers some of the following questions:

> What are my writing strengths? What are my writing weaknesses? Who was my audience for this paper and why? Did I write my paper to fit the needs of my intended audience? If so, how did I do this in my estimation? What would I do differently to this paper if I could modify

something right now? What was the greatest

challenge of this writing assignment? What will

be one specific goal I want to accomplish when I

receive my paper once again and begin to revise?

This particular reflective writing prompt requires students

to think beyond their errors with the conventions of

writing, such as grammar and mechanics; it asks students to

consider their audience choice and to identify how they

attempt to reach their audience.

Not only should reflective writing be a part of

students' final step before submitting works in progress to

instructors, but instructors should, likewise, create a

self-reflective piece. In other words, on the due date of

an essay, students should have the opportunity to reflect

on their writing commitment, their writing challenges, and

writing joys of a particular assignment. At the same time,

writing instructors, who teach Portfolio Composition,

should keep a self-reflective notebook and share it with

other instructors in hopes of identifying some similar

concerns and issues.

While students are writing their reflective piece in

class, the writing instructor should practice the same

pedagogical model. In other words, reflecting about the

teaching process with a community of writing teachers can be a positive reinforcer of good instruction and can be a constructive critique of teaching skills that need to be refined and reinforced. This reflective practice will especially benefit graduate teaching assistants who are novice instructors and who teach the majority of portfolio classes. The following questions should be addressed by Portfolio Composition instructors:

What was challenging about teaching this assignment? What do I think were my teaching strengths in this assignment and my weaknesses? How did I teach purpose, thesis, and audience for this paper? When teaching students about composing this paper, did I remember who comprised my audience and in which ways did I tailor my instruction to fit the needs of my audience (the class)? Does the demographics of my class make a difference in my instruction? What are points that I intend to reinforce on when I assess these papers? What are my goals for teaching the next paper?

Reflective writing prompts encourage instructors to mimic the students' reflective questions and to focus on how

audience is addressed specifically. These responses can be shared anonymously between the community of portfolio writing teachers for the purpose of helping writing instructors, especially inexperienced ones, recognize audience issues that, as writers and teachers, they share with their students and with other teachers.

Another important practice that should be added to the current Portfolio Composition Writing Program at MTSU is student post-reflection after receiving their teacher's responses to draft 3. Currently, students are asked to preconceive their audience; in other words, they create an audience whom they wish to address and use the coversheet, which serves much like a contract. Therefore, students visualize audience before they write. However, little attention by students is paid to audience during the revision process. One addition to the program that could address this concern is use of an additional reflective exercise completed outside of class. Using teacher feedback sheets, coversheets, and through marginal comments, instructors are making post comments about audience as seen in the case study reported in Chapter IV. However, this study indicates that students respond by correcting grammatical errors before considering audience

for their revisions. A post-audience analysis is an additional exercise that would refocus the students' attention on audience. The *St. Martin's Guide to Writing* outlines a post-writing exercise at the end of each chapter called "Thinking Critically About What You Have Learned." This section in the text asks students to think critically about their purpose, thesis, audience, and writing challenges and difficulties. This post assignment could be used with teacher feedback to help students critically re-examine their audience choices and how effectively their essay addresses to the targeted audience.

How can English 111 Portfolio Program assessment of audience in student writing be improved?

A more specific aspect of MTSU's Portfolio Writing Composition Program that needs to be modified is the assessment of Essay 4. Currently, feedback for Essay 4 is offered through verbal comments between the teacher and student during a mandatory conference session. However, results of the study indicate that revisions on Essay 4 are fewer in regard to audience issues. As Chapter IV indicates, only 10% of the 145 folders contained teacher comments about audience on the feedback sheet and again only 10% of the folders contained comments to be addressed

by students on their coversheets. These numbers suggest that teachers offering verbal feedback only about audience may not be productive for students' revisions because Essay 4 was assessed atypically; the results reported in the previous chapter are not valid for this study. However, this observation is not to suggest that the conference assessment idea be abandoned completely. One way of assuring that students are understanding comments and re-thinking their choices is to create a modified teacher feedback sheet for the conferenced essay. This instrument could highlight a student's problems with audience, purpose, and thesis (See "Modified Teacher Feedback Sheet," Appendix 9, p.153).

In addition, students should bring a reflective writing piece to the conference in which they comment about their audience, purpose, and thesis. This reflective writing should be assigned as outside work to be completed before the conference:

> What was my audience choice for this paper? Is this audience completely narrowed by race, age, gender, educational level, and the like? Do I write my paper to my given audience or to a general audience? If I am writing my paper to my

chosen audience, is my paper clear and accurate
to meet their needs? If not, what can I do as a
writer to assure that I meet my audience's needs?
By addressing these questions through self-reflection
before a conference, the short period of conference time
can be maximized to give both instructor and student a
clear agenda of what needs to be accomplished.

Finally, where does the future of audience awareness
lie in first-year composition studies and more specifically
in MTSU's Portfolio Composition Program? Currently, the
Portfolio Program treats audience as a major component of
the rhetorical triangle and as an essential criterion for
successful writing. As the results of the study indicate,
audience awareness is, in fact, being taught through the
writing-as-process pedagogy. Also by privileging revision,
the portfolio method of assessment is systemic to this
pedagogy: the measurement of student writing reinforces the
importance of audience. While the program needs to refine
audience instruction to insure that all teachers place
equal focus on audience-centered writing and know how to
help their students achieve it, the future of audience
instruction in the Portfolio Program at MTSU looks
promising.

New challenges yet facing audience instruction in MTSU's English 111 Portfolio Composition Program include a growing need to understand and accept diversity. Audience instruction in the twenty-first century is going to create new demands on educators as they increasingly expect students to put aside egocentric writing for audience-centered, real-world writing where differences among peoples must be tolerated and adapted to. As college campuses become more ethnically diverse and technology increasingly available to students, audience instruction must help students become aware of other cultures, including cultures identified through electronic peer groups. The challenge of audience instruction that MTSU's Portfolio Composition Program faces in the future will be meeting the needs of students in a diverse, technological century while preparing them, through writing instruction, for life in an increasingly complex world.

Appendices

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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

February 7, 2001

To: Ms. JULIE LUMPKINS

FROM: DR. WILLIAM LEVINE, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, AND

    COMMITTEE MEMBER, INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

RE: PROTOCOL #01-107

I am pleased to inform you that I have approved your request for an expedited review. Your project, "The Teaching of Portfolio Composition: The Role of Audience Revision in First Year Writing Courses at MTSU," has met the Institutional Review Board's guidelines for research involving human subjects. Thank you for your supplementary memo explaining your procedures for storing and disposing of student data.

I wish you the best as you embark on your research.

CC: Dr. Ayne Cantrell

Appendix 2
Essay Coversheet

Student_____   English 111 Essay Number_____

ESSAY COVERSHEET

Instructions: For each essay, complete a coversheet after you have written a discovery draft and then submit the coversheet with all subsequent drafts of the essay, revising the coversheet as needed if your approach to the essay changes. You may write on the back of this sheet if you need more room.

1. In a word or phrase, describe your topic._____

2. In a word or phrase, describe your working title._____

3. Complete the following sentence that tell why you are insider on this subject; that is, what qualifies you to write on this subject?

   I am an insider on this subject because

4. In two to four sentences complete the following, which should describe your target audience in specific terms: class, gender, race, age, educational level, geographical location and the like.

   My target readers are

5. Complete the following statements that indicate (a) the purpose that you want to achieve in writing this essay for this specific audience and (b) the response you expect from this audience.

   My purpose in writing this essay is to

   I hope my audience will respond by

6. Complete the following sentence to indicate what value your essay holds for its readers.

   My readers will benefit from reading this essay by

7. In a word or phrase, identify the role you are playing as the author of this essay: Are you writing in your role as a university student, new parent, concerned citizen, dedicated worker, or <u>what</u>?

8. In a complete sentence, state your thesis. Be sure that this statement is the same thesis that appears in your essay.

Appendix 3
Teacher Feedback Sheets

English 111   Student_____

TEACHER'S FEEDBACK TO ESSAY 3: PROFILING A PLACE OR ACTIVITY
Instructions: This form must be bound in your English Folder on top of all materials for Essay 3 collected here and in the order returned to you.

_____ Your essay submission is being returned to you unread because you fail to meet the format and submission requirements noted below.

_____ Your essay submission has been read. You are ready to

    1. Complete sentence-level corrections as required by the **Harbrace Handbook** English **Folder Assignment and**

    2. Revise the essay as instructed for matters of purpose, audience, thesis, organization, development, and language usage.

FORMAT
_____ Titled and state topically without underlining or placing inside quotation marks
_____ Handwritten in blue or black ink on wide-lined paper, front side only
_____ Typed/printed on one side only and on a good grade of white 8 ½ X 11" paper with 1" margins, double spacing throughout, and right margin not justified; word processed using a standard font such as Courier or Times Roman 12
_____ Typed/printed with fresh ribbon
_____ First page set up as example in Harbrace Handbook, page 517
_____ Subsequent pages numbered as Harbrace example, pages 517-37
_____ Secondary sources (quotations and paraphrases) cited parenthetically and listed on a works cited page following MLA Guidelines for documentation

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS
_____ Drafts 1, 2, & 3 numbered at top of the first page of each draft
_____ 550-650 word count met
_____ Draft 3 and coversheet
_____ Draft 2 and coversheet
_____ Peer Response Forms
_____ Draft 1 with statements of purpose, audience, general idea
_____ Two invention strategies
_____ Interview notes and copies of brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, etc.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
Without _____ **extensive revision** as suggested in the following areas, this essay will not pass the portfolio evaluation.

Without _____ **some revision** as suggested in the following areas, this essay will not pass the portfolio evaluation.

TEACHER'S RESPONSE TO ESSAY 3

PURPOSE: Using information gleaned from an interview but without referring to him/herself and to the interview itself in the essay, does the writer profile a place or activity and offer an interpretation of the subject as required by the essay genre assigned?
_____ Satisfactory   _____ Unsatisfactory

AUDIENCE: Does the writer designate an audience appropriate for the subject profiled, sufficiently narrow the audience, and adapt content and language to that audience?
_____ Satisfactory   _____ Unsatisfactory

THESIS: Does the writer express a clear, specific, and appropriate thesis that gives a dominant impression or interpretation of the subject being profiled?
_____ Satisfactory   _____ Unsatisfactory

DEVELOPMENT: Does the writer provide plenty of concrete information (including details, examples, definitions, illustrations) and at least one quotation from the interview source to present an interesting, complete, and accurate account of the subject? Does the writer accurately document the essay using the MLA format for parenthetical citations and Works Cited?
_____ Satisfactory   _____ Unsatisfactory

ORGANIZATION: Does the writer choose an organizational pattern that logically follows from the thesis (usually topical), and does the writer cue the reader by providing adequate transitions among paragraphs?
_____ Satisfactory   _____ Unsatisfactory

LANGUAGE USAGE: Does the writer choose language that expresses an appropriate tone toward the subject and audience and avoid grammatical and mechanical errors that detract from the essay's message?
_____ Satisfactory   _____ Unsatisfactory

TEACHER'S GENERAL RESPONSE

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____ Follow up with Teacher Conference   _____ Attend MTSU Writing Center

English 111   Student_____

TEACHER'S FEEDBACK TO ESSAY 4: JUSTIFYING AN EVALUATION
Instructions: This form must be bound in your English Folder on top of all materials for Essay 4 collected here and in the order returned to you.

_____ Your essay submission is being returned to you unread because you fail to meet the format and submission requirements noted below.

_____ Your essay submission has been read. You are ready to

3. Complete sentence-level corrections as required by the **Harbrace Handbook** English **Folder Assignment and**

4. Revise the essay as instructed for matters of purpose, audience, thesis, organization, development, and language usage.

FORMAT
_____ Titled and state topically without underlining or placing inside quotation marks
_____ Handwritten in blue or black ink on wide-lined paper, front side only
_____ Typed/printed on one side only and on a good grade of white 8 ½ X 11" paper with 1" margins, double spacing throughout, and right margin not justified; word processed using a standard font such as Courier or Times Roman 12
_____ Typed/printed with fresh ribbon
_____ First page set up as example in Harbrace Handbook, page 517
_____ Subsequent pages numbered as Harbrace example, pages 517-37
_____ Secondary sources (quotations and paraphrases) cited parenthetically and listed on a works cited page following MLA Guidelines for documentation

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS
_____ Drafts 1, 2, & 3 numbered at top of the first page of each draft
_____ 550-650 word count met
_____ Draft 3 and coversheet
_____ Draft 2 and coversheet
_____ Peer Response Forms
_____ Draft 1 with statements of purpose, audience, general idea
_____ Two invention strategies
_____ Viewing and/or reading notes

IMPORTANT NOTICE
Without _____ **extensive revision** as suggested in the following areas, this essay will not pass the portfolio evaluation.

Without _____ **some revision** as suggested in the following areas, this essay will not pass the portfolio evaluation.

TEACHER'S RESPONSE TO ESSAY 4

PURPOSE: Does the writer evaluate a particular subject appropriate to the essay genre assigned, state his/her judgment clearly, and back it up with a convincing argument? Is the argument based on standards of value that readers will be likely to agree are appropriate for judging this kind of subject?
_____ Satisfactory   _____ Unsatisfactory

AUDIENCE: Does the writer designate an appropriate audience and adapt content and language to that audience?
_____ Satisfactory   _____ Unsatisfactory

THESIS: Does the writer express a carefully focused thesis that indicates the writer's judgment about the subject and gives reasons in support of that judgment?
_____ Satisfactory   _____ Unsatisfactory

DEVELOPMENT: Does the writer give clear and appropriate reasons that support his/her judgment of the subject? Are the standards of value for judgment clearly expressed or understood? Is there sufficient and relevant evidence, especially textual support (descriptions, quotations, paraphrases, summaries) to support all claims? Does the writer accurately document the essay using the MLA format for parenthetical citations and Works Cited?
_____ Satisfactory   _____ Unsatisfactory

ORGANIZATION: Does the writer choose an organizational pattern that presents the essential parts of the evaluation: a presentation of the subject, the judgment, and reasons and support for the judgment? Does the writer cue the reader by providing adequate transitions among paragraphs?
_____ Satisfactory   _____ Unsatisfactory

LANGUAGE USAGE: Does the writer choose language that expresses an appropriate tone toward the subject and audience and avoid grammatical and mechanical errors that detract from the essay's message?
_____ Satisfactory   _____ Unsatisfactory

TEACHER'S GENERAL RESPONSE

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____ Follow up with Teacher Conference   _____ Attend MTSU Writing Center

English 111   Student_____

TEACHER'S FEEDBACK TO ESSAY 5: SUMMARIZING AND RESPONDING

Instructions: **This form must be bound in your English Folder on top of all materials for Essay 5 collected here and in the order returned to you.**

_____ Your essay submission is being returned to you unread because you fail to meet the format and submission requirements noted below.

_____ Your essay submission has been read. You are ready to

      5. Complete sentence-level corrections as required by the **Harbrace Handbook English Folder Assignment and**

      6. Revise the essay as instructed for matters of purpose, audience, thesis, organization, development, and language usage.

FORMAT
_____ Titled and state topically without underlining or placing inside quotation marks
_____ Handwritten in blue or black ink on wide-lined paper, front side only
_____ Typed/printed on one side only and on a good grade of white 8 ½ X 11" paper with 1" margins, double spacing throughout, and right margin not justified; word processed using a standard font such as Courier or Times Roman 12
_____ Typed/printed with fresh ribbon
_____ First page set up as example in Harbrace Handbook, page 517
_____ Subsequent pages numbered as Harbrace example, pages 517-37
_____ Secondary sources (quotations and paraphrases) cited parenthetically and listed on a works cited page following MLA Guidelines for documentation

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS
_____ Drafts 1, 2, & 3 numbered at top of the first page of each draft
_____ 550-650 word count met
_____ Draft 3 and coversheet
_____ Draft 2 and coversheet
_____ Peer Response Forms
_____ Draft 1 with statements of purpose, audience, general idea
_____ Two invention strategies

IMPORTANT NOTICE
Without _____ **extensive revision** as suggested in the following areas, this essay will not pass the portfolio evaluation.

Without _____ **some revision** as suggested in the following areas, this essay will not pass the portfolio evaluation.

TEACHER'S RESPONSE TO ESSAY 5

PURPOSE: Does the writer compose an essay that accurately and adequately summarizes an assigned reading and presents a clearly defined, fitting response to the subject addressed?
_____ Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory

AUDIENCE: Does the writer designate a specific and appropriate audience for the essay and adapt both content and language to the designated audience?
_____ Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory

THESIS: Does the writer express a clear, specific, and relevant thesis that states a response in opposition to or agreement with the position stated in the assigned reading?
_____ Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory

DEVELOPMENT: Does the writer use material at least twice from the assigned reading (paraphrases and quotations) to accurately summarize the main points of the essay? Does the writer present material (examples, details, illustrations, statistics, testimony) to clarify and to support his/her response? Does the writer accurately document the essay using the MLA format for parenthetical citations and Works Cited?
_____ Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory

ORGANIZATION: Does the writer begin with an introductory paragraph that introduces the assigned reading, names the author and title of the work, and states a thesis that agrees or disagrees with the author's main point. In the paragraphs following, does the writer organize the response in a clear and logical sequence providing adequate transitions among ideas? In the concluding paragraph, does the writer bring the reader back to the assigned reading's main point and leave a favorable impression for the student writer's position?
_____ Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory

LANGUAGE USAGE: Does the writer choose language that expresses an appropriate tone toward the subject and audience and avoid grammatical and mechanical errors that detract from the essay's message?
_____ Satisfactory _____ Unsatisfactory

TEACHER'S GENERAL RESPONSE

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ Follow up with Teacher Conference _____ Attend MTSU Writing Center

Appendix 4
Final Portfolio Evaluation

Final Portfolio Evaluation
English 111

Student_____ Essays 1 2 3 4 5

1. Does the writer follow through on the requirements of the writing assignments and achieve the purposes of the essays as defined by the assignments?

    __ Exceptional achievement __ Above average __Average __Unsatisfactory

2. Does the writer define appropriate audiences for the essays and then meet the needs of the audiences?

    __ Exceptional achievement __ Above average __Average __Unsatisfactory

3. Does the writer provide sufficient and appropriate materials (details, descriptions, illustrations) to develop all ideas?

    __ Exceptional achievement __ Above average __Average __Unsatisfactory

4. Does the writer produce well-focused, unified essays and organize material appropriately?

    __ Exceptional achievement __ Above average __Average __Unsatisfactory

5. Does the writer come through as a dependable and credible person in the overall presentation of ideas, in the tone of the writing and the attitude towards the audience, and in the professional attitude towards revision and editing out of sentence and phrase-level errors, including faulty grammar and mechanics?

    __ Exceptional achievement __ Above average __Average __Unsatisfactory

Other Comments: *An __unsatisfactory__ in any of the areas above results in a failed portfolio. All portfolios that receive F's have been team assessed and represent the evaluation of more than one English III instructor.*

Appendix 5
Profiling a Place or Activity

ESSAY 3: Profiling a Place or Activity

ASSIGNMENT: Write an essay of 550-650 words that profiles a community or campus organization, program, or place; a business or profession; or an interesting and unusual hobby or sport. *For a thorough description of writing that profiles a subject, read The St. Martin's Guide, chapter 4, pages 129-53, which includes sample essays by professional writers and students. For a sample essay by a MTSU student, see Portfolio Guide, page 29.*

TOPIC: Follow instructions in St. Martin's Guide, chapter 4 on "Considering Topics for Your Own Essay" (St. Martin's 135 and 151) and "Finding a Subject to Write About" (155-71), *but omit suggestions for profiling persons. Profiles of people are not allowed.*

PURPOSE: Your general purpose is to inform and to entertain. More specifically, you are to provide readers with new information about a place or activity or with information that enlarges their knowledge about something they know only a little about, enabling them "to visualize the place or activity" (St. Martin's 129).

AUDIENCE: Choose a publication for your essay: a campus newspaper (Sidelines, The Record), a local magazine or newspaper (Murfreesboro Magazine, The Daily News Journal, The Nashville Scene, The Tennessean), a special interest magazine or journal Spin, Wired, a sports magazine, historical society newsletter, etc.).

INVENTION AND WRITING DRAFT 1: You are required to follow through on the "Guide to Writing," St. Martin's (155-71). Be sure to follow instructions completely, including writing all lists of places and activities, setting up a tentative schedule for observation and interview visits, and posing preliminary interview questions. You are expected to generate several pages of invention—at least five handwritten. Also follow instructions for writing and revising draft 1 carefully and completely. Your teacher may ask that you complete a progress report following draft 1 (see page 127).

SPECIFIC SKILLS/ABILITIES REQUIRED BY THIS ASSIGNMENT: You will
- Use a least one interview and observation to gather material for writing
- Create a dominant impression of the place or activity
- Present lively and interesting detail, including sensory information and quotations
- Document secondary sources appropriately using MLA guidelines

TRAPS TO AVOID: You will want to avoid the following problems especially:
- Choosing too broad a subject (e.g., selecting used book stores, instead of the BookRack; recycling centers, instead of Recycle Murfreesboro)
- Failing to leave the reader with a dominant impression of the activity or place
- Treating the subject too superficially (the essay reads like an advertisement)
- Focusing on the writer and using "I" instead of focusing on the subject

RESEARCH REQUIREMENT:
1. Interview a knowledgeable individual, and when available, collect descriptive materials, such as pamphlets or newsletters, to gather information about your profile subject. *You may interview a relative only with your instructor's permission; the first interview must be in person, not via telephone.*
2. Quote the interviewee at least once in the essay.

3. Acknowledge sources using MLA documentation style.

OBSERVATION AND INTERVIEW GUIDELINES: Following suggestions in *The St. Martin's Guide* (Chapter 20), schedule and plan your visit and prepare and write out your interview questions in advance.

Observation tips:
- Observe the site from several perspectives and take notes.
- Divide the notes into categories covering aspects or features of the place or activity—the setting, the people, and your personal reactions.
- Reflect in writing on what you have seen and heard and felt.

Interview tips:
- Ask specific questions, for the most part, and if you receive a "yes" or "no" answer, follow with a question seeking more information.
- Be flexible—if you think of a good questions during the interview, ask it.
- If the interviewee wanders from the topic, steer him/her back.
- Listen carefully.
- Take only the notes you will need to job your memory.
- Use a tape recorder if your interviewee does not object and the recorder does not distract.
- End the interview with a general invitation: "Can you think of anything else to tell me?"
- Immediately after the interview, make a complete record of it based on your notes and include physical descriptions, if appropriate.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS:
1. Essay 3 requires that you quote and paraphrase your sources appropriately and that you document them correctly. See Harbrace Handbook 38 e for how to cite an interview (page 603) and a pamphlet (page 597) on the Works Cited and how to cite sources parenthetically within the text of your paper.
2. You must submit notes from the interview and copies of any printed materials collected for this essay.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:
1. Do not refer to the interview in the essay ("She said in the interview. . . .").
2. Do not refer to yourself as the interviewer in the essay ("When I asked him. . . .").
3. Do not present a hodgepodge of unrelated information about your subject. Do have an interpretation of the subject, an "angle" for your profile. You goal is to create an interesting focus for your profile. Your angle/focus will be expressed as a thesis, a central, overriding idea to which everything in your essay relates.

Appendix 6
Justifying an Evaluation

ESSAY 4: Justifying an Evaluation

ASSIGNMENT: Write an essay of 550-650 words that evaluates a subject (such as a movie, television program, book, magazine, computer game, music album, concert, play, dance performance, an actor's performance, or a player's performance). Base your evaluation on standards of value that readers will likely to agree are appropriate for judging the subject. *For a thorough description of writing that justifies an evaluation, read The St. Martin's Guide, chapter 8, pages 351-81, which includes sample essays by professional writers and students. For a sample essay by a MTSU student, see Portfolio Guide, page 37.*

TOPIC: Follow instructions in St. Martin's Guide, chapter 8 on "considering Topics for Your Own Essay" (St. Martin's 358, 372-73, 379) and "Finding a Subject to Write About" (383-84), *but omit suggestions for a topic that does not require research ("evaluate your performance as a student, your athletic ability") or a topic that requires too much research ("evaluate a government agency"). Choose a subject that has a "text," a source that you can document; obviously, a book as a text, and so do television shows, movies, dance performances, concerts, and the like.*

PURPOSE: Your general purpose is to persuade by argumentation. More specifically, you are to apply appropriate standards of value to your subject and provide readers with a convincing argument that supports your evaluation of the subject. You want your readers to agree with your evaluation.

AUDIENCE: Choose a specific medium in which you might publish your essay: a campus newspaper (Sidelines, The Record), a local magazine or newspaper (Murfreesboro Magazine, The Daily News Journal, The Nashville Scene, The Tennessean), a special interest magazine or journal Spin, Wired, a sports magazine, historical society newsletter, etc.).

INVENTION AND WRITING DRAFT 1: You are required to follow through on the "Guide to Writing," St. Martin's (382-98). Be sure to follow instructions completely, including writing lists for possible subjects (culture, written work, leisure) and all other writing prompts. You are expected to generate several pages of invention—at least five handwritten. Also follow instructions for writing and revising draft 1 carefully and completely. Your teacher may ask that you complete a progress report following draft 1 (see page 129).

SPECIFIC SKILLS/ABILITIES REQUIRED BY THIS ASSIGNMENT: You will
- Use firsthand observation and/or critical reading to gather material for writing
- Think critically and logically to reach sound judgment
- Develop the judgment with a well-supported argument
- Present a reasonable tone
- Document secondary sources appropriately using MLA guidelines

TRAPS TO AVOID: You will want to avoid the following problems especially:
- Choosing an inappropriate subject—one that requires no research, too much research, or has no source to document; or one that is too broad (war movies rather than one particular movie, such as Saving Private Ryan)
- Failing to assert a strong judgment
- Failing to sufficiently describe the subject for readers who may be unfamiliar with it

- Seeking to evaluate the subject from memory only (writers should not attempt to evaluate a movie, e.g., unless they have an opportunity to see it two or three times, nor should they evaluate a novel unless they have time to reread it)
- Failing to apply appropriate standards of evaluation (writers should not attempt to evaluate a movie, e.g., unless they know its genre, such as horror, American western, romantic comedy, and can determine suitable standards of evaluation for the particular genre)
- Failing to support the judgment with evidence (details from the "text")
- Focusing on the writer and using "I" instead of focusing on the subject

ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING: Writing that justifies an evaluation attempts to persuade by way of building a convincing argument. Argumentative writing makes assertions (claims) that must be supported by reasons backed up by evidence. The thesis, of course, is the major claim in an essay that justifies an evaluation; it makes a judgment about the subject.

To understand the complexity of writing to justify an evaluation, you should know that Essay 4 will require you to build a deductive argument (see Harbrace 35f). The deductive argument to justify an evaluation uses standards of value as the major premise to establish its conclusion. *Often these standards are implied but not stated directly in the argument.* An example of such a deductive argument is

>   Major premise: Entertaining action films have fast-paced direction, complicated stunts
>   Punctuated by animated music, and sympathetically portrayed super heroes.
>   [standards of value]
>   Minor premise: *Rumble in the Bronx* has fast-paced direction, complicated stunts
>   Punctuated by animated music, and a sympathetically portrayed super hero.
>   Conclusion: *Rumble in the Bronx* is an entertaining action film. [thesis claim]

Also note that in addition to the basic framework of a deductive argument, the essay that justifies an evaluation will require you to build inductive arguments (Harbrace 35e) to establish the minor premise. For example, illustrations from *Rumble in the Bronx* must be given as supporting evidence for each of the three points made about the movie in the minor premise of the deductive argument given above, so the essay would have to create three inductive arguments.

Appendix 7
Summarizing and Responding

ESSAY 5: SUMMARIZING AND RESPONDING

ASSIGNMENT: Write an essay of 550-650 words in which you summarize and respond to a position presented in another essay. *For a thorough description of writing that summarizes and responds, read the instruction and guidelines in* Portfolio Composition *that follows and the sample student essay, page 47.*

PURPOSE: Your general purpose is to persuade by argumentation. More specifically, you are to introduce the essay to which you are responding and show clearly, logically, and specifically where you stand, distinguishing your position from that of your source. *You must disagree with the author at least in part. You may agree with author's basic position while disputing some of her/his subpoints or applications. Or you may disagree with most of the article.* Whatever your stand, you will want your reader to agree that your position is worthy of their acceptance.

AUDIENCE: You must assume that your readers have not read the essay that you are addressing. Be sure to narrow to a specific group, however. Most likely, you will want to select an audience that the writer of the essay most likely was targeting. Where was the essay originally published? What audience does the publication target? What hints does the essayist give about his/her targeted audience.

INVENTION AND WRITING DRAFT 1: You are required to follow through on the "Guide to Writing," Portfolio Composition. Be sure to follow instructions completely for "Invention and Research." You are expected to generate several pages of invention—at least five handwritten. Also follow instructions for writing and revising draft 1 carefully and completely. Your teacher may ask that you complete a progress report following draft 1 (see page 131).

SPECIFIC SKILLS/ABILITIES REQUIRED BY THIS ASSIGNMENT: You will
- Read selected essay critically by questioning and understanding
- Analyze, interpret, and evaluate the essayist's position
- Quote, paraphrase, and summarize the essayist's position accurately
- Present a logical and well thought out response
- Document the source appropriately using MLA guidelines

TRAPS TO AVOID: You will want to avoid the following problems especially:
- Failing to summarize the essay adequately for your reader who has not read the essay
- Agreeing in total with the essayist, thus failing to offer any criticism of his/her position and insights of your own
- Misrepresenting the author
- Using the article as merely a point of departure to launch an argument of your own

Appendix 8
Introduction Letter to the Final Portfolio

Introduction Letter to the Final Portfolio
Portfolio Composition
English 111

Directions: Write a 250 word essay in which you a letter about your portfolio submission. A good way to begin is with invention strategies in which you map out the information below.
You need to set this up in the form of a letter addressed to:

Dear Portfolio Readers,

In your introduction paragraph, you will want to
- Introduce your portfolio
- Give the titles of your essays and explain why you choose these particular essays for your submission

In your middle paragraphs, you will want to answer the following
- What are your strengths in your portfolio?
- What are your weaknesses in your portfolio?
- What steps did you take to revise the essays in this portfolio?
- What changes did you make to your global issues?

In your conclusion paragraph, you will want to
- Tell your readers what you hope they will gain from reading your portfolio
- Tell your readers what you have gained from creating this writing portfolio

Make sure you sign your letter as such:

Sincerely,

Name

Put this letter on top of your final portfolio when you are finished and submit. Make sure you proofread your letter before submitting.

Appendix 9
Modified Teacher Feedback Sheet

Modified Teacher Feedback Sheet
Essay 4

Oral Feedback Check-Off List: (For student to fill out during out-of-class conference)

- Is my thesis correctly written?

  ____Yes   ____No

  If no, what are possible steps to make it better?

  1.
  2.
  3.

- Is my audience choice correct?

  ____Yes   ____No

  If no, what are possible steps to make it better?

  1.
  2.
  3.

  Am I addressing my audience in my paper?

  ____Yes   ____No

  If no, then what can I do in my paper to adapt to my audience?

  1.
  2.
  3.

- Is my purpose correct?

  ____Yes   ____No

  If no, then what can I do to make it better?

  1.
  2.
  3.

- Key points to discuss:

  ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT: GRAMMAR AND MECHANICS:

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<div align="center">Works Cited</div>

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