

Bowling Green State University
ScholarWorks@BGSU

Master of Arts in English Plan II Graduate
Projects

English

Spring 4-17-2017

Final MA Portfolio

Mary O'Hara

Bowling Green State University, meohara@bgsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ms_english



Part of the [Other Rhetoric and Composition Commons](#)

Repository Citation

O'Hara, Mary, "Final MA Portfolio" (2017). *Master of Arts in English Plan II Graduate Projects*. 6.
https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/ms_english/6

This Dissertation/Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the English at ScholarWorks@BGSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master of Arts in English Plan II Graduate Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@BGSU.

FINAL MA PORTFOLIO

Mary Ellen O'Hara
meohara@bgsu.edu

A Final Portfolio

Submitted to the English Department of Bowling Green State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in the field of English

April 17, 2017

First Reader: Dr. Sue Carter Wood
Second Reader: Dr. William Albertini

Table of contents

Analytical Narrative 1

Project One:

A Path Out of the Darkness: Toward Successful Peer Assessment 9

Project Two:

Grammar: Cohesion Unit 28

Project Three:

Infinite Hybrids: An Author-centric Approach to Teaching Literature 58

Project Four:

“I Was Told that I Better Keep Off that Subject”: Margaret Sanger’s
Early Rhetoric During the Sex Education Campaigns
Research and Analysis 66

Analytical Narrative

Although I'm not a fan of Anais Nin I've always remembered a quotation of hers, "[w]e write to taste life twice, in the moment and in retrospection". And it seems I've come to the moment when retrospection is required of my time at BGSU. Not surprisingly, my feelings are mixed. My goal, upon entering the program, was quite simple, I wanted to formally investigate methodologies of composition. Although I've been teaching composition for several years, my formal training is in theatre. Much of my knowledge regarding composition derives from personal study, discussions with colleagues and some trial-and error. Therefore, upon being accepted into BGSU, I was looking forward to immersing myself in methodologies related to composition and benefitting from dialogue with my classmates and instructors. My goal never changed; however due to the limited amount of course offerings, I attended several classes which were tangential to my goal.

In reflecting upon my writings while at BGSU and selecting those to be included in my portfolio I had little hesitation. Each of the selected writings holds the practical possibility of being incorporated into a future course, although not exclusively in composition. Furthermore, each writing served to ignite my passion for a topic – sometimes an unlikely passion as with the teaching unit on cohesion. I've ordered the pieces based upon their practical applicability; thus, the portfolio extends from pieces I will likely use in the fall of 2017, to those I hope to implement if given the opportunity to teach non-composition courses. Additionally, the first two pieces represent my existing teaching philosophy of composition while the latter pieces illustrate the development of philosophies in new areas, or at least in areas where I've no teaching experience.

To begin the process of tasting again I return to a research essay written for ENG 6200, *The Teaching of Writing*. While following the dictate to research and develop best practices in an area of composition I elected to examine peer assessment as I'd been dissatisfied with the

approaches I'd attempted over the years. My research led me to the writings of Keith Topping, David Boud and Duncan Nulty. However, it was Topping's various suggestions which sparked my interest and imagination. Topping's "planning issues" furnished me with a pathway to re-envision the peer assessment process. For in reading his article, I realized I wasn't giving peer assessment the necessary attention; simply, peer assessment required more than a few workshops. Additionally, I noted how peer assessment sat outside my teaching philosophy of empowering students through collaborative and process-oriented teaching practices. Topping's article provided the initial steps toward including such practices. So, my research essay, *The Long and Winding Road Toward Successful Peer Feedback: A Teaching Unit* became a process of mapping-out a semester-long approach to peer assessment which included co-development of feedback criteria, matching same-ability students in small groups, role-playing and modeling sessions of assessment behavior, and providing feedback on completed peer assessments. My research acted as a catalyst toward developing several new exercises and activities, and at the time, I was satisfied with my research and approach to peer assessment.

My satisfaction didn't last long. The following semester I continued researching both peer and instructor assessment practices. The result was a desire to revisit my ENG 6200 research essay. To be clear in regards my desire for revision, the research I unearthed did not discount my original mapping of peer assessment; rather it revealed more possibilities which I wanted to incorporate into my practice. In regards to feedback, although sources from NCTE's website were suggested I admit I found them turgid. However, a casual comment about Asao Inoue's community-based approach to assessment led me down a rabbit hole that was designed with my mind and teaching philosophy in mind. After reading several of Inoue's articles as well as those of Brian Huot I opted for what might be described as a partial-gut-renovation revision approach. I retained the

framework of Toppings planning issues, but the day-to-day lessons (i.e. the content) were radically revised. I jettisoned most of the activities in the original opting instead for those which placed students in control of all evaluative aspects of the course. In addition, student reflections became an integral part of the evaluation unit. Also, on a practical level, student's evaluations became more frequent, but focused upon briefer texts. On a technical level, I worked to improve clarity and transitions; I also attempted to eliminate the division between the students and myself, thereby emphasizing the collaborative nature of the unit, by incorporating plural pronouns. Finally, on a stylistic note, I attempted to more fully incorporate the theme of a road or pathway into the overall essay, which also included a title change - *A Path Out of the Darkness: Toward Successful Peer Assessment*.

While recent research both inspired and dictated a content gutting revision to my peer assessment research essay, a more contemplative and systematic revision was in keeping with the needs of the teaching unit I designed for another section of ENG 6220, *Teaching Grammar in the Context of Writing*. Constructing a semester-long, grammar unit placed me in uncharted waters as my experience in teaching grammar was based exclusively on discrete, one and two-day workshops peppered throughout the semester. I elected to develop a unit on cohesion, relying heavily upon the utilization of the Known-New Contract. The fact the Known-New Contract could be separated into subtopics while encouraging students to improve writing through subtle changes was enormously appealing. Thus, the unit was less focused upon traditional grammar lessons in favor of emphasis upon writing style and by extension clarity and flow. Additionally, the Known-New Contract inherently touched upon several individual grammar topics which tend to be problematic for college students including: pronouns and synonyms, the passive voice and adverbials. And adverbials because they help to demonstrate the movability of phrases easily

connect to other areas of stylistic experimentation such as parallelism. Thus, the unit allowed me to teach six discrete grammar topics yet the arrangement created the impression they were interconnected. In examining the unit at the time, I felt it held together well; however, I admit I had concerns I'd gotten lost in the detail and breadth of the project. As with many complex projects I wished I had more time to step away and evaluate the unit more objectively.

Indeed, this concern that I hadn't given the overall unit enough consideration was one of the motivators for including it in my portfolio. Unlike the peer assessment essay I didn't continue to research the topic. Nevertheless, time simply worked upon my thoughts and I wished to return to this, the first teaching unit I designed while at BGSU. My first steps were to revise the opening rationale. I wanted to provide a stronger context for my decisions regarding cohesion as well as how I saw such a unit functioning in my current institution. I then progressed to the daily lesson plans, and this is where I began to contemplate, in detail, each of my decisions. It would be utterly tiresome to list all the changes I made; suffice to say I added in more time: more time within the lessons, more time between some of the lessons to improve retention, more time for students to complete writing assignments. I also improved overall uniformity both in the Works Cited and in the vocabulary utilized. Additionally, I continued to develop the sense of flow from the introduction of a grammatical concept, to examples, to concentrated practice, to homework, to in-class activities, to revising and eventually to crafting drafts utilizing the concept. With time to contemplate the complexities of each lesson, I've revised the unit such that lessons are more tightly connected and the entire unit can more realistically be implemented. Now it's a matter of testing the unit in the classroom.

And this is the point where the content of this portfolio shifts from the practical to the theoretical as I'm not sure I'll be teaching a literature course soon. Nevertheless, I wanted to return

to this essay from ENG 6090, *Teaching Literature* because I'd begun articulating some opinions and philosophies which felt unfinished. Originally, the essay was written in response to a prescribed question: a quotation followed by the instruction to use authors from our course texts in support of our views. From the beginning, I chose to take a hardline. I selected a quotation from Harold Bloom's *Elegiac Conclusion*. Rather than take the common and encouraged approach to denigrate Bloom's perspective I chose to celebrate it. The quotation discusses the concept of literary contamination and its impact upon canon formation. My essay endeavored to verify Bloom's statement and further, to illustrate the superfluous role of the literary critic in canon formation. Additionally, the prompt indicated the essay was a "preliminary sketch" of our methodology toward literature. I therefore very briefly introduced creative criticism, a topic I'd been discussing in course postings. Creative criticism, a term derived from the two anthologies *The Story About the Story* by J. C. Hallman, is founded upon the belief that authors are best suited to critique literary texts. Thus, creative criticism has as its focus writers, commonly creative writers, discussing works of fiction. With creative criticism, the focus is not upon the appropriation of various theories, such as psychoanalysis, Marxism, feminism, or cultural theory, to use as a lens by which to view the text, but rather the individual reading of an author who is knowledgeable and experienced in the craft of writing. The page limitation for this assignment prevented me from further developing the topic of creative criticism. Nevertheless, I wanted to introduce it as my preferred methodology to teaching literature.

In returning to this essay I was disappointed with the feedback which seemed mired in formal and editorial considerations. However, when I realized I wasn't obligated to use these suggestions and, even better, that I could unmoor the essay from the original prompt, I immediately became excited by the possibilities of revision. I retained the inductive approach, beginning with

the wider viewpoint of theory and slowly eliminating opposition to reveal the author-centric approach. I also elected to retain the introductory section. Both decisions are grounded in my belief that such choices are crucial to understanding the origins of my endorsement of creative criticism. After all, it's hard to deny that personal experience isn't basis for many of our philosophies. When I began reshaping the essay I made this point more implicitly clear by inserting myself and my allegiance to Bloom's view early in the essay. I then undertook the task of shoring up my support of Bloom with more detailed analysis and further supporting materials. And, of course, I developed and defended creative criticism as a valid approach to teaching an introductory literature course. While composing the essay, I noticed the writing was organically falling into sections so I opted to include section titles. Finally, I made a subtle change in the title from *Infinite Hybrids: An Author-centric View of the Canon* to *Infinite Hybrids: An Author-centric Approach to Teaching Literature* thereby marking the essays detachment from the original prompt.

Whereas I felt compelled to make comprehensive changes to my ENG 6090 essay, I was hesitant to dismantle large sections of my final essay for ENG 6800, *Convincing Women: US Women's Rhetorical Tactics and Practices* – which will serve in this portfolio as my research and analysis essay. The original objective of the essay was to examine the early rhetorical work of Margaret Sanger. Sanger, as a proponent for reproductive rights, was a stretch from our course focus upon abolitionist and suffragist women rhetors. But, not a big stretch, as Sanger is commonly included with other first-wave feminists. I selected an early work of Sanger's *What Every Girl Should Know* published in 1910 specifically because it was written a decade before the ratification of the 19th Amendment. The choice was meant to suggest that reproductive rights advocacy ran in tandem with suffrage for several decades (at least from the Comstock at of the 1870's). The essay I crafted, "*I Was Told that I Better Keep Off that Subject*": *Margaret Sanger's Early*

Rhetoric During the Sex Education Campaigns, was separated into two sections. The first provided a context for Sanger's writing, or the forces shaping her rhetoric which included: a brief history of sex education, the emergence of sexologists, the concern for race suicide, the perception of the family, and roles of males and females in society, the social and economic changes which precipitated the rise of working women, and venereal disease. The second section analyzed Sanger's introduction to *What Every Girl Should Know* in light of the context provided. At the time of completion, I felt satisfied with the essay, and I remain so.

My satisfaction with the essay and the fact my professor mentioned it convinced her to include reproductive rights in her course syllabus indicated a level of quality. I therefore elected to make multiple small, but precise and effective linguistic changes, endeavoring to augment my analysis and increase clarity throughout the piece. I also reinforced sections in need of more support. But perhaps the most visible aspect of this revision is the inclusion of an appendix which is designed to assist my professor in her research if she elects to include reproductive rights in her course. The appendix is comprised of a general list of titles regarding reproductive rights as well as specific resources for several prominent figures in the movement including Ida Craddock, Emma Goldman, Rachelle Yarros, Mary Ware Dennett and Sanger. I hope the information proves useful. Certainly, if I do have the opportunity to build a course on women rhetors or specifically on the nascent years of the reproductive rights movement I will be well prepared.

In tasting these writing projects again, it becomes clear each piece required its own unique revision. From a gut-and-renovate to a contemplative and systematic revision each revision has stretched my research, analytical and writing skills, and demonstrated to me the multifaceted nature of revision. Finally, given I'm rarely satisfied with any accomplishment for long, I think it best to understand this portfolio represents my current thinking. However, there is more to

discover, more to articulate. Within a few months my momentary satisfaction will dissipate and likely disappear. Time will work upon me. Reflection and new experiences will again transform my views. And so, I can state, in all honesty, this portfolio represents my thinking at this very precise moment – a moment those reading this work will know has already passed.

ENG 6200: Research Project

A Path Out of the Darkness: Toward Successful Peer Assessment (A Proposed Teaching Unit)

*In the middle of the journey of our life
I found myself astray in a dark wood
Where the straight road had been lost sight of*

(Alighieri 3).

Introduction

I open this research project with Seamus Heaney's translation of Dante Alighieri's *Inferno* not to point toward the darkness I encountered in my research, but rather my palpable feelings of confusion regarding aspects of my teaching. And this, at such a time in my life. For I *am* in the middle of my life's journey (as least I hope so). As such, teaching is not new to me. So why the confusion? Doubts. Doubts about my abilities and the resulting efficacy of my teaching. These doubts have come unbidden; for I've received no criticism. Rather, the combination of my teaching goals, the challenge implicit in my courses at BGSU to examine my practices and methodologies, and the emotional distance of not teaching for over a year have married, bringing me into this dark wood. Given the unknown surroundings, perhaps the best course is to return to the beginning, to my teaching goals. For those goals and their reconsideration were the primary catalyst of my doubt.

On a simplistic level my goal as a composition teacher is to assist students to become better writers. Easier said than done! Writing is a complex process requiring sustained concentration, facility with language, organizational skill, aptitude with writing mechanics and the ability to clearly articulate thoughts. Therefore, improvement is an equally convoluted process which can lead in multiple directions (reading skills for one). However, my concerns are not with how to

create engaged students or the practical matters of group activities and writing prompts. For these the road remains unobstructed. However, that same road disappears into darkness with assessment practices. Simply, I've never felt confident my approach to assessment was leading students toward better writing. I recognize that my practices cause me to fall into the grading trap Brian Huot mentions; where a student has no major role in critically examining writing, and is "effectively not learning how to make her own decisions about her writing" (169). As assessment is the most direct means toward revision, and revision allows students to return to their writing, recognizing where more work is needed, then successful assessment is crucial to writing improvement. Therefore, a new approach to assessment seems the best pathway out of this dark wood.

There is another element which I'd like to incorporate into assessment, perhaps a larger, loftier goal. I'm looking for a methodology which represents a seismic change, a radical shift where my teaching philosophies, such as the importance of student autonomy, are manifested in the classroom. I'm in search of a methodology where students are given an active and substantial role in the revision process. Indeed, I hope such an active role improves both their ability and perception of writing. I'm suggesting more than merely rewording assessment comments, or using oral rather than written assessments or even dedicating a few more classes to assessment training. No, I'm proposing an approach to assessment which is based in a student collective. An approach where assessment becomes a significant part of the entire course; where students examine texts weekly; where they devise assessment criteria which is discussed and revised continually. In the process students, would learn to read with an evaluative eye, discerning which sections of a draft require comments. They would also discover what comments are the most successful in aiding revision, and how to articulate those in writing and speech. For, as the argument goes, if students

gain facility in assessing the work of others, they should become better assessors of their own work. Thus, they may become capable of writing without the support of academic mechanisms (i.e. authorial autonomy).

My initial steps toward locating a methodology led to the work of Keith Topping. After reading Topping's article, *Peer Assessment*, I felt I'd been provided with the first steps in a pathway toward student-engaged assessment. In fact, many of Topping's suggestions were unfamiliar and quite comprehensive in their hands-on approach toward peer assessment which was just what I was looking for. Topping was asking for a lot: a lot more preparation, a lot more training, a lot more time responding to student assessment. He was presenting a challenge; one I wanted to take. In fact, I've chosen to incorporate Topping's planning issues as the framing device for this essay. My intention is to examine each point separately, and then explain how such practices will manifest in my classroom.

Before discussing Topping's planning issues, I think it best to clarify some terms, or at the least provide the definitions which are guiding me and my research. Peer assessment is "an educational arrangement in which students assess the quality of their fellow students' work and provide one another with feedback" (van den Berg 135). This definition implies two roles: the educational arrangement is designed by the teacher, while the assessment is provided by the student. However, the roles are in no way discrete because arrangement directly impacts assessment. Therefore, if a teacher is on her toes, consistently using modeling, group assessment activities and shared vocabulary, she can proactively shape this arrangement thereby improving assessment. Additionally, this definition implies a shared responsibility; both roles must actively engage in the process (i.e. Students aren't the only ones who are active during peer assessment; the teacher needs to adapt to the needs and progress of the students). In fact, the concept of shared

responsibility will take on larger importance as I introduce Topping's planning issues and how I intertwined them through other methodologies to reach my own approach to assessment.

Seek to work with colleagues rather than developing the initiative alone

Topping's call to arms begins with a simple request, don't go it alone. Sound advice especially if a teacher is piloting a new, semester-long methodology. Certainly, having a forum to evaluate difficulties and unintended consequences, clarify or reshape pedagogical goals and adhere to research deadlines can only be of benefit. Further, the immediacy inherent to such group interactions necessitates that reflection happen *during* the teaching process rather than weeks or months later when the mind can subtly rewrite experience. Indeed, there is another dark wood in which to be lost; that of boldly progressing forward in methodologies without substantial reflection. Although Topping does not discuss such a possibility he does indicate his advice for colleague support is predicated upon a conviction that peer assessment is a highly intricate process. He warns,

[p]roviding effective feedback is a cognitively complex task requiring understanding of the goals of the task and the criteria for success, and the ability to make judgments about the relationship of the product or performance to these goals. Good organization is perhaps the most important quality of implementation integrity, leading to consistent and productive outcomes (25).

Colleagues therefore act a form of quality control, assuring that organization and goals are maintained in the face of grading and other academic responsibilities. As the quotation suggests, Topping commonly enlists the term feedback in his research; however, more recent publications tend to prefer the terms assessment or evaluation (which are used interchangeably as for example by Brian Huot in *Toward a New Discourse of Assessment for the College Writing Classroom*). For this essay, I will adhere to recent terminology.

Clarify purpose, rationale, expectations, and acceptability with all stakeholders

Topping is specifically referring to “cognitive, attitudinal, social or emotional gains” (25). My purpose is primarily focused upon cognitive gains. I’m hoping students can demonstrate improved thinking/logic as well as become more reflective about the writing itself. These gains may also include an increased ability to logically organize thought, as well as increased vocabulary leading to improved clarity and flow. Although my primary goal is cognitive, I’m confident the consistent interaction and oral assessment sessions will lead to social and attitudinal changes as well.

Indeed, culling attitudinal information may be a terrific starting point for introducing the topic of peer assessment. I’d like to begin the unit with a homework assignment which details each student’s history with peer assessment including opinions of efficacy, rationale for utilizing such an approach (learning outcomes) and any suggestions for improving the process. These written responses will provide the basis for a discussion where we’ll identify the positives and negatives of peer assessment, its intended purpose, the potential skills acquired and finally what we could do to improve it. Toward the end of the discussion I’ll summarize our comments and explain how they connect to the proposed methods for our course. As this method places much of the power in the student’s hands and involves substantial training and reflection I hope students will not only see the benefits of attempting this approach, but will be enthusiastic to begin.

Early in the process, I’ll also stress our focus is upon the skills developed *during* the peer review as well as our reflections on it. Therefore, the revision is an outcome, not the learning goal of our work. This shift in focus from revision (product) to the developing of criteria and understanding the process of evaluation through activities (process) marks an important perceptual change for me and I hope for the students as well. Certainly, this process-oriented approach is

supported by research such as that of Cho and Cho who “found that in a peer feedback situation, the students gain more benefit from giving feedback than from receiving it. ---- In other words, giving feedback engages a higher level of thinking skills” (Walker 233). This is a critical point. Traditional approaches to peer assessment guide students to focus upon the outcome, the revision, which is a process of writing to “get it right” for a grade. The act of assessment is secondary, a necessary step toward a grade in which students have little input beyond filling in pre-designed worksheets. Thus, assessment, and the educational potential of increased ability to evaluate, discuss and reflect upon writing are worthless. This point is further explained by Duncan Nulty:

both peer and self-assessment involve students in the identification of criteria for judging work and making judgements using those criteria. These assessments *of* learning skills are also notably beneficial *to* learning. But, more than this, they are also beneficial as learning outcomes in their own right. This means that they do not simply empower *students* in their learning, but they empower professional practice and ongoing learning after graduation (501).

Nulty highlights the concomitant attitudinal and social gains which can impact future learning. For peer assessment does require fine-tuned communication skills due to the delicate nature of providing satisfactory, specific evaluative responses in both written and oral form. Therefore, assessment training holds the promise of extending outside the classroom. Indeed, the same assessment skills, well learned and enacted in the classroom, do possess potential benefit outside academe: in managerial positions, office meetings and most collaborative or group work. Indeed, these learned skills can be applied and even taught to others.

Involve students and colleagues in developing and clarifying assessment criteria

Although I will be happy to share information in regards the process and documents developed by the class with my colleagues, my primary goal is the co-development of assessment criteria with students. Given the work of authors such as Asao Inoue I understand endeavoring to

collaboratively develop criteria is a long and involved process, demanding substantial hours throughout the semester (213). Nevertheless, the potential benefits outweigh the loss of time dedicated to other topics. Additionally, this collaborative effort provides students with a much-needed sense of ownership. As David Boud and Nancy Falchikov state, “[s]tudents frequently do not have the opportunity to see how the process of assessment actually works. It is something they experience as a procedure to which they submit themselves rather than something they own” (403). The approach I propose will provide students the opportunity to identify necessary compositional elements, further develop how those elements are successfully utilized, gain understanding of those elements through constant interaction and develop a specific, shared vocabulary of assessment. Thus, a phrase such as “clarity of thought” isn’t a nebulous term, but a phrase created by students which suggests a “[f]ocus on a single claim that is arguable, consistent, thoughtful, and takes a unique position on the issue (i.e., different from others’ stances, positions, and/or analyses)” (Inoue 219). Indeed, such phrases possess layers of meaning as they have been discussed, shaped, reshaped, and utilized throughout the course; a vocabulary written in the collective experiences and conclusions of the students themselves.

To ease the group into this presumably new process of developing criteria and understanding their role in evaluation I’ll provide materials about assessment such as *Harvard Writing Project Brief Guide Series: Responding to Student Writing* and chapters from texts such as *(Re)articulating Writing Assessment and Learning* by Brian Huot. Such materials will allow us to consider the multiple purposes within assessment, where we wish to place our efforts, some potential vocabulary as well as elements of assessment we perhaps hadn’t considered. In essence, these texts will get the ball rolling so that we can talk about assessment. Additionally, such texts may also invite critical discussion and analysis of the assessment process (i.e. power dynamics,

constraints, biases) which may be useful as students take on a new role in the assessment process.

The actual development of evaluation criteria will entail multiple approaches including group work, reflections, blogs, discussions and, of course, evaluations themselves. Initially, activities such as those outlined in the chapter “What Do *We* Want in This Paper?” from *Teaching with Student Texts*, particularly that of Domenica Vilhotti, are a quick, low-stakes means of manufacturing criteria (Harris). Indeed, Vilhotti’s rotating groups also hold the potential of producing several perspectives on the same text. Additionally, activities such as Vilhotti’s, which expose students to discrete parts of the text (introduction, summary, analysis, argument with support, conclusion) enable students to recognize what is essential to a particular section of writing by examining them in isolation (Harris 38). Eventually, through such activities, students will have produced enough raw material to begin to test and refine criteria.

Match participants and arrange contact

Topping suggests, “same-ability peer matching” and I support the advice (25). Most ENG 160 courses include 24 students. In the early stages of peer evaluation, I plan to separate students into groups of 6, of similar ability. The 6 drafts will be assessed by each member during 2 sessions, or 3 drafts per class (Note: These are short drafts, usually a page or two initially.). Assessment experience is essential in order for students to gain facility with the process. The constant exposure to writing provides students with more opportunities to recognize writing similarities and patterns which can lead to realizations about their own writing and that of other students. Additionally, such exposure provides the time and space to reconsider and reshape assessment criteria. In regards revision, each student has multiple assessments and therefore must select from the myriad of comments those which are most useful to revision. Finally, despite the fact that quantity is rarely important when assessing writing, multiple assessments may lead to more revision. Indeed, it has

been noted that “more feedback is of more benefit, in that the increased quantity of feedback from multiple peers, as against just one, leads to greater improvement from draft to final version” (Walker 233). Likely multiple assessments may allow students to more easily identify effective evaluative techniques and wording, thereby enabling them to improve their own assessments. And there may be hidden benefits in placing most of the assessment in the hands of students. As Keith Topping states, “feedback from peers can be more immediate and individualized than can teacher feedback” (22). Additionally, an age-specific lexicon, with possible code-switching, holds the potential of increased comprehension which may mean the comments are more actionable during revision.

Provide training, examples, and practice

Here is the cornerstone of Topping’s approach. He offers various suggestions beyond the traditional lecture/discussion approach to peer assessment. Topping is primarily focused upon “the roles and behaviors expected of assessor and assessee” (26). For Topping these roles need to be clearly delineated; he suggests two lecturers complete a role-play demonstrating behavior to the students. Once roles are understood students can then “practice peer assessment on a very short task” (26).

Topping’s emphasis upon training and practice point to the behavioral complexity of assessment and the many hurdles students face in acquiring the necessary skills to accomplish evaluations. I might add that it is not only important for students to train and practice, but also reflect upon the actions and skills acquired through such activities. Additionally, given the complexity of assessment, it is important to delineate the various cognitive processes involved in assessment to avoid confusion or misunderstanding. Ineke van den Berg makes a similar

conclusion in, *Designing Student Peer Assessment in Higher Education: Analysis of Written and Oral Peer Feedback* when she references the work of L. Flower who states,

particularly novice writers have yet to learn how to systematically perform the four steps of reviewing: to analyze (what does the text mean, how is it put together?), to evaluate (does the text meet academic requirements?), to explain (for what reason the text goes wrong?), and to revise (what changes are necessary to make the text meet the requirements?) (317).

By separating the assessment process into discrete tasks the true cognitive complexity and need for dedicated training is revealed. Each task needs to be discussed and considered separately not because students can't accomplish them, but because students can't accomplish them well without sufficient understanding and preparation. I'm therefore advocating evaluation practices commence in the first two weeks of class much like Della M. Fazey who argues, "developing peer and self-assessment skills should begin from the very beginning of a course of study (where the existence of such skills is least likely and assistance with their development most needed)" (Nulty 500-501).

While we are developing evaluation criteria I'd also like to dedicate substantial time to the roles and tasks of assessor and assessee. Despite Toppings suggestion of faculty modeling behavior, I prefer students consider and develop these roles through group exercises. In this way students retain more independence and ownership. Additionally, they are given the freedom to discover how these roles manifest in their behavior rather than mimicking faculty behavior. The development of assessor and assessee roles could begin with a homework assignment, leading into a discussion. The homework would ask students to evaluate a short selection; more importantly students would explain their reading and selection process during evaluation. The consequent discussion would compare approaches and begin to select best practices. Following the discussion, I'd provide selections from articles such as the Flower's listed above and Richard Straub's article

Student's Reactions to Teacher Comments: An Exploratory Study which divides evaluation into another series of categories: (1) corrections, criticisms and commands, (2) qualified evaluations and advice, (3) praise, (4) interpretation, reader response, lessons and explanations, and (5) questions (99). These readings would allow us to select and define the necessary behaviors for a positive evaluation experience. Our conclusions would become the basis of an online document open to revision by all students. Again, as with the evaluation criteria, our description would transform over time. Indeed, I'd likely present one or two other perspectives on evaluation for students to consider, such as van den Berg who suggests that "adequate feedback should fulfil four main feedback functions: analysis, evaluation, explanation and revision, and cover three main aspects: content, structure and style" (145). By examining and discussing various sources we can develop our own methodology of evaluation or rather a hybrid based upon our unique understanding and experience with the evaluation process.

Additionally, as I've mentioned, students would be practicing their behavior through recurring evaluation activities (at least once a week); practice sessions will initially be focused on short texts of less than a page. After such sessions have become routine, I'll solicit for student groups to present to the class. These presentations are designed to contribute to a reshaping of our description of roles as well as provide opportunities for questions and concerns. The entire assessment unit can be seen holistically as a back-and-forth trajectory between the topics of evaluation criteria and evaluation roles where each topic likely informs and modifies the other.

Provide guidelines, checklists, or other tangible scaffolding

Much like evaluation criteria and roles, we will discuss and co-create guidelines, checklists and assessment rubrics. Thus, such documents act as a trigger to recall the discussions, activities and writings which engendered them. Again, this is another means of providing students with more

ownership and extending the evaluation process into areas students might not have fully considered.

Scaffolding is being provided throughout the process by using short selections and models, developing criteria which become incrementally more detailed, electing to have most written assessments occur outside the classroom, providing various readings as a resource, and, of course, developing guidelines and checklists in collaboration.

Specify activities and timescale

The nature of recurring evaluations mitigates the need for defining performance expectations once they've been understood after the first four or five evaluations. The reading and written evaluation will occur outside the classroom to provide students who struggle with reading and/or evaluating writing more time to compose their evaluation comments. Oral evaluations will occur in class and will also fall into a routine which will include time for the author to read the assessments, record questions and comments, and for the students to discuss their evaluations in detail.

Perhaps the more complex activity, requiring specificity, may be that of reflecting upon the evaluation process itself. I will provide short prompts, again separating the evaluation process into discrete categories to target these reflections. I will then bring several of these reflections to class to discuss them and how they may impact aspects of our process (roles, criteria, expectations, revisions).

Additional support will be provided online through discussion threads and a supporting materials section which will include: threads for each assessment group, a thread for students to ask questions or pose concerns to me, a supporting materials section which includes our readings, other texts regarding evaluation, current versions of our evaluation documents and basic timelines

for evaluating written work. A final element to add to the supporting materials section would be the inclusion of models. Yu-Fen Yang promotes extensive use of modeling in composition assessment, however his study was centered upon online writing courses (688). Nevertheless, I believe providing three or four student models for each step of our drafting process may also provide another form of scaffolding for students. Additionally, models can provide the dual benefit of supplying examples of effective written assessment as well as examples of how that assessment was translated into a successful revision.

Examine the quality of peer feedback, moderate reliability and validity, evaluate and give feedback

I've amalgamated three of Topping's planning issues as they overlap with much of what has previously been discussed. Again, Topping stresses that the process doesn't end after the first evaluation session. Clearly, I support his view and have expanded upon this idea such that the assessment process is constantly and rather consistently being evaluated and redesigned in tandem with the reshaping of assessment roles. Although Topping stresses the importance of students receiving feedback *on* their feedback from their professor, I'm advocating that such assessment arise from other students. I believe that through constant interaction, noting how others evaluate writing, completing numerous evaluations, reflecting upon the evaluation process and discussing that process in class – through these activities students will self-regulate to best practices without my interference. I prefer students modify their behavior more organically through the assessment process rather than having behavior dictated to them. Again, this approach is based in my emphasis upon ownership and authorial autonomy. Although he is not directly championing authorial autonomy Asoa Inoe certainly supports students actively discovering best writing and assessment practices. He claims, “[w]e don't learn how to write successfully by someone else telling us how

to do it. We learn by practicing, thinking about our practices, and re-formulating practice” (232). Through recursive activities of evaluating with multiple students, examining and receiving multiple drafts, reflecting upon the evaluation process and discussing it students learn to shape themselves into assessors. Thus, to return to the earlier definition of assessment described by van den Berg, through proper educational arrangement students can become more effective assessors.

Conclusion

Clearly, there is no one path out of the dark wood of doubts regarding my teaching, but having completed this research I’ve discovered one that appears quite promising. A path which encourages authorial autonomy and ownership; a path in which, “students learn to write by learning how to assess”; a path which provides students the opportunity to reflect upon their writing process (Huot 171b). And such reflection holds the potential benefit of helping students “become more critical, self-conscious, and hopefully better writers” (Inoue 209).

This path also reveals a vital piece of information which I’d never considered, that assessment is an intricate combination of high order thinking. And, as such, it is a vast topic unto itself; one which requires a myriad of activities, assignments and discussions. Thus, I’m only beginning this journey as I formulate a new methodology toward assessment. More time needs to be dedicated to class activities, reflective prompts and group arrangement. And there are other considerations not covered in this research such as how this assessment process is reflected in course grades and the weight of student evaluations in assignment grades. Also despite my process-oriented approach there remains the question of student’s ability to revise. Price, Handley, and Miller note some students “may not be able to act on the feedback without further help” (Walker 245). What training and supports are necessary to assist students toward revision? Many educators assume because students have been receiving assessments most of their academic lives they are

qualified to discern comments and translate them into improved writing. Perhaps, again, student's skill sets and the complexity of the task are being over and under estimated respectively. These are questions which may be answered during the teaching of this unit or they may require more detailed research and new activities. Ultimately, assessment like any other area of teaching is an incremental process.

Nevertheless, at this point it's clear I'm at the beginning of a new teaching journey; one I'm excited to undertake. My doubts have been replaced with hope; for this new methodology appears to hold so much promise for students - a promise to become more thoughtful, involved and articulate writers.

Works Cited

- Alighieri, Dante, and Daniel Halpern. *Dante's Inferno: Translations by Twenty Contemporary Poets*. Ecco, 1993.
- Boud, David, and Nancy Falchikov. "Aligning Assessment with Long-Term Learning." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 31, no. 4, 2006, pp. 399-413. *PsycINFO*, doi: <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu:8080/10.1080/02602930600679050>.
- Harris, Joseph, et al. *Teaching with Student Texts: Essays Toward an Informed Practice*. Utah State University Press, 2010. *Project MUSE*, <https://muse-jhu.edu.ezproxy.bgsu.edu:9443/book/1081>.
- Huot, Brian. *(Re)articulating Writing Assessment for Teaching and Learning*. Utah State University Press, 2002. *Project MUSE*, <https://muse-jhu.edu.ezproxy.bgsu.edu:9443/book/9328>.
- Huot, Brian. "Toward a New Discourse of Assessment for the College Writing Classroom." *College English*, vol. 65, 2002b.
- Inoue, Asao B. "Community-Based Assessment Pedagogy" *Assessing Writing*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2005, pp. 208-238. *ERIC*, <http://ezproxy.bgsu.edu:8080/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=EJ803629&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Nulty, Duncan D. "Peer and Self-Assessment in the First Year of University." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 36, no. 5, 2011, pp. 493-507. *Sociological Collection*, doi: 10.1080/02602930903540983.

- Straub, Richard. "Students' Reactions to Teacher Comments: An Exploratory Study." *Research in the Teaching of English*, vol. 31, no. 1, 1997, pp. 91-119. *Educational Research Complete*,
[http://ezproxy.bgsu.edu:8080/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true
&db=ehh&AN=9705232714&site=ehost-live&scope=site](http://ezproxy.bgsu.edu:8080/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=ehh&AN=9705232714&site=ehost-live&scope=site).
- Topping, Keith J. "Peer Assessment." *Theory into Practice*, vol. 48, no. 1, 2009, pp. 20-27. *Business Source Complete*, doi: 10.1080/00405840802577569.
- van den Berg, Ineke, et al. "Designing Student Peer Assessment in Higher Education: Analysis of Written and Oral Peer Feedback." *Teaching in Higher Education*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2006, pp. 135-47. *Sociological Collection*, doi: 10.1080/13562510500527685.
- Walker, Mirabelle. "The Quality of Written Peer Feedback on Undergraduates' Draft Answers to an Assignment, and the Use Made of the Feedback." *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2015, pp. 232-247. *Sociological Collection*, doi: 10.1080/02602938.2014.898737.
- Yang, Yu-Fen. "A Reciprocal Peer Review System to Support College Students' Writing." *British Journal of Educational Technology*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2011, pp. 687-700. *Education Research Complete*, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-8535.2010.01059.

Works Referenced

- Boud, David, et al. "Peer Learning and Assessment." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1999, pp. 413-426. *Sociological Collection*,
<http://ezproxy.bgsu.edu:8080/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=slh&AN=2984076&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Boud, David. "Avoiding the Traps: Seeking Good Practice in the Use of Self-Assessment and Reflection in Professional Courses." *Social Work Education*, vol. 18, no. 2, 1999, pp. 121-132. *Sociological Collection*,
<http://ezproxy.bgsu.edu:8080/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=slh&AN=6003541&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Boud, David. "Sustainable Assessment: Rethinking Assessment for the Learning Society." *Studies in Continuing Education*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2000, pp. 151-67. *Education Research Complete*, doi: 10.1080/01580379950177314.
- Inoue, Asao. "Grading Contracts Assessing Their Effectiveness on Different Racial Formations." *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. Peter Lang, 2012, pp. 79-94.
- Inoue, Asao. "A Grade-less Writing Course that Focuses on Labor and Assessing." *First-Year Composition: Theory into Practice*. ed. Debra Coxwell-Teague. Parlor, 2014, pp. 71-110.
- Mostert, Markus, and Jen D. Snowball. "Where Angels Fear to Tread: Online Peer-Assessment in a Large First-Year Class." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 38, no. 6, 2013, pp. 674-86. *Professional Development Collection*, doi: 10.1080/02602938.2012.683770.

- Mulder, Raoul A., et al. "Peer Review in Higher Education: Student Perceptions Before and After Participation." *Active Learning in Higher Education*, vol. 15, no. 2, 2014, pp. 157-71. *ERIC*, <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu:8080/10.1177/1469787414527391>.
- Orsmond, Paul, and Stephen Merry. "The Importance of Marking Criteria in the Use of Peer Assessment." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 21, no. 3, 1996, pp. 239-244. *Sociological Collection*, <http://ezproxy.bgsu.edu:8080/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=slh&AN=9609200205&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Reinholz, Daniel. "The Assessment Cycle: A Model for Learning through Peer Assessment." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2016, pp. 301-15. *Sociological Collection*, doi: 10.1080/02602938.2015.1008982.
- Stellmack, Mark A., et al. "Review, Revise, and Resubmit: The Effects of Self-Critique, Peer Review, and Instructor Feedback on Student Writing." *Teaching of Psychology*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2012, pp. 235-44. *PsycINFO*, doi: <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.bgsu.edu:8080/10.1177/0098628312456589>.
- Yancey, Kathleen. *A Rhetoric of Reflection*. Utah State University Press, 2016.

ENG 6220: Grammar Unit

Rationale: Cohesion Unit

The motivation behind this unit is to use the acquisition of grammar skills as a means of improving writing, specifically within academic genres. This approach diverges rather radically from that of my department which isolates grammar from writing and accords it little time in the curriculum. The department currently requires six grammar lessons (usually utilizing only half a class period) in the semester. Grammar's inconsequential role in composition is perhaps best illustrated in inter-department, professional development seminars where workshops are frequently focused upon enlisting students to teach the grammar lessons and the "dynamic" use of PowerPoint and Prezi. Given this pervasive attitude, this unit likely will appear innovative and perhaps unorthodox to my colleagues. However, I hope, through examining student writing throughout the semester, the department will see value in this approach and encourage further discussion of the relationship between grammar and writing. What I'm advocating to my department through this unit, which I intend to use as the basis of a professional development workshop, is a more thoughtfully-designed, systematically-researched and integrated use of grammar within the writing curriculum; one which encompasses several weeks and multiple lessons throughout the semester.

The department offers two required composition courses: ENG 160, an introductory course centered upon several academic genres, and the more advanced ENG 161, a research writing course. Academic genres cause significant cognitive dissonance for students for a variety of reasons including a lack of familiarity, the requirement of legitimate research (also unfamiliar), the struggle with appropriate tone, and, most importantly, the fact the genre appears more cognitively rigorous and demanding. Additionally, ENG 160 and 161 students are usually

freshmen transitioning from high school to college. They are grappling not only with their own independence, but a new and usually quite foreign environment; an environment distressingly less familiar than what they had expected. Furthermore, these freshmen are confronted with higher academic expectations. Such expectations usually indicate to students that their old study habits are insufficient to the current academic needs. Thus, students feel the pressure to remake themselves and this realization causes enormous anxiety. Amidst these turbulent waters students need an anchor, some learning which can buoy them up in their courses, and here is where gaining more skill in writing can truly help. Therefore, a course that not only focuses upon academic genres, but emphasizes the means by which to organize more complex thoughts and articulate them more clearly (i.e. a unit on cohesion) may prove practically beneficial.

In many ways, a unit on cohesion represents a happy marriage of departmental and student needs. Students require a complete understanding of the academic genre that includes fully understanding the form as well as the linguistic skills necessary to effectively execute such forms. The department requires six grammar lessons from a prescribed list and suggests the lessons directly connect to a particular genre. The fundamental pedagogical difference in how I wish to teach this unit is that I no longer see grammar lessons as being one-offs; lessons taught in a few days and then forgotten. I now see that grammar *can* significantly impact the quality of writing and help students to engage with aspects of style. A well-developed grammar unit also may also allow student to become more cognizant of how to evaluate their writing and that of their peers.

This unit covers approximately eight or nine weeks during the semester. The concept behind this extended unit is that it includes at least five of the necessary grammar principles (pronouns, passive voice, adverbials, parallelism and commas) while providing sufficient time for students to effectively assimilate cohesion (i.e. not simply in homework, but in two major writing

assignments). As I envision it, the cohesion unit will begin with the largest writing issue for students, that of organization. Initially, organization may appear less grammar-based to the students and therefore may be a more appealing means of entering this unit. With the idea of organization in mind, I'll commence the unit with a section on the Known-New Contract (Kolln). The first lesson will introduce the concept of the Know-New Contract (KNC); students will simply observe how the KNC works and evaluate its effectiveness. My hope is that by evaluating examples students will perceive how incorporating the KNC can improve not only cohesion in writing, but understanding for the reader. In perceiving the value of the KNC students may then be more motivated to begin implementing it into their writing.

Although the KNC is relatively easy to teach, it is not easily absorbed by students. In order to develop flow in writing students, to some extent, have to become more conscious of the writing process. Such an experience can feel awkward and disconcerting, therefore, a certain amount of adjustment time is necessary. Accordingly, these lessons will begin after the first draft of the current writing assignment is completed. Thus, students have already articulated their thoughts on the page; they aren't being asked to simultaneously compose a new essay and incorporate the KNC. Further, I believe the KNC is best taught through specific, discrete lessons where students are provided an opportunity to incrementally revise sections of a current assignment.

I envision the KNC section of the unit as being divided into four lessons: introduction, pronouns and synonyms, passive voice, and cementing the KNC (the mobility of phrases will be highlighted throughout). What is refreshing about designing the KNC is its implicitly positive language and approach; the KNC avoids discussion of the negative aspects of grammar and writing (i.e. "this is wrong or poorly written"). Rather, it focuses upon choices and those choices are made independently by the students (how empowering!). The KNC is about enhancing writing, the use

of passive voice is actually a positive in the KNC, repetition is also a positive – although synonyms are even better. Thus, I don't feel bound to explain "rules", but only to remind students of possible pitfalls (not going overboard on repetition, carefully choosing pronouns, how to wield the power of the passive voice). Ultimately, the KNC moves away from the prohibitive and rather dictatorial nature of many grammar lessons and into a more democratic and creative space.

Having introduced the structure of the KNC and given students ample experience in shaping and moving phrases, they are prepared to engage with other aspects of cohesion. As the KNC is heavily reliant upon adverbials I'll transition into them for the next section. However, I should pause to note the significance of building in time for skills to be properly absorbed. To be assured students are confident in their ability to use the KNC I have built in lesson-less time where students are primarily focused upon completing a full revision of their current assignment and creating the first draft of a new assignment using the basic principles of the KNC. Thus, upon formally returning to the KNC via adverbials, students are comfortable in their understanding and ability. Additionally, taking the next step to using adverbials should seem obvious and relatively easy.

Although there are several types of adverbials I'll be centering upon prepositional phrases and dependent clauses as these are more frequently used in the KNC. Again, cohesion is still being emphasized as adverbials are perceived as a tool to sharpen flow and clarity. Within the context of these adverbials, placement of commas for introductory phrases and dependent clauses will also be discussed. The adverbial lessons finish with another section on mobility; a lesson designed to encourage further experimentation and remind students how meaning can change based upon word placement.

The topic of experimentation leads well into the final section of the unit, parallelism, which is the final feature of the KNC as well. Generally, students are somewhat familiar with parallelism and have utilized it in narratives. Part of the first lesson on parallelism includes an evaluation of parallelism in non-narrative/academic writing and relating those observations to the KNC; then, it is a matter of practice. The idea again is to provide creative space – freedom to play with language which is as important to narrative as it is to non-narrative genres. The second parallelism lesson attempts to illustrate less traditional, nevertheless highly cohesive ways of utilizing this feature. The unit finishes again with further practice as well as the use of commas specific to parallelism.

The choice to end the lesson with commas is designed to prepare students for a more detailed section on punctuation that will complete the semester. This section will be modeled in part upon the lesson written by Mary K. Tedrow in her article, *Making a Successful Punctuation Lesson*. Students create a portfolio of their best work for an end of semester review board and I believe that Tedrow's lesson might work well as students begin basic revisions (large-scale revisions after the final, graded draft are prohibited) for the portfolio review. I believe this unit on cohesion will not only allow students to become more proficient utilizing certain grammatical devices, but also improve their writing (specifically their style – maybe even their enjoyment of writing) and perhaps begin to alter their attitude toward grammar. Honestly, what more can a composition lecturer ask for?

FINAL NOTE: I would feel remiss if I didn't acknowledge the work of Constance Weaver, who certainly left an indelible mark on many of the decisions I made for this unit. I found her "Framework for Teaching Grammar Through the Writing Process" to be invaluable. Although I've not included all aspects of her framework (and have developed some ideas regarding revision work not included in this unit) I found it provided the specificity and scope I needed to build this unit.

Works Noted:

Weaver, Constance. *Grammar to Enrich and Enhance Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 2008. Print.

Tedrow, Mary K. "Making a Successful Punctuation Lesson." *National Writing Project*. 2007. Web. 9 Dec. 2015.

Grammar concept: <i>The Known New Contract (Lesson 1: An Introduction)</i>
Objective: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process, including consideration of peer and instructor feedback, from initial draft to final revision 2. Demonstrate sentence-level correctness
Time: 50-minutes Materials: pen and paper
Activities: <p>Lesson Opener: (6 minutes) Students choose a partner while two short paragraphs are projected. Students collaboratively select the stronger paragraph and explain their rationale. Explain the defining characteristics of a strong paragraph are clarity and flow. Thus, students are to decide which paragraph is easier to read and understand. After they've made their choice ask them to devise two supporting reasons for their view.</p> <p>We Do: (6 minutes) The entire class reconvenes to discuss the strengths of each paragraph. Three or four pairs are chosen to present their conclusions. While students are speaking, I'll record (on the whiteboard) the strengths and weaknesses mentioned for each paragraph.</p> <p>I Do: (8 minutes) Briefly summarize student observations and discuss how these can be perceived as aspects of cohesion. Explain, cohesion is the flow of sentences; it can be accomplished using certain grammatical devices. Query the class if anyone has heard of the Known-New Contract (KNC). Connect our discussion/findings to the necessity for clarity and flow in writing and the significance of the KNC. Then, using the whiteboard and projector, explain the basic idea of the KNC: each sentence begins with known information which then bridges to new information (This acts like a chain where the new becomes the known in the next sentence.). Also, explain the "bride" analogy of something old and something new. Project and explain two brief examples (each example will begin with a non-KNC which is then revised into a KNC). Highlight the known information and the new once located. Begin to note the use of synonyms and pronouns as a means of connecting known and new.</p> <p>We Do: (16 minutes) Provide two examples for the entire class to revise together. Then provide two examples and have students quickly revise and present revisions. Note the importance of placement with the KNC. Placement emphasizes not only old and new information, but the topic (beginning of sentence) and the stress/focus (end of sentence). Also, note that important information (including technical or complex concepts) is placed at the end of a sentence (the stress). This then becomes the connecting point for the following sentence. Use a few examples such as: <i>A virus infected our system but everything is fine now.</i> <i>Everything is fine now, but a virus infected our system.</i> Provide a few examples with two options (such as the one listed above) and ask students to explain the meaning and the way it changes based upon position/arrangement.</p>
Assessment: During the following class, I'll project each homework paragraph for the class to view. The students will present their findings and I'll record their comments – adding any necessary comment to clarify or prevent confusion. I'll also collect their homework to discover if they grasp the basic idea of the KNC and provide any necessary feedback.

Homework: Note: Students have a copy of *The Last Distinction?* as it was used for the film review genre discussion.

Divide the class into two groups. Half the class will work on the paragraph on page 11 which begins “Of modern history's important thinkers...” the other half will work on the paragraph on page 12 which begins “In the thirties, the psychologist Winthrop Kellog...”

Ask students to copy the paragraph (i.e. retype it into their document). Then, they are to analyze the paragraph noting how one sentence connects to another. They might want to consider how synonyms and pronouns are being used. They may also want to circle known information and underline new information. However, to accomplish this assignment they need to explain how the author appears to be using the KNC from one sentence to the next. Students should include the paragraph with any notations and their conclusions neatly typed for the next class.

Works Cited:

Comstock, Michelle. *Rhetorical Knowledge and Purposeful Writing: Comptain*. University of Denver, Colorado, 2015. Web. 3 Dec. 2015.

Kolln, Martha and Loretta Gray. *Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects*. Boston: Pearson. 2013. Print. (86-89).

The Last Distinction (PDF attachment)

Lesson Plan: Unit Cohesion Mary Ellen O'Hara College Freshmen February 8, 2016

<p>Grammar concept: <i>The Known-New Contract (Lesson Two: Pronouns and Synonyms)</i></p>
<p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process, including consideration of peer and instructor feedback, from initial draft to final revision 2. Demonstrate sentence-level correctness
<p>Time: 40-minute lesson</p>
<p>Materials: homework, pen and paper</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <p>Lesson Opener: (10 minutes) Review the basics of the KNC. Then, ask students to retrieve their homework, i.e. the short paragraphs which were examined for their use of the KNC. Project each paragraph and solicit feedback while recording findings on the whiteboard.</p> <p>I Do: (13 minutes) Further explain the importance of Pronouns and Synonyms to creating cohesion. Begin with Pronouns, noting that cohesion necessitates the use of both personal (s/he, you, it, they, them, we and us) and demonstrative pronouns (this, that, these and those). Explain the importance of avoiding the “Bald this” (clear referent). Project two examples to discuss. Then, project the Stephen Ambrose paragraph from Kolln and Gray page 89. Work through the paragraph as a class identifying each pronoun and how it connects ideas.</p> <p>You Do: (7 minutes) Distribute copies of the paragraph from <i>Is Facebook Making Us Lonely?</i> Ask students to read the paragraph and note the use of synonyms. Suggest they create a quick list at the bottom or side of the sheet. Also, ask them to make one observation as to how they understand or in any way differentiate these synonyms.</p> <p>I Do: (8 minutes) Briefly, reconvene and solicit responses (record on whiteboard). Project another example of synonyms in a paragraph – ask students to comment.</p> <p>You Do: (2 minutes) Ask students to turn over their sheets where they will find four selections which they should revise using the KNC, pronouns (personal and demonstrative) as well as synonyms. The assignment is to be completed as part of their homework due at the next class.</p>
<p>Assessment: During the following class, I'll project the worksheet for the class to view. The students will present their revisions and I'll add any commentary to prevent confusion. I'll also collect their homework to discover if they grasp the KNC and the use of pronouns and synonyms, and provide any necessary feedback.</p>
<p>Homework: Students will revise the selections on the worksheet using the principals of the KNC including anchoring known information to new information (usually placing “the known” first in the sentence, followed by “the new”) including pronouns (both personal and demonstrative) to connect ideas and finally using synonyms to increase clarity. The worksheet is to be completed for the next class.</p>

Works Cited:

- Chaemsaithong, Krisda and Daniel Griesbach "Cohesion." *Ask Betty*. University of Washington, Seattle, 2015. Web. 4 Dec. 2015.
- James, Emily. "Known-New Contract." *Prezi.com*. Prezi, 2015. Web. 8 Dec. 2015.
- "Known-New Contract: Cohesion Between Sentences." *How-to Guides*. University of Colorado Denver College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, 2015. Web. 4 Dec. 2015.
- Kolln, Martha and Loretta Gray. *Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects*. Boston: Pearson. 2013. Print. (90-94).
- Shanmugaraj, Nisha. "Improving the "Flow" of Your Writing: Clarifying Complex and Technical Writing". Carnegie Mellon University. Global Communications Center. 2015. Web. 7 Dec. 2015.
- "Some Writing Exercises to Improve Coherence and Clarity" Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm. School of Computer Science and Communication, 19 Nov. 2013. Web. 8 Dec. 2015.

WORKSHEET SIDE A: NOTE: To save space, I've not left appropriate room for student's revisions.

Facebook Making Us Lonely?

Facebook arrived in the middle of a dramatic increase in the quantity and intensity of human loneliness, a rise that initially made the site's promise of greater connection seem deeply attractive. Americans are more solitary than ever before. In 1950 less than 10 percent of American households contained only one person. By 2010 nearly 27 percent had just one person. Solitary living does not guarantee a life of unhappiness, of course. In his recent book about the tendency toward living alone, Eric Klineberg, a sociologist at NYU, writes: "Reams of published research show that it's the quality, not the quantity of social interaction, that best predicts loneliness." True. But before we begin the fantasies of happily eccentric singledom, of divorcees dropping by their knitting circles after work for glasses of Drew Barrymore pinot grigio, or recent college graduates with perfectly articulated, steampunk-themed, 300-square-foot apartments organizing croquet matches with their book clubs, we should recognize that it is not just isolation that is rising sharply. It's loneliness, too. And loneliness makes us miserable.

WORKSHEET SIDE B:

Please revise the following paragraphs using the principals of the KNC including: anchoring "known" to "new" information, using pronouns (both personal and demonstrative) to connect ideas and finally using synonyms to increase clarity. NOTE: You may rearrange sentences, change punctuation, revise longer sentences to make them shorter or vice versa - whatever it takes to create your idea of cohesion in each section.

1. Hard work and perseverance will lead to socioeconomic success in the USA. However, "limited English proficient students were found to be more disadvantaged economically than other students" and without a high school education, the doors to equality remain closed for many immigrants (Porter 23), Herein rests the importance of education in the American culture. High profile jobs are available only to educated individuals with English fluency.
2. Youth counselors do not expect underprivileged youth to graduate from college; the many financial and social challenges they face pose insurmountable hurdles to responsible study habits, which studies show have a direct correlation to graduation rates. Most working-class families make under \$19,000 a year or less with two working parents often holding down two jobs.
3. Thirty sixth-grade students wrote essays that were analyzed to determine the effectiveness of eight weeks of training to distinguish fact from opinion. That ability is an important aspect of making sound arguments of any kind. in an essay written before instruction began, the writers failed almost completely to distinguish fact from opinion. In an essay written after four weeks of instruction, the students visibly attempted to distinguish fact from opinion, but did so inconsistently. In three more essays, they distinguished fact from opinion more consistently, but never achieved the predicted level.

4. The power to create and communicate a new message to fit a new experience is not a competence animals have in their natural states. Their genetic code limits the number and kind of messages that they can communicate. Information about distance, direction, source, and richness of pollen in flowers constitutes the only information that can be communicated by bees, for example.
5. Public and private literacy programs combined have helped only about four million American adults. The special problems literacy programs must overcome are linked to these results. Irregular class attendance is one such problem. If an adult has small children or must hold down two jobs, class attendance becomes difficult. On the large scale, though, a problem of policy focus exists. Should the suggested source of illiteracy-elementary and secondary education-be the focus of public policy? Or should teaching the present illiterate population to become literate be what public policy gears itself toward?

Lesson Plan: Cohesion Mary Ellen O'Hara College Freshmen February 10, 2016

<p>Grammar concept: <i>The Known-New Contract (Lesson Three: Passive Voice)</i></p>
<p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process, including consideration of peer and instructor feedback, from initial draft to final revision 2. Demonstrate sentence-level correctness
<p>Time: 45-minute lesson Materials: pen and paper</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <p>Lesson Opener: (15 minutes) Solicit volunteers to type their revisions below the originals on my computer for projection. While they are typing, use the opposite whiteboard to review the KNC, pronouns and synonyms with the class. Once revisions are ready, discuss each revision (other students may offer their revisions as well). Clarify any points of confusion.</p> <p>I Do: (10 minutes) Project an example of the KNC using passive voice such as</p> <p>A. <i>Ann was a great student. Unfortunately, she was hit by a car and was unable to finish the semester.</i></p> <p>B. <i>Ann was a great student. Unfortunately, a car hit her, and she was unable to finish the semester.</i></p> <p>Based on student response begin to connect feedback to passive voice (PV) and the KNC (i.e. PV is another means of creating cohesion). Explain why passive voice is highly useful to cohesion. Ask the class how to create the passive voice (<u>'be' verbs and past participles</u>), record on the whiteboard and clarify points. Ask students to quickly devise a sentence using the passive voice (if they need a subject consider using Nim Chimpsky from the film review). As they work I'll create a sentence as well. Then we'll do a shout-out of several examples.</p> <p>We Do: (20 minutes) Shift to projecting three or four sentences and asking pairs to decide whether the sentence is active or passive. Then utilize Schuster's exercise "Important Use of the Passive Voice" pp 131- 133 via worksheet and projection.</p>
<p>Assessment: During the following class, I'll have students work in groups to evaluate the revisions. Meanwhile I'll evaluate student copies for any issues which will then be discussed during class. Later I'll examine each copy to discover if they grasp the KNC, pronouns, synonyms and passive voice, and provide any necessary feedback.</p>
<p>Homework: <i>Choose a larger paragraph from your film review (at least six lines) copy and paste it twice into a separate document. Leave the first copy alone; this is your original. Then revise the second copy using all aspects of the KNC including: placing "known" information at the beginning of the sentence and "new" information at the end, utilizing pronouns (personal and demonstrative), synonyms and the passive voice. Use your best judgment in making the paragraph "flow". Print and bring three copies to Monday's class (the 15th).</i></p>
<p>Works Cited:</p> <p>Kolln, Martha and Loretta Gray. <i>Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects</i>. Boston: Pearson. 2013. Print. (42-45, 94-95).</p> <p>Rist, Mary. "ENGW 2326: Revising and Editing" <i>Editing Exercises on Cohesion</i>. Fall 2013. St. Edward's University. sites.stedwards.edu/marier-engw2326fa13. Web. 6 Dec. 2015.</p> <p>Schuster, Edgar. <i>Breaking the Rules: Liberating Writers Through Innovative Grammar Instruction</i>. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. Print.</p>

Lesson Plan: Cohesion Mary Ellen O'Hara College Freshmen February 15, 2016

<p>Grammar concept: <i>The Known-New Contract (Lesson Four: Transitional Devices)</i></p>
<p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process, including consideration of peer and instructor feedback, from initial draft to final revision 2. Demonstrate sentence-level correctness
<p>Time: 35-minute lesson</p>
<p>Materials: pen, paper and Transitional Devices Sheet</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <p>Lesson Opener: (15 minutes) Students will provide me a copy of their revisions upon arrival. Then, they will break into groups of three to share their revisions. I will project a few questions to help guide their feedback. Initially, students should work individually to provide written feedback regarding revisions using the questions I've projected as a guideline. Then, the groups will gather and provide oral feedback to each other.</p> <p>I Do: (20 minutes) Following the feedback session we will reconvene as a class and I will ask for comments from each group recording significant points and answering questions.</p> <p>Handout Transitional Devices Sheet (taken directly from Weaver pp 191-192). Briefly, discuss the use of transitional phrases and the importance of using the correct transitional phrase. Project an example such as the following for discussion:</p> <p><i>Environmental Technologies constructed a 600-foot-long, environmentally sustainable structure for pedestrians in 2002. Consequently, this is the existing bridge. Accordingly, the architects have used all sustainable materials, practices and protocols including using re-claimed wood and metal, avoiding building in highly trafficked wild-life areas, and using no-gas driven tools. In conclusion, the bridge met the standards of the EPA, and was therefore awarded the EPA's Nature Walk Prize for 2003.</i></p> <p>Note the importance of creating the relationship between information by utilizing the appropriate transitional word/phrase. Thus, the student must recognize the relationship to choose the appropriate term which then clarifies the relationship for the reader.</p> <p>Finally, briefly discuss expletives (it is, there are/is, this is) and the potential problems they create because expletives lack specific meaning and therefore detract from clarity. Students should quickly scan their film review drafts to discover if they've used these sentence openers and revise them.</p>
<p>Assessment: I will be collecting essay and can provide feedback on these grammatical issues. The essays will allow me to gauge if there is any aspect of KNC which needs re-enforcement or further explanation.</p>
<p>Homework: Revise your film review. Consider the use of the KNC and the associated methods to improve cohesion and clarity. Also, don't forget to revise any expletives which begin a sentence. The second draft is due February 15th.</p>
<p>Works Cited:</p> <p>James, Emily. "Known-New Contract." <i>Prezi.com</i>. Prezi, 2015. Web. 8 Dec. 2015.</p> <p>Kolln, Martha and Loretta Gray. <i>Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects</i>. Boston: Pearson, 2013. Print. (102-104).</p> <p>Shanmugaraj, Nisha. "Improving the "Flow" of Your Writing: Clarifying Complex and Technical Writing". Carnegie Mellon University. Global Communications Center. 2015. Web. 7 Dec. 2015.</p> <p>Weaver, Constance. <i>Grammar to Enrich and Enhance Writing</i>. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 2008. Print.</p>

Questions to Evaluate Revised Paragraphs for Cohesion

Please read the first paragraph carefully before moving to the revision. Consider, what do you understand in the first paragraph? Do you see any confusing sentences or areas where you aren't sure what is being communicated? You are welcome to make notations as you read (i.e. use a wavy line under any confusing sections, make a square around words or phrases which are vague). THEN, examine the revision. Remember, the author made a conscious choice to change aspects of the paragraph. Specifically consider the following:

1. **THE KNC:** Is “known” information appearing first in the sentence, followed by new information? Choose the revised sentence which best illustrates the use of the KNC and underline it. Then make a comment as to why you chose this sentence.
2. **USE OF SYNONYMS:** Circle a few of the synonyms in the paragraph. Comment on their use (i.e. how are they helping or hindering the paragraph).
3. **PASSIVE VOICE:** Make an asterisk next to a section which uses passive voice. Make one comment as to how this use of passive voice impacts the paragraph.
4. **STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS (SPECIFIC):** Provide one positive and one constructive comment regarding this revision (remember our discussion of specific feedback in class).

Grammar concept: <i>The Known New Contract (Lesson 5: Adverbials)</i>
<p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process, including consideration of peer and instructor feedback, from initial draft to final revision 2. Demonstrate sentence-level correctness
<p>Time: 50-minute lesson Materials: pen and paper</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <p>Previously: There was a brush-up lesson on issues/questions regarding the KNC for the final draft of the Film Review during class on Feb 22nd. On March 11th, there was a review of the KNC to incorporate it into the existing early draft of the Argumentative Essay.</p> <p>Lesson Opener: (10 minutes) Project the following paragraph from <i>When Animals Mourn</i> for the students to evaluate. Ask them to consider the opening of each sentence and make any comments.</p> <p><i>Throughout the following day numerous adult giraffes attended the infant's body. Some adult males approached for the first time, although they showed no interest in the carcass, instead focusing on foraging for inspecting the reproductive status of the females. On day three, Muller spotted the mother giraffe alone under a tree about 50 meters from where the calf had died. The body itself, however, was no longer in its resting spot. Following a search, Muller located it, half-devoured, in the spot under the tree where the mother had been earlier. By the next day the body was gone, taken by hyenas.</i></p> <p>Record observations on the board and connect student feedback as to the use of adverbials. Explain that one of the more powerful aspect of adverbials is to define time (as most actions happen in time). Project examples, "When, in the course of human events", "Four score and seven years ago", "In my younger and more vulnerable years", "In the beginning", "It was about 11 o'clock in the morning", "After the wolves were released". After examining the examples and discussing them, suggest that adverbials not only situate the reader in time, they also provide cohesion.</p> <p>We Do: (8 minutes) Project the Rachel Carson paragraph from Kolln page 142 for the class to view. Ask students to work in pairs and record as many adverbials as possible. Solicit feedback and discussion; encourage students to note how the adverbial strengthens cohesion. Additionally, begin noting that adverbials include not only adverbs, but prepositional phrases as well as dependent clauses (list on the whiteboard).</p> <p>You Do: (8-10 minutes) Handout the short paragraph from Kolln page 143-144 about the eruption of Mount St. Helen. Ask students to revise the paragraph based in part on the Rachel Carson model and upon how they currently understand adverbials.</p> <p>We Do: (10-15 minutes) We reconvene at which time I'll project an image of the Mount St. Helen paragraph and solicit for two or three responses to each sentence opening, quickly recording them on the whiteboard for discussion.</p>
<p>Assessment: During the following class, I'll have students work in pairs to evaluate the revisions. Meanwhile, I'll evaluate student copies for any major issues to be discussed immediately during class. Later, I'll examine each copy to discover if students are grasping adverbials and cohesion, and provide any necessary feedback.</p>

Homework: Please choose one sizable (6 lines or longer) paragraph from your Argumentative Essay to revise. Copy the original paragraph into a new document and then begin your revision below. Try to include more adverbials as a means of creating cohesion. You don't need to revise every sentence – only where revision will strengthen your writing. Consider that adverbials include adverbs, prepositional phrases and dependent clauses. If you wish to further revise the paragraph by changing positioning, clarifying word choice or including additional information please feel free to do so. Please print out two copies of this assignment for our next class.

Works Cited:

Kolln, Martha and Loretta Gray. *Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects*. Boston: Pearson. 2013. Print. (141-151).

Schuster, Edgar. *Breaking the Rules: Liberating Writers Through Innovative Grammar Instruction*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 2003. Print. (207).

Grammar concept: <i>The Known New Contract (Lesson 6: Adverbials)</i>
Objective: 1. Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process, including consideration of peer and instructor feedback, from initial draft to final revision 2. Demonstrate sentence-level correctness
Time: 25-minute lesson
Materials: pen, paper and homework
Activities: <p>Lesson Opener: (10 minutes) Ask students to drop-off one copy of their revision paragraph to me and form pairs to exchange the other copy with a fellow student. They are to underline the adverbial phrases in the revision and make a few notes about how the revisions add or perhaps detract from meaning and cohesion. Once they've had time to make their notations students may then discuss the revisions with their partner.</p> <p>We Do: (15 minutes) Reconvene the class; solicit and record comments/observations on the whiteboard. Continue to connect adverbials to cohesion and the effort to add markers for reader comprehension and flow. Transition into a discussion of prepositional phrase adverbials and how they help to define direction, place, time, duration, manner and cause (project a basic list such as the one on page 145 of Kolln) for students to record. Remind students to think of the term "prepositional phrase" i.e. a preposition followed by a phrase (a phrase does not contain <i>both</i> a subject and verb). Project the following paragraph for students and ask them to identify any adverbials.</p> <p><i>The men announced that they were going to get some coconuts, walked away, and never came back. After an hour, the women decided to make a break for it. Huddled close together, they walked down to the beach and headed south toward the sanctuary. They were terrified and stunned, barely speaking and moving on autopilot. Two hours later they finally reached the gate but found no sign of Mora. Almudena started to sob. A caretaker called the police in Limon, and soon a line of vehicles raced north along the beach track. At 6:30 a.m. the police radio crackled. They had found Almudena's car, buried up to its axles in sand. There was a body inside.</i></p> <p>Discuss how each adverbial is helping to situate the reader and provide cohesion to the paragraph and relate these choices back to the KNC.</p>
Assessment: This assessment will result from student feedback during class, noting discussion as students work in groups, then clarifying points to the class as well as the upcoming homework assignment.
Works Cited: Kolln, Martha and Loretta Gray. <i>Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects</i> . Boston: Pearson. 2013. Print. (148-154).

Grammar concept: <i>The Known New Contract (Lesson 7: Adverbials and Comma Use)</i>
<p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process, including consideration of peer and instructor feedback, from initial draft to final revision 2. Demonstrate sentence-level correctness
<p>Time: 40-minute lesson</p>
<p>Materials: pen and paper</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <p>Lesson Opener: (12 minutes) Provide feedback on the revised paragraph from our last class. Briefly review the use of adverbials (adverbs and prepositional phrases) and project the Rachel Carson (Lesson 6) paragraph again. Explain that another form of adverbial is the dependent clause. Ask students to define how they understand dependent clause (DC) and record information on the whiteboard. Shape the definition with the class to assure everyone understands the term. Then ask students to look at the Rachel Carson paragraph. Explain there are either one or two DCs in the paragraph. They should look at the paragraph and make their decision. Then take a vote (one or two DCs), ask students to locate the DC and explain their rationale for choosing it.</p> <p>I Do: (8 minutes) Explain that DCs like PPs can indicate time (list example words on the whiteboard), and create connections between sentences which is an essential aspect of the KNC and cohesion. Thus, words of concession, reason, result, comparison and contrast, and clarifying terms such as condition and contingency are DCs. DCs have two qualities: they are dependent (can't stand on their own) and they are clauses (they contain both a subject and a verb).</p> <p>You Do: (7 minutes) Project the following sentences from <i>Why the Brain Prefers Paper</i>. Ask students to work in pairs to identify the DC and PP below. Also, ask them to note any other similarities or differences in the sentences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>When we read, we construct a mental representation of the text.</i> - <i>After twenty minutes of reading, Garland and her colleagues quizzed the students.</i> - <i>In a January 2013 study by Anne Mangen of the University of Stavanger in Norway and her colleagues, seventy-two tenth-grade students studied one narrative and one expository text.</i> - <i>When under pressure to read quickly, students using computers and paper performed equally well.</i> - <i>Beyond pragmatic considerations, the way we feel about a paper book or an e-reader – and the way it feels in our hands- also determines whether we buy a best-selling book in hardcover at a local bookstore or download it from amazon.com.</i> <p>We Do: (13 minutes) Reconvene the class and discuss results while recording responses on the whiteboard and clarifying points. Also, solicit students for responses to sentence similarities and differences. Lead into a discussion of comma use for introductory phrases. Ask students to again examine each sentence and note the use of commas; how the commas help to break up thought and create clarity for the reader.</p>

Assessment:

Again, I'm primarily using student feedback and noting discussion as students work then, clarifying points to groups and the class. At this point a certain level of student comfort with the process is necessary to begin essay revisions. Thus, the larger assessment will come when I receive the two-page revision (which will prepare them for a larger revision in the future).

Homework:

Begin work revising two full pages from your Argumentative Essay. If you need to cut and paste the pages to begin with a full paragraph, please do so (for the 21st at end of the week). You are still working with the KNC. Now you are adding in adverbials (adverbs, PPs and DCs) and you will also be experimenting with parallelism (next class). Please bring two printed copies of your assignment to class on the 21st.

Works Cited:

Kolln, Martha and Loretta Gray. *Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects*. Boston: Pearson. 2013. Print. (148-152).

Grammar concept: *The Known New Contract (Lesson 8: Parallelism)*

Objective:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process, including consideration of peer and instructor feedback, from initial draft to final revision
2. Demonstrate sentence-level correctness

Time: 45-minute lesson

Materials: pen and paper

Activities:

Lesson Opener: (8 minutes) Using projections, briefly review adverbials (adverbs, PPs and DCs) and commas as part of the KNC. Ask students to write two sentences one including a PP and the other a DC. While they are writing, devise two sentences as well. Ask for several shout out sentences and ask students to indicate where the comma is placed when reading their sentence. Clarify any points.

We Do: (22 minutes) Project this paragraph from *Learning to Die in the Anthropocene*. Ask students to read the paragraph and note any devices we've been using as well as anything they find interesting or that may relate to our unit on cohesion. Remind students cohesion is the flow of words, phrases and sentences used to enhance the reader's understanding and includes positioning, transitional devices and repetition.

Likewise, civilizations have throughout history marched blindly toward disaster, because humans are wired to believe that tomorrow will be much like today – it is unnatural for us to think that this way of life, this present moment, this order of things, is not stable and permanent. Across the world today, our actions testify to our belief that we can go on like this forever, burning oil, poisoning the sea, killing off other species, pumping carbon into the air, ignoring the ominous silence of our coal mine canaries in favor of the unending robotic tweets of our new digital imaginarium.

Solicit for examples of aspects of cohesion we've discussed (list them on the whiteboard). Likely, the students will note the repetition in the selection. If they don't use the term parallelism then ask if any of them have heard of it and ask them to explain it, recording comments on the whiteboard. Once a solid definition has been created and students have provided all they know of parallelism fill in any areas of confusion. Then, explain parallelism is a terrific device to enhance meaning and add a certain level of pathos (the class discussed ethos, pathos and logos during early sessions of the course). Project the following famous quotations and ask students to identify what is being repeated and what type of effect that repetition has upon the reader. Also for extra points can they identify the authors of these statements.

- *It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.*
- *I came; I saw; I conquered.*
- *Government of the people, by the people and for the people, shall not perish from the earth.*
- *Great minds discuss ideas. Average minds discuss events. Small minds discuss people.*

After a full discussion of the above-mentioned examples, explain there are two forms of parallelism: literal (examples above) and grammatical (return to the *Learning to Die* paragraph and note the final sentence). Then project the following example as well:

I stopped by the doorway. The City Room was immense, reporters rushing down the aisles, showing copy to each other, bustling back again, flinging gestures, shouting into telephones.

You Do: (13 minutes) Briefly discuss the example then ask students to choose a favorite place, memory or image and describe it using parallelism. (They are also welcome to use something from the Argumentative Essay or Film Review as well as another topic of interest.) Choose five students to read or write their selection and discuss each example with the class.

Assessment: During our next class, students will exchange revisions with a partner to receive feedback. They are to focus on aspects of cohesion. I will project the basic concepts we've covered for students to use as part of their feedback to their partner. I will also have a copy of revisions and will examine them while the students are working. If I note any issues or areas which need clarification I will present them during class. I will be collecting and evaluating each essay. If the revisions are weak, I will move the date of the second draft and use the following class to re-enforce any areas in need of support.

Homework: Continue revising the two pages from your Argumentative Essay for Friday. You are still working with the KNC. Now, you are adding in adverbials (adverbs, PPs and DCs) and parallelism. Please bring two printed copies of your assignment to our next class.

Works Cited:

Kolln, Martha and Loretta Gray. *Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects*. Boston: Pearson. 2013. Print. (53-55).

Noden, Harry. *Image Grammar: Teaching Grammar as Part of the Writing Process*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. 2011. Print. (57-69).

Grammar concept: <i>The Known New Contract (Lesson 9: Parallelism)</i>
<p>Objective:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process, including consideration of peer and instructor feedback, from initial draft to final revision 2. Demonstrate sentence-level correctness
<p>Time: 15-minute lesson Materials: sheet, pen and paper</p>
<p>Activities:</p> <p>Previously: The revision homework received feedback in class from students which lead to a general discussion of adverbials and parallelism. Additionally, I returned copies of the two-page revision to students with comments.</p> <p>Lesson: (7 minutes) Divide the class into six groups of four and hand out the sheet of examples. Explain to students we are jumping back into at parallelism again. Give each group one of the paragraphs to focus upon. Ask them to locate the use of parallelism in their example (there may be more than one example of parallelism) and explain how it is being used (emphasis or contrast).</p> <p><i>Downtown Portland has distinct edges. Its eastern border is the deep, navigable Willamette River, a grassy, mostly level expanse suited to events that draw thousands such as the Rose Festival, a blues festival, and a summer symphony series. Its western border is the steep West Hills, which contain Washington Park, home of the International Rose Test Gardens, where more than 400 varieties of roses are cultivated, and Forest Park, whose 4,800 of Douglas fir, alder, and maple constitute one of the largest nature preserves and hiking areas in any American city.</i></p> <p>And</p> <p><i>Why imagine that specific genes for aggression, dominance or spite have any importance when we know that the brain's enormous flexibility permits us to be aggressive or peaceful, dominant or submissive, spiteful or generous? Violence, sexism, and general nastiness are biological since they represent one subset of a possible range of behaviors. But peacefulness, equality, and kindness are just as biological – and we may see their influence increase if we can create social structures that permit them to flourish.</i></p> <p>And</p> <p><i>That knowledge has become the key resource that means there is a world economy, and that the world economy, rather than the national economy, is in control. Every country, every industry, and every business will be in an increasingly competitive environment. Every country, every industry, and every business will, in its decisions, must consider its competitive standing in the world economy and the competitiveness of its knowledge competencies.</i></p> <p>We Do: (8 minutes) Reconvene the class and receive feedback from the various groups, recording significant comments on the whiteboard. Note how parallelism can be accomplished through literary and grammatical devices as well as a combination of the two. Also, note that parallelism can be used to contrast points as well. Thus, there is great flexibility in this grammatical device; it can not only strengthen cohesion/flow, but add clarity and emotion.</p>
<p>Assessment: During our next class students will exchange their revisions with two other students to receive feedback. I will also have a copy of the revisions and will examine them while students are working. If I note issues or areas which need clarification I will present them during class.</p>

Homework: Ask students to find a place in their Argumentative Essay where they would like to incorporate parallelism. They should copy the original section then provide the revision and bring three copies to the next class.

Works Cited:

Kolln, Martha and Loretta Gray. *Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects*. Boston: Pearson. 2013. Print. (97-100).

Grammar concept: *The Known New Contract (Lesson 10: Parallelism and Commas)*

Objective:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of writing as a process, including consideration of peer and instructor feedback, from initial draft to final revision
2. Demonstrate sentence-level correctness

Time: 35-minute lesson

Materials: Parallelism sheet from Lesson 9, homework, pen and paper

Activities:

Previously: I asked students to retain their copy of the paragraphs illustrating parallelism for this class.

We Do: (12 minutes) Divide the class into groups of three and exchange copies of the parallelism revision. A copy is also provided to me. Students are asked to simply read the original and the revision and make two comments. Comments should relate to features of cohesion and can include the KNC (synonyms, passive voice and pronouns) adverbials (prepositional phrases and dependent clauses) as well as parallelism. Students should indicate if the parallelism is designed to emphasize or contrast information. Once they've written their comments groups may discuss feedback and issues while I walk around answering questions and clarifying points. I'll ask each group to choose one person to read their new example to the class for further comment and then we'll transition into...

Lesson Opener: Project the following article from The Onion for student comment.

Commas, Turning Up, Everywhere!

WASHINGTON—In the midst of a crisis that may have reached a breaking, point Tuesday afternoon, linguists, and grammarians, everywhere say they are baffled, by the sudden and seemingly random, appearance of commas, in our nation's sentences. The epidemic of errant punctuation has spread, like wildfire, since signs of the epidemic first, appeared in a *Washington Post* article, on Federal Reserve Chairman, Ben, Bernanke. "This, is an unsettling trend," columnist William Safire, told reporters. "We're seeing a collapse of the grammatical rules that have, held, the English language, together for, centuries." Experts warn, that if this same, phenomenon, should occur with ellipses...

We Do: (12 minutes) Briefly, I'll explain we now have a grasp of how to use parallelism, it is only a matter of making sure we use the punctuation that accompanies parallelism; in this case, commas to either separate items in a list or when using a conjunction. After locating their sheet on Parallelism from Lesson 9, I'll ask students to note how commas are being used in the three paragraphs. They are to record how each paragraph uses commas on the sheet itself. Once this is completed, I'll project each paragraph and we'll discuss commas as I randomly call upon students for their observations.

You Do: (10 minutes) I'll ask students to retrieve a copy of their parallelism revision and to check if they have used commas effectively -- if not they should make changes. Once they feel they've placed commas where necessary, they should confirm their choice with a friend. I'll circulate as students are working. Then I'll choose six or seven students to shout out their revisions for discussion.

Assessment: I will be meeting with students to provide detailed feedback on their revisions. Additionally, I will create a lesson which specifically addresses any issues I notice arising as a result of incorporating cohesion into the essays.

Homework: Students are to incorporate more aspects of cohesion into their final draft of the Argumentative Essay. The KNC should be visible including the use of synonyms, passive voice, repetition, adverbials (adverbs, prepositional phrases, dependent clauses) and parallelism while using commas effectively.

Works Cited:

Kolln, Martha and Loretta Gray. *Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects*. Boston: Pearson. 2013. Print.

Ruzich, Connie and Marena Perkins. "The Passion of Punctuation" *Readwritethink.org*. International Literacy Association and National Council of Teachers of English. 2015. Web. 7 Dec. 2015.

Tedrow, Mary K. "Making a Successful Punctuation Lesson -." *National Writing Project*. N.p., 2007. Web. 3 Dec. 2015.

English 160 Academic Writing I: Nature and Humanity
 Writing Project: Human Encounters with Nature: The Documentary
 Genre: Film Review

Due Dates:

Complete Draft for Peer Review: February 3rd (bring one hard-copy to class with blank Peer Review Sheet)

Revised Second Draft: February 15th (include hard copies of revised draft, rough draft and peer review)

Polished Final Draft with Revision Statement: February 29th (online via Blackboard/SafeAssign)

Readings:

The Last Distinction? - Benjamin Hale (BB)

Some Humans and the Chimp They Loved and Tormented – A.O. Scott (BB)

Project Nim – James Marsh (film)

Reading and Writing Short Arguments William Vesterman (BB)

The Purposeful Argument Harry Phillips (BB)

Films to Review: (online sources include Hulu, Netflix, YouTube, amazon and documentary heaven)

Flow: For the Love of Water - Irena Salinas

Encounters at the End of the World - Werner Herzog

If A Tree Falls: A Story of the Earth Liberation Front – Marshall Curry

The End of the Line - Rupert Murray

Chasing Ice – Jeff Orlowski

The Unforeseen – Laura Dunn

Dirt: The Movie – Bill Benenson and Gene Rosow

Take me somewhere I have never been, show me something I have never seen, let me meet people I would never have a chance to meet and show me the world from their perspective. Adam Symansky, producer - on documentaries

Situation:

It is not uncommon to utilize the media such as *IMDb* and *Rotten Tomatoes* or pick up a copy of *The Reader* when choosing a film for entertainment. Reviews articulate the value of a film, point to strong or weak moments, while providing a clear synopsis. The best reviews also provide a larger context for the film (social, political, cultural, environmental).

The Chicago Flame is looking to hire a film reviewer for the upcoming academic year. They are willing to compensate the reviewer by covering ticket and transportation costs while paying \$75 per review. As *The Flame* is an academic newspaper, it has decided to emphasize non-fiction films in its cinema section. *The Flame* is particularly interested in acquiring a reviewer who can analyze documentaries. Currently, they are accepting applications and ask each respondent to attach a sample film review for consideration.

Task:

Include a four-page (no less than 1100 words) film review that evaluates one of the films listed above.

ARGUMENT: Consider, a documentary film presents an argument in visual form. How does the director attempt to sway the audience? Do they use ethos, pathos or logos? How do they use these rhetorical modes to create an impact on the audience?

RESEARCH: As you analyze how the director creates an argument you will need to examine sources and locate information to support your views and further your understanding of the subject matter. Once you have acquired more knowledge about the subject you can return to the film. Research the speakers. Are they credible? Are they a major part of this “conversation”? What effect do they have on the film’s message or credibility? Are they the best source given the information provided?

CONTEXT: The film should be reviewed both on the macro (the entire film) and the micro (specific scenes) level. Thus, you will need to choose one or two moments which illustrate the relative strength or weakness of the film and discuss these moments in detail. You will also examine the overall structure of the film. Does the basic story make sense? Is it told in an engaging or provocative way? Most importantly, you will situate the film in a context (social, political, environmental or cultural). This context should be referenced throughout your review.

Evaluation Criteria:

A successful Film Review will:

- provide an engaging title which evaluates the film's success
- present a context for the film (Is the film engaging a social, political, environmental, cultural issue?)
- construct a compelling, succinct one paragraph summary of the film
- present research/information regarding the subject matter of the film (tied to context and/or analysis)
- analyze sections of the film (without synopsis) utilizing argumentative rhetorical modes (ethos, pathos logos and kairos)
- identify the target audience
- provide the credentials for speakers mentioned
- define any unusual terms specific to the documentary
- be free of grammatical errors and typos (especially names, places and technical terms associated with the film)

English 160: Academic Writing I: Nature and Humanity
 Writing Project: Arguments in Humanity and Nature
 Genre: Argumentative Essay

Due Dates:

Complete Draft for Peer Review: March 14th (full draft for peer review and Peer Review Sheet)

Revised Rough Draft: March 28th (revised draft, rough draft, Peer Review Sheet and Writing Center materials)

Polished Final Draft with Revision Statement: April 13th (online via Safe Assign before class)

NOTE: *You are to schedule and attend one Writing Center meeting before April 5th; please include the draft you examined. Provide a brief 150-200-word reflection of your meeting (i.e. your expectations, what you gained, what you would do differently, and perhaps what didn't occur).*

Required texts:

Ideas and Details: A Guide to Writing (BB)

They Say, I Say Gerald Graff

Longman Writers' Companion (BB)

Why the Brain Prefers Paper (BB)

Desegregating Wilderness (BB)

Learning to Die in the Anthropocene (BB)

Situation:

The Environmental Science Department and Office of Sustainability have partnered to create a bi-annual journal focused upon science, nature and the environment. The editorial staff are soliciting for articles for the autumn of 2016 issue and are particularly interested in contributions from UIC students. Although the journal will contain various genres, the staff would like to emphasize argumentative compositions which are well researched. Indeed, the staff believes that well-researched essays which effectively utilize rhetorical modes (ethos, pathos, logos and kairos) are the most effective means of connecting with readers.

Task:

Begin with a concise and significant (who cares?) claim which states the topic/subject matter. (NOTE: We will discuss and brainstorm topics in small groups.) Then, organize your essay according to specific data and warrant (or reasons you believe the claim is correct). Consider what is the context or larger issue at stake (environmental, ethical, educational, health, human freedom, human rights, justice). A claim must be well supported to convince the reader your position is wise, well-conceived and viable. Remember your essay should recognize opposing viewpoints and respectfully address those counterarguments.

Sources:

Three academically credible sources (i.e. academic articles or books) are required. You may also use one *credible* internet source (.edu, .gov). Encyclopedias, news articles, Wiki-pages are not permitted (though they may help you in your initial research). You are welcome to use more sources as long as they are credible.

A *Works Cited* page formatted via MLA guidelines is required. Academic articles may be found via library search engines such as Academic Search Premier, JSTOR, Project Muse, EBSCO or WorldCat and Google Scholar, textbooks and library books. Credible data must be reasonably current. Thus, please limit yourself to sources published in the past ten years unless you can honestly justify an older source (talk to me first).

Use of Sources:

You are limited to six quotations/paraphrasings for the entire essay (of the six only one block quotation may be used). All quotations and paraphrasing must be cited at the end of the sentence in which the source is utilized. Please review the Purdue OWL page we discussed in class.

A successful argumentative essay:

- clearly articulates a strong claim to guide the argument
- explains why the issue is important and creates interest in the issue
- supports the claim with data, warrant and backing
- organizes the argument logically using topic sentences
- employs rhetorical strategies (ethos, pathos, logos) to persuade readers
- addresses objections respectfully and counters them with thoughtful commentary (rebuttal)
- employs quotations and paraphrasing effectively in MLA format
- utilizes credible sources cited in MLA format
- develops a conclusion which extends rather than restates the original thesis
- employs a professional tone suitable to an academic publication
- utilizes sentence structure and grammar effectively

Final Draft:

The final draft includes a revision statement of 250 words which explains the changes you opted to make to your draft, where the essay improved as well as where you believe the essay continues to require improvement. Simply add this section after your *Works Cited*.

Grading Criteria:

A – will adhere exactly to the above requirements, will exhibit clarity of thought and demonstrate a strong understanding of the complexities of the given topic, will be almost free of grammatical errors

B – will adhere almost completely to the above instructions; perhaps not fully including a particular component, misunderstanding some aspects of the topic/issue or not developing clear, well-structured points/thought, will contain only a few grammatical errors, will sufficiently describe the topic and its complexities without glossing over points

C - will demonstrate a serious effort to adhere to the instructions listed above, will incorporate all aspects of argumentation and rhetorical modes, but may suffer from misunderstanding or confusion of the topic/issue, provide too much summary of research and not enough argument, lack clear organization of thought and contain a significant amount of grammatical errors

D – will demonstrate some effort towards adhering to the above instructions, but may suffer from a lack of understanding or confusion in regards the topic/issue, confusion regarding the use of argumentation and/or rhetorical modes, a lack of organizational coherence, a failure to provide a visible argument while only summarizing research, or suffer from language use which renders the work unintelligible and include abundant grammatical errors

English 6090: Teaching Literature

Infinite Hybrids: An Author-centric Approach to Teaching Literature

Preface:

Discovering an author one truly admires is analogous to falling in love. There is the initial shock of delighted surprise, as though caught off guard, then, the sudden flush of enchantment, and finally the irresistible desire for more contact. Such was the case with the man I might call the love of my life; for I've loved him since my early twenties and love him still, more than twenty years later. I love him not only for his prose, his simple, but poignant way of revealing our humanity, but also for his contribution to my reading education and library. You see Samuel Beckett was not only a great writer, but a dedicated and prolific reader. Indeed, by reading a Beckett biography at the age of twenty-one, I was introduced to a cast of new authors; authors read and admired by Beckett himself. As I began to read I noticed certain similarities. With new-found vigor, I returned to James Joyce perceiving a kinship of style. I bought a copy of *Gargantua and Pantagruel* with some trepidation (a comic monk of the Renaissance?) then discovered Beckett's elder in the mischievous, yet direct use of the scatological and corporeal. I even noticed the progenitor of the absurd in Franz Kafka as well as an appreciation for brevity and simplicity. Ultimately, I discovered a relationship between what Beckett read and what he wrote. Obviously, there were other influences: music, art and politics. Nevertheless, I could clearly perceive a line, a connection between Beckett the author and his literary predecessors. The connection was neither explicit nor exact, each element had undergone some transformation, but the similarities were not so removed from their original as to be unrecognizable. It was then I realized the multiple ways literature inscribes itself upon each generation of authors.

The Beauty of Contamination:

When Harold Bloom's asserts, "[g]reat styles are sufficient for canonicity because they possess the power of contamination, and contamination is the pragmatic test for canon formation", I immediately recognize our twin understanding of one crucial aspect of literature, that it is an unending chain of influence

between authors (29). For in using the term “contamination”, Bloom is *not* referring to its well-known definition (i.e. of unwanted influence or impurity), but rather a “blending” either of manuscripts or stories or even of “two linguistic forms” (Gove 491). The traditional definition of contamination would imply an artistic will being forced upon an unsuspecting, vulnerable writer; whereas Bloom’s use of the secondary definition emphasizes a conscious choice, or act of selection by the author. And with that selection the author pays homage to an earlier work while reinventing and perhaps even resurrecting aspects of it.

Thus, when Gabriel Garcia Marquez declares James Joyce “showed me that it was not necessary to demonstrate facts: it was enough for the author to have written something for it to be true, with no proof other than the power of his talent and the authority of his voice”, he is acknowledging Joyce’s expertise and bold authorial voice (Michaud). It is Joyce’s writerly excellence which compels Marquez to boldly state his truth and to blend his style with the author of *Ulysses* (Triska). Indeed, Bloom emphasizes this same point when he explains, “[w]riters, artists, composers themselves determine canons, by bridging between strong precursors and strong successors” (229). Significantly, Bloom has created an exclusive group of creators (or what David Richter would term *initiators*) in his chain of influence. For by excluding literary critics or theorists, what David Richter terms *mediators*, a group which also includes publishers, editors, marketers and teachers Bloom accentuates the chasm he perceives between initiators and mediators (Richter 125). In Bloom’s view creators are influenced by and act as an influence upon other creators – and that’s it. Critics may evaluate, scholars may analyze, publishers may reissue, but the creator will rarely notice their efforts and certainly the efforts of such mediators will have little lasting effect upon the output of the creator.

To a large degree, Bloom has history on his side with his view of creative influence. Most creative writers are primarily influenced by and concerned with creative works. Few authors read literary criticism, a literary form uniquely designed for those in academe. Now, there are exceptions such as Samuel Beckett or more recently David Foster Wallace, and more young, though not necessarily canonical writers, are currently acquiring terminal degrees. Nevertheless, at this point in literary history, Bloom’s view of influence is a valid one.

However, mediators such as John Guillory seem uncomfortable with Bloom's concept of canonical influence. In *The Canon as Cultural Capital*, Guillory attempts to insert mediators, in the form of teachers, into the equation when he asserts "authors learn whom to read and how to judge [literature] in the schools" (224). His statement seems rather bold given the fact many canonical authors received little to no formal education, including Charles Dickens, Mark Twain and Herman Melville (Richter 224). Additionally, there are those who balked and read outside the prescribed curriculum developing their own sense of judgement. Samuel Beckett's first exposure to James Joyce didn't occur until after he graduated from Trinity College. Similarly, Jack Kerouac was a prolific reader who did not follow the advice of his educators (Gussow 47; Kerouac). Nevertheless, Guillory is not alone in perpetuating the myth of community between mediators and initiators. Wayne Booth in *Who is Responsible for Ethical Criticism, and for What?* condescendingly describes the role of mediator as one who is ethically responsible for "the care and feeding of artists" (349). Such a description though not lacking in compassion also reveals Booth's view of the superior position of mediators. Booth attempts to conjoin the two parties with a cyclical analogy by emphasizing that, "the most important of all critical tasks is ... a vigorous conversation, that will nourish in return those who feed us with their narratives" (351).

But is there a conversation? Do initiators respect the opinions of mediators? Does "blending" occur as the result of a review especially given the contentious attitude many authors express toward critics? Consider Mark Twain's comment, "[t]he trade of critic, in literature ... is the most degraded of all trades and it has no real value" (Yardley). Indeed, many authors see critics as those who would restrict their artistic endeavors. Jack Kerouac pulls no punches when he states "if critics say your work stinks it's because they want it to stink and they can make it stink by scaring you into conformity with their comfortable little standards. Standards so low that they can no longer be considered 'dangerous' but set in place in their compartmental understandings" (Price). Given the antagonism of writer/initiators for critic/mediators, Booth's "conversation" appears rather one-sided – a forced feeding of sorts. Additionally, Booth fails to acknowledge the power of initiators to impact readership and success, such as with author endorsement book blurbs. Quite simply, most readers are familiar with other authors, not literary critics (although Bloom

due to his prodigious output is known to many), and therefore readers, too, when browsing in a bookstore or online are influenced by the words of other initiators/authors – not meditators.

A Note on Style:

Within Bloom's chain of influence, he avoids defining "great style" perhaps because of its elusive nature. However, great styles can certainly be recognized if not specifically defined. Consider the many essays which highlight stylistic similarities between authors. Indeed, these similarities are ingrained; most literature educators would be hard-pressed to deny that Sherwood Anderson's style influenced the work of William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway. Nevertheless, a recognizable style existing over generations is impossible to locate. Bloom might agree with Martha Nussbaum when she discusses "works that share no single core of features over the centuries, though they are connected by a network of overlapping resemblances" (363). These resemblances or great styles, as Bloom explains, create a chain of influence through time. This same concept is shared, in part, by T.S. Eliot in his discussion of tradition in *Tradition and the Individual Talent* when he observes "the most individual parts of his [a poet's/writer's] work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously" (Eliot). As with Nussbaum and Bloom, Eliot appears unable to precisely articulate the alchemical ingredient; nevertheless, he observes its presence in great works and, in so doing, confirms its existence in his theory.

An Author-centric Approach:

Even as I acknowledge my isolated position of teacher/mediator outside the closed chain of influence, I nevertheless support Bloom's claim. I also wonder how I might incorporate some of his theory into the teaching of literature. Perhaps as I begin to sketch out some ideas, it is wise to consider the words of Elaine Showalter in *Teaching Literature*, when she suggests the focus should not be upon *what* we teach, but *how* we teach (21-40). Can Bloom's views on intertextuality be practically applied in an introductory literature course? For my part I say yes, absolutely. Indeed, an author-centric model of teaching literature has the potential to create a sense of cohesion. For what is discovered in one text may arise, in a slightly different form, in another thereby creating a series, a chain of infinite hybrids. So, to briefly return to the "what" of teaching, course reading lists which often appear as a disparate amalgamation of texts can be

perceived as carefully selected and ordered to highlight various chains of influence. For instance, it is possible to say Shakespeare and Cormac McCarthy are connected: Herman Melville was influenced by Shakespeare, Melville, in turn, influenced William Faulkner, and Faulkner clearly influenced McCarthy. By highlighting this chain of influence the focus is removed from cultural, feminist or any number of other literary theories and returned to the writing itself. Indeed, there is a return not simply to style, but to plot, setting, tone, point of view, themes, symbols and imagery. Perhaps this approach is not popular in the wake of the literacy theory boom, nevertheless I believe such an approach has significant value to students. Students who may be wishing to learn more about how to read literature and engage with a text on a deeper level without the added trappings of various schools of literary theory.

Indeed, my dissatisfaction with the elite, bloated and incomprehensible qualities of most literary theory and criticism were the catalyst for seeking an alternative means of teaching literature. And I may not necessarily be alone at least in regards the writing itself: Margaret Nussbaum has termed feminist theorist Judith Butler's writing "ponderous and obscure" (Smith).

Certainly, the last thing undergraduate students need as they begin to delve into a complex and rich piece of literature is a turgid overview by a loquacious academic. In my research, I discovered two collections by J. C. Hallman which allowed me to begin realizing an author-centric approach to literature. Hallman's collections are titled, *The Story About the Story: Great Writers Explore Great Literature (Parts I and II)*. Hallman shares many of Bloom's views as well as my own. In the introduction to his collection, Hallman observes the division between initiators and mediators which he describes as "a decades long pissing match" (8). He utilizes Henry James as an example of the conflict and animosity many initiators share for mediators. Hallman notes, "James loathed critics. He claimed that critics heaped meanings onto his work to wriggle themselves out of their own 'queer predicaments'" (11). Much like myself, Hallman was in search of a means of teaching literature which didn't include mediators. Toward that end, Hallman turned to readers; he "canvassed writers, readers and bookstore owners" to discover "essays that had helped cement the idea of literature for them" (12). And with those essays he compiled *The Story About the Story* which paves the road toward "a writer's model for how to write about reading" (9).

Hallman titles his approach “creative criticism” mainly because the authors included are flexing their creative muscles even as they attempt to pinpoint the power contained within certain literary texts. In the collection, these authors are as unafraid to use a series of metaphors as they are of adhering to any pre-prescribed notions of literary criticism. Such essays stretch the boundaries of literary criticism; they are a model for combining, or perhaps the word is blending, creative writing with analysis. To my mind such models hold great potential for teaching literature, not only because they release students from the strident, linguistically overstuffed, excessively formal rhetoric of literary criticism, but they acknowledge the power of analytical thinking expressed creatively. Furthermore, to return to Bloom’s chain of influence, as readers students are also being influenced - influenced both by the fiction as well as criticism they’re asked to read. Therefore, why obscure that influence? And, for that matter, why not permit students the freedom to express their understanding through genres which are more creative and permissive of experimentation. Is there any logical reason why analytical or critical thinking skills must remain married to formal, academic writing? Can’t complex thought and analysis be executed just as effectively within creative genres of writing? Perhaps it is time for students be allowed to break free from such traditions.

These initial steps toward an author-centric approach to teaching literature may be criticized for their limited scope or omission of current literary theory and criticism. However, if the larger goal of teaching students to read complex texts that they might obtain the skill-set to read future works with more ease, understanding and autonomy is successful then perhaps what is lacking is all for the better.

Works Cited

- Bloom, Harold. "Elegiac Conclusion." *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*, edited by David H. Richter, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000, pp. 225-233.
- Booth, Wayne. "Who is Responsible in Ethical Criticism, and for What?" *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*, edited by David H. Richter, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000, pp. 349-355.
- Eliot, T. S. "Tradition and the Individual Talent (1920)." *Poetry Foundation*, 13 Oct. 2009, www.poetryfoundation.org/resources/learning/essays/detail/69400.
- Gove, Philip Babcock. *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, Unabridged*. Merriam-Webster, 1993.
- Guillory, John. "The Canon as Cultural Capital." *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*, edited by David H. Richter, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000, pp. 218-224.
- Gussow, Mel. *Conversations with and about Beckett*. Grove Press, 1996.
- Hallman, J. C. *The Story About the Story: Great Writers Explore Great Literature*. Tin House Books, 2009.
- Kerouac, Jack. "Kerouac's Top 40". *Bookish*, 1 Jan. 2014, www.bookish.com/articles/kerouacs-top-40/.
- Michaud, Jon. "Eighty-Five from the Archive: Gabriel García Márquez". *The New Yorker*, vol. 16 Mar. 2010, www.newyorker.com/books/double-take/eighty-five-from-the-archive-gabriel-garcia-mrquez.
- Nussbaum, Martha. "The Literary Imagination." *Falling into Theory: Conflicting Views on Reading Literature*, edited by David H. Richter, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000, pp. 356-365.
- Price, Steven D. "The Little Black Book of Writers' Wisdom." Skyhorse Publishing, 2013, https://books.google.com/books?id=gawtAgAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.
- Richter, David H. *Falling into Theory*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000.
- Showalter, Elaine. *Teaching Literature*. Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

Smith, Dinita. "When Ideas Get Lost in Bad Writing; Attacks on Scholars Include a Barbed Contest With 'Prizes'". *The New York Times*, 27 Feb. 1999, <http://www.nytimes.com/1999/02/27/arts/when-ideas-get-lost-bad-writing-attacks-scholars-include-barbed-contest-with.html>.

Triska, Zoë. "Famous Author Writing Influences: 20 Famous Writers on What Inspired Their Work." *The Huffington Post*, 3 July 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/07/03/author-writing-influences_n_3540905.html.

Yardley, Jonathan. "Mr. Clemens, in His Own Words." *Washington Post*, 19 Nov. 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/11/19/AR2010111906788.html>.

ENG 6800: Final Project

“I Was Told that I Better Keep Off that Subject”:
Margaret Sanger’s Early Rhetoric During the Sex Education Campaigns

I’ve been thinking about a quotation from Rudyard Kipling. He says, “[i]f history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten”. As I consider Kipling’s words I understand there are many histories which we likely *should* know, but don’t. However, I don’t think the reason we lack these histories is related to the form itself. Rather, there are stories or histories we are never told. Thus, such histories have no place in our consciousness. Only if we seek them out do we discover them. Such has been my experience in researching reproductive rights during the turn of the century. Not only have I been astonished at how little I knew about the forces and individuals involved in releasing women from various corporeal constraints, I’ve also discovered after several conversations, that other women, those separated by several generations of educational systems, those in their twenties to those in their eighties, possess a smattering of knowledge about this critical aspect of women’s history. As Victor Vitanza points out, “[w]riting history involves judgements about which scenes and actors and events are important and which are not” (121). Consequently, it appears most areas of reproductive rights history have been ignored by many educational systems. And the natural result of that neglect is that those early advocates, the women who spoke out, who wrote, who refused to accept prohibitive laws and social constraints — their stories, lacking enough voices, enough story tellers to sustain them are lost or perhaps worse wrecked upon the shores of factoids and misinformation: “Margaret Sanger, didn’t she have something to do with the pill? She was racist or into eugenics, right?”. Without the support of other voices, a history cannot survive the buffets of time. Nevertheless, as so many

feminist historians and rhetorical historians have discovered, the residue of a history does remain within written texts.

Although I'm certainly no historian I've chosen to examine a text by Margaret Sanger, perhaps the woman most known for reproductive rights in the U.S. I've selected an early work of Sanger's, *What Every Girl Should Know*, a work which led to her arrest, a work which did not advocate (as did much of her later writings) birth control, but rather sex education, and perhaps most significantly, a text which landed amid a flurry of conflict, questioning and repression. Sanger's text was written at a particularly contentious moment in U.S. history; one where rhetoric held a crucial role. In discussing rhetoric, Lloyd F. Bitzer explains the term "rhetorical situation" which is focused upon the "contexts which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse" (1). Bitzer is highlighting the fact that rhetoric does not occur in a vacuum. Rather, rhetoric is always responsive to circumstances and other rhetoric. Or as Bitzer so aptly states, "[r]hetorical works belong to the class of things which obtain their character from the circumstances of the historic context in which they occur" (3). Thus, Sanger's text is a product of a specific historical moment. Therefore, to effectively examine her text, it is necessary to understand the circumstances and voices surrounding it.

Rhetorical Climate of Sex Education

To begin, it should be noted Margaret Sanger was not alone in writing a text advocating sex education, nor was she alone in producing a text banned for obscenity by the Comstock Act, the willful distribution of which led to her arrest. Mary Ware Dennett had a similar experience with *The Sex Side of Life*, which was published less than a year before Sanger's book (Chen 175).

Despite the rather pervasive forces behind Anthony Comstock, the rhetorical environment into which Sanger entered was not entirely unfriendly to many of the ideas she was advocating.

In regards to sex education, Leigh Ann Wheeler notes, “[s]ex education was not particularly new; handbooks and pamphlets had appeared in the popular press since the late nineteenth century” (177). Additionally, certain texts were slightly more progressive in their portrayal of women. Dr. Edward Clarke in his book *Sex in Education: A Fair Chance for the Girls*, published in 1873, walks a somewhat ambiguous line with the following statement: “Woman in the interest of the race, is dowered with a set of organs peculiar to herself, whose complexity, delicacy, sympathies, and force are among the marvels of creation. If properly nurtured and cared for, they are a source of strength and power to her” (33). Clark both celebrates the female body (complexity, marvel, strength and power) while noting its weakness (dowered, delicacy). He also includes the rather ambiguous phrase, “[i]f properly nurtured and cared for” which could be referencing women learning about their bodies and therefore being capable of self-care, or men as custodians of women where men interpret sex education for women and therefore properly nurture and care for them. In any case, Clarke’s statement reveals an ideology of family and the concomitant attitude toward sex as a means of procreation prevalent at that time, a point I will discuss in more detail later.

Men, and specifically doctors, were not the only ones’ publishing material on sexuality. Women had been writing and publishing material for decades. As Wendy Hayden points out the nineteenth century public displayed an interest in anatomy and physiology such that “lectures to popular audiences and to women’s societies, textbooks and marriage manuals, and pamphlets advocating ‘reform physiology’” were proliferating (84). Within this environment Mary Gove Nichols became known for speeches on feminine hygiene, basic anatomy, dress reform, and the importance of exercise for women (Hayden 88). Additionally, not only was the topic of sex being spoken of by both sexes it was also heard by both sexes – usually through women’s clubs.

Nevertheless, there were limitations which prevented serious and physically consequential topics from being discussed. Indeed, it is the absence of essential information such as how to naturally avoid pregnancy, the symptoms and effects of venereal disease upon mothers and children, as well as pre-natal care which are glaringly nonexistent. Furthermore, much of the language incorporated into socially acceptable texts was obscurantist. Consider how the “1916 prize-winning pamphlet *Sex in Life: For Boys and Girls of Twelve to Sixteen Years*” explains reproduction.

Life itself you can learn only by living. That is why, until you yourself have married your true mate, and known the joy of being a mother or a father, you cannot really understand the beautiful truths of a baby's creation . . . When you yourself have learned of these holy things, of the splendor of life and love, by your own experience, you will know that no one could have told you about them (Carter 247).

The author, by cloaking reproduction in mystery and flawed logic that such “holy” experiences cannot be articulated, helps to constrain those seeking knowledge. Additionally, many texts utilized a system of euphemisms created not only to avoid prosecution under the Comstock Act, but also to soften seemingly vulgar information. The proliferation of euphemisms in sex education publications meant immigrants or those without a strong grasp of the English language were essentially prohibited from gaining necessary knowledge even if they did purchase such a publication (Jensen 2-4). Thus, as Robin Jensen notes, “it should be no surprise that women, immigrants, racial minorities and members of the working class received little, if any, formal sex education” (3).

Indeed, classist as well as sexist agendas held sway regarding the topic of sex; men were the primary audience for sex education, and discussions by professionals calling themselves sexologists were gaining popularity at the turn of the century. This group, as Layne Parish Craig

explains, which originally included “Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis and Sigmund Freud crafted a taxonomy of sexual identities and behaviors that continued to structure public conversations about sexuality into the late twentieth century” (10). And a large part of those identities was focused upon “abnormal” behavior; one particularly significant subject was that of the hysterical female (Craig 10). Such discussions helped to further undermine the role of women. More importantly they perpetuated patriarchal justification for not educating women, as women were too sensitive and therefore incapable of absorbing such vulgar or scientifically complex information. In addition, the field of sexology bolstered political agendas:

Foucault has argued that the emergence of sexology was indicative of what he called the project of “governmentality,” the formulation of types of knowledge utilized by the state to monitor the habits of its citizens. Foucault claimed that this development is part of the historical trajectory of the emergence of modern liberal government, where the views of professionals, especially from the medical realm, are considered representative of the needs of a nation’s social body” (Bauer 93).

Thus, the views of sexologists began to proliferate and yet another lens, this one based in an innovative area of science, was put in place to constrain women to fit into the political apparatus.

Race Suicide

Within this deceptively vocal environment changes in social and economic tides contributed to an event which slowed the halting progress of sex education. The decline in birthrates of “native-born Anglo-Americans who claimed the right to represent the core of national identity and well-being” became a major political and cultural issue (Carter 215). The concern for class dominance sparked a sea change; one which turned against women who were primarily saddled with the blame for this population decline. Dr. Edward Clarke’s ‘fair chance for the girls’ evaporated as he “blamed the threat of race suicide on the increasing numbers of middle-class, white women who were pursuing some form of higher education”, noting that “formal education

interfered with women's fertility and femininity" (Carter 214-215). Clarke statements demonstrate a form of pseudo-science prevalent at the time. Such conflation of educated observation with opinion could not be proven or, if so, only through weak and inconsistent logic. Nevertheless, his position as a doctor legitimized his statements thereby making them inviolate. Additionally, Clarke is supporting the traditional role of women within the family model – a role essential to increasing population.

The concern over population decline was exacerbated by the fact that while Anglo-American birth rates decreased that of immigrants continued at a steady pace. This trend, which was noted in the 1870's, was codified and fully articulated by Francis Amasa Walker in 1891 through his examination of U.S. Census records (Gordon 88). Furthering the argument that women were at the heart of this decline, divorce rates were increasing, with "more than two-thirds of American divorces" being sought by women (Simmons, and Carter 215). The issue of "race suicide", as it became known, reached its highpoint when President Theodore Roosevelt began directly addressing the topic in several forums. Roosevelt labeled the population decline "a sign of moral disease" thereby cementing the opinion of the ruling class: women were shirking their responsibilities in not giving birth; in fact, they were "criminal(s) against the race" (86). Roosevelt decreed that such women displayed a "viciousness, coldness, shallow-heartedness" which was to be condemned. He urged the public to shift its course by setting a standard: "[s]ix children were the minimum number for people of 'normal stock'; those of better stock should have more" (Gordon 90-91). Clearly, within Roosevelt's statements is a reminder of the current, nonetheless long-standing family model and the specific role of women within it.

The Family Model

The focal point of the turn-of-the-century family model was that of the male and his desire. Before examining this model, it's important to realize this family model is founded upon capitalist ideals. Ideals which position each individual in a place where they are most productive to the economy and, as these two become conflated, by society. Within this model male desire was portrayed as absolute, invincible, even sacrosanct. This was supported by the long-held "doctrine of necessity" or the belief sex was necessary for the health of men (Carter 218). Chaste behavior for men was simply *not* an option. Given this unadulterated "fact" women were placed in the untenable position of opposing this force of desire, at least before marriage. Women were the deniers of men, deniers of nature, deniers of an all-powerful force. Most importantly, women were obligated to deny men not simply for reputation, but to assure that traditional families were built (i.e. men will marry and support their children). Within this model the woman is without desire and yet is desired. She is also the weaker of the two sexes. Nevertheless, she is asked to oppose the natural, inborn and undeniable desire of the stronger sex. How does a woman overcome the stronger male? With her inborn virtue, the unshakeable ability to remain chaste. Doubtless, these exaggerated and untenable concepts of masculinity and femininity were founded upon romantic ideals and not upon the practicalities of day-to-day existence.

Within this model, women exist *for* men. Therefore, woman can serve only one of two roles upon reaching adulthood. Significantly, both roles relate to their sexual function in relationships; women can be either mothers and wives, or prostitutes. As both roles are almost completely reliant upon men there is no possibility of independence. For independence is reserved exclusively for men who will financially provide for their children, wives, sisters and, if need be, mothers. Thus, within this model, attempts at independence by females would be perceived as a threat. Such was the case for working women who had, to some degree, removed themselves from

the model. These women were quickly perceived as problematic; they were flouting the model; a model promulgated upon a special privileged form of democracy and capitalism. Thus, women began receiving targeted attacks such as the later statements of Dr. Clarke.

Given its patricentric emphasis this model also fails to acknowledge the toll children take upon the female body or the dangers of child birth. In fact, it works under the supposition that if a woman speaks of the pain associated with childbearing or childrearing she is abnormal, unfit, spoiled or willful – and therefore should be admonished and indeed that was what lay behind the statements of Theodore Roosevelt.

Economic and Social Changes

Population decline provided the opportunity for more explicit classist, racist and sexist agendas to materialize. In regards to women, the birthrate issue became a justification for targeting educated and working-class women (i.e. independent women) or those provided the freedom not to take part in the family model. True, educated women were choosing to marry later in life and having less children. Similarly, women who worked outside the house were also more likely to have less children (Carter 88-89). Thus, during the Progressive Era, a new class of women arose; one which inspired curiosity, fear and criticism. Christina Simmons, notes after 1890 working-class women became “very noticeable to reformers, journalists, and novelists seeking to document the ‘New Woman’”. This new class of women possessed a hitherto unknown autonomy; for despite contributing most of their wages to their families, “their earnings gave some leverage against parental control and allowed a few to live with peers and apart from family” (Simmons). By acquiring an education and/or finding employment women were acquiring a level of independence previously reserved for men. Yet, population decline became the weapon, the evidence proving women’s equality had gone too far. Nevertheless, those privileges so hard won

could not be removed without significant backlash; thus, the most efficient and seemingly logical course within this patriarchal agenda was to shame those enjoying such privileges.

There were, nevertheless, other factors contributing to the shift in family size of the dominant class and these factors were again used as the justification for further constraints:

The need for moral policing ... arose from political and economic shifts that were eroding older hierarchies of authority, including the patriarchal family. The factory system began to replace household economic production, pulling young people out of immediate family supervision. Growing cities enticed some to seek fortunes in the volatile business economy, while others escaped traditional family and community authority by moving west. Culturally and psychologically, these transformations were related to a developing concept of individual self (Simmons).

However, the individual self was again proving to be a concept exclusive to men. Women were expected to remain within the control of, and indeed continue to reside with, the family - for they had no acceptable place outside the model, nor did they have any legal standing. Even in the case of married women laws were not uniformly passed to allow women a modicum of control over their property and earnings until 1900 (National Women's History Project).

The Rise of Venereal Disease

Most advocates for sex education focused upon the threat to the American family in their rhetoric. However, the population issue and indeed questions in regards to family were complicated by several social issues. One hot potato topic was that of venereal disease, which was on the increase. Jean Baker when discussing the recruitment of WWI soldiers notes that, "15 percent of all draftees were found to suffer from venereal disease, so many, in fact, that Secretary of War, Newton Baker ended the disqualification [of men with venereal disease from joining the military]" (130). At first glance this number may not appear significant. However, it represents only a portion of the male population with various venereal diseases as "over 25 per cent of the entire male population of the country between the ages of 18 and 31 were in military service"

during WWI (Yockelson). Thus, a substantially larger percentage of men likely suffered from one venereal disease or another. These diseases were commonly acquired while frequenting prostitutes; the disease was then passed on to wives and their children with devastating and debilitating, even fatal results. Strangely, the family model somehow supported vilifying prostitutes, literally depicting them as the enemy of the family - for how could men be blamed for their desires (Carter 220-221)?

Groups had already formed to help stem the tide of venereal disease including the American Social Hygiene Association, National Congress of Parents and Teachers and even the federal government in the early part of the century (Wheeler 177). So, it was, as Julian Carter indicates, the danger and “increasing concern about the transmission of venereal disease [which became] one of the vectors along which Americans were drawn into a widespread public conversation about the transmission of sexual knowledge” (216). However, the family model dictated that the topic of sex has as its locus men, not only as the primary audience but in addressing their concerns: “knowledge was the weapon a virile man could use to protect ‘innocent wives’, ‘newborn infants’, and the nation itself from the venereal threat” (Carter 222).

The Rhetorical Battle

The discussion of sex was to prove contentious not the least because concepts about sexuality and the roles of men and women were being rewritten and codified. Women’s sexuality had rather recently been reconceived through the auspices of evangelical Christianity. The banner of seductress had been replaced; women were now “passionless” and morally upright - while men continued to be defined by their unimpeachable sexual desires (Simmons). Such sexual roles helped to perpetuate social problems. They “served as the ideological foundation of the sexual double standard: if men had to have sexual intercourse to preserve their health, then it made sense

for society at least tacitly to countenance men's premarital sexual activity, which reformers deeply opposed" (Simmons). The model essentially supported prostitution which naturally led to the spread of venereal disease. Nevertheless, the damage wrought by ignorance and silence necessitated not simply that sex education become a part of every adolescent's life, but that a system be instituted to disseminate this knowledge.

The double threat of race suicide and venereal disease shifted the topics of sex and sex education from the personal and private to the public and more importantly political -especially when these issues began to effect military recruitment. Sex education was now a political matter: one where the power to define family and sexual roles could potentially have long-term effects upon the nation. At this point, Victor Vitanza's words take on a poignancy when he explains:

[r]hetorics ... codify who can and cannot speak; what can and cannot be said; who can and cannot listen and act and the very nature of the language to be used. Rhetorics do not make these decisions on their own. They are constructed at the junctures of discourse and power, at the points at which economic, social, and political battles are waged in public discourse (116-117).

Those who could grab the larger audience and retain it would be the ones to define the actions and attitudes of the public regarding sexuality. The battle was on for the right to educate the next generation about sex. There were, however, not two but several camps vying for the privilege including the social purist school, the developmental school, the social hygienists, the progressive reformers, and the scientific community. At stake, among many issues, was what institution would define sexual and family roles, science/academe or the church? The largest and most controversial question was that of the act of intercourse itself; was sexual intercourse for reproduction only or was it also for pleasure? If science won this battle where did religion stand in regards the body, marriage and family? Similarly, if religion won out how was science to engage with issues of the body? Further complicating the issue was the fact most groups were comprised almost entirely of

upper and middle class whites who felt they could “help” immigrants and African Americans by making the right decisions for them (Carter 218-219). Conflict arose rapidly and criticism began to fly in all directions. Not surprisingly criticism quickly became heated between groups which were dominated by one sex (the female-dominated purists) or another (the male-dominated scientific community). William Trufant Foster, head of Reed College, in 1914 attacked purist reformers stating, “[s]ome are ignorant and unaware that enthusiasm is not a satisfactory substitute for knowledge. Some are hysterical” (Simmons). Here Foster exploits both the new trope of the hysterical women and that of the more traditional dim-witted religious enthusiast to deftly discredit the purists. However, Foster raises an important point which concerned many, the dissemination of inaccurate information. And it is important to acknowledge, the scientific community was not immune to criticism of inaccurate information within its own ranks as well as issues of moral turpitude. Within this skirmish each group attempted to present their agenda for sex education while simultaneously criticizing the agendas of other groups. And it was during this complex battle that Margaret Sanger began publishing her ideas about sex education.

An Examination of Margaret Sanger’s *What Every Girl Should Know*

The text for *What Every Girl Should Know* began as sex education lectures Sanger provided in her own home to mothers and children in 1911. These, in turn became the fodder for public lectures and eventually a column of the same title published in 1912 and 1913 for the socialist magazine *New York Call* (Chester 65 and Jensen 25). Sanger’s title may have been influenced by or borrowed from an earlier popular work, Dr. Mary Wood Allen’s *What a Young Woman Ought to Know*, published in 1899 and reprinted in 1905 and 1913 (Carter 228). Sanger’s book represents a collection of the best texts from her column. As these pieces were written by the same author

within a short period and are concerned with a specific topic the chapters appear to flow together quite harmoniously.

The one major addition to this collection is that of an introduction. Given the book was to be distributed to a wider audience - an audience which may not be as forward thinking as the socialist audience of *New York Call* - Sanger uses the introductory section as a space to justify the existence of her volume by presenting some of the concomitant issues related to a women's ignorance of her body as well as her critical role outside of family as a member of society. In order to provide a thorough examination given the page limit, this essay will focus exclusively upon the introduction.

Sanger is a direct writer; this is evidenced in her introduction where she dives into her justification for writing on sex education in the first paragraph; "[s]tudents of vice, whether teachers, clergymen, social workers or physicians" may have their different opinions about the cure to vice, but they are united in their belief that "ignorance of the sex functions is one of the strongest forces that sends young girls into unclean living" (7). Thus, Sanger, by aligning herself with other, perhaps more respected experts in the field, justifies the need for educating women to save them from vice. This strategic technique, of associating herself with experts, a concrete means of establishing her ethos, is something Sanger wisely relies upon throughout her text. In this way, she legitimizes her position placing herself among the medical professionals such as Clarke and Allen. Additionally, Sanger identifies the issue on so many minds at the time - prostitution.

Sanger's concise argument continues via logical means; her second paragraph raises the obvious specter of venereal disease - a consequence of prostitution. To raise the topic so early in her discussion represents a bold move. For in doing so, Sanger understands she is transgressing into a sensitive, taboo topic; one which elicits fear. Certainly, no human being wants to acquire a

venereal disease, especially something as dangerous, debilitating and potentially deforming as syphilis. Nevertheless, Sanger realizes the dread of venereal disease, although seemingly selfish, is linked to the larger more virtuous desire to eradicate it or at the least slow its progress. Sanger taps into the human motive to not only save ourselves, but others from suffering through the simple, and as Sanger presents it, seemingly innocuous process of education. By marrying the audience's motive to alleviate the suffering caused by venereal disease with her own motive to, as James Herrick might say, gain "converts to a point of view" that education of the body is necessary for women, Sanger effectively and subtly uses an underlying fear to motivate action (10).

And Sanger has a few more rhetorical moves up her sleeve. She elucidates the larger implications of sex education by noting the act of educating women will lead directly to a "saner and healthier attitude on the sex subject" (7). And this may be Sanger's ultimate goal. For Sanger is cognizant "[r]hetoric often plays a critical social role" in shaping knowledge or as James Herrick explains it, in "knowledge-building" (21). Women, educating one another about their bodies and the natural process of sex, are reinforcing a knowledge which exists in certain publications (like those of Sanger) and by extension, perpetuating a healthy 'truth' about the subject of sex. Sanger is struggling to transfigure the subject of sex; to rescue it from "offensiveness", "shame or mystery" and "prudishness" where it had been historically mired and remake sex into an act which is "natural, clean and healthful" (Sanger 8). For if the topic is refashioned it can be removed from its previous place of darkness and silence.

The cloaking of sex in shame and silence only perpetuates fear and hostility or so Sanger subtly indicates in her introduction. For Sanger was aware of the strident opposition within her audience; she had already received admonishments for many of the same articles previously published in *New York Call*. As Jean Baker mentions in her biography of Sanger, the "response

was outrage”; some readers were so offended they cancelled subscriptions (70). Indeed, Sanger’s final column in the *What Every Girl Should Know* series, titled “Some Consequences of Ignorance and Silence” which discussed gonorrhea and syphilis in detail were suppressed by the office of Anthony Comstock. In this instance, the *New York Call* made an audacious move. On one page of the magazine in bold type read the title *What Every Girl Should Know* “over a blank box under which the word NOTHING appeared” (70). This circumstance highlights the “dialogic” or “response-making” nature of rhetoric (Herrick 11). Sanger’s article invoked a response from Comstock (suppression) whose response, in turn, was responded to by the *New York Call*. However, within this dialogic system Sanger had not personally responded. Thus, her choice to use the very first paragraph in her introduction to discuss the topic of venereal disease is indeed Sanger’s assured way of stating that such topics are not verboten or obscene, and to ignore them is to do a grave disservice to society.

So, if sex education is necessary then, Sanger logically asks, “[w]ho shall instruct” (7). In directly raising this question Sanger hits upon a significant point in regards the relationship between power and rhetoric. As James Herrick mentions, “[h]ow influence gets distributed in a culture is often a matter of who gets to speak, where they are allowed to speak, and on what subjects” (19). And Sanger’s response? “To the writer the answer is simple. The mother is the logical person to teach the child as soon as questions arise” (7). And with this answer Sanger accomplishes several rhetorical goals with one simple statement.

By suggesting that mothers should be responsible for sex education Sanger removes the subject from both the medical and educational fields (i.e. those fields which were patriarchally defined and controlled) and re-situates it in the home where the subject is under the personal control of women. For Sanger’s selection presupposes women as those who control the domestic

sphere. Likely, Sanger would prefer the choice be understood as a small concession for more direct control of corporeal freedom for women. Indeed, the same choice of nominating mothers empowers women as educators and the main disseminators of information. Furthermore, the discussion of sex is repositioned; it shifts from a subject which is not discussed, even avoided, to that which is discussed between family members as a natural process of life learning – like any other form of knowledge handed down from mother to child. Thus, Sanger, by repositioning sex education, bequeaths the dignity of domesticity to the topic. For by enlisting domesticity which is based upon the purity of women within the home, Sanger wields a trope with significant cultural sway especially among men (her most adamant critics).

It is within this section, where Sanger justifies her belief that women should educate children about sex, that her aesthetic talents become more visible. Sanger, as has been mentioned, describes sex as “natural, clean and healthful” to which she adds only a few sentences later the phrase “the beauty and wonder and sacredness” of sex. These words particularly beautiful and natural will be the palate from which Sanger will paint her pictures of sex. For it is through repetition of these words and associating phrases that Sanger attempts to shape the way sex is perceived and discussed. And this is a significant point, for Sanger is endeavoring to marry aesthetics to the rhetoric used to discuss sex. She is invoking a language which is simple, but aesthetically pleasing to overcome the “shame and mystery” (a mystery created largely by silence) which has historically dogged discussions of sex. And Sanger’s language served another crucial purpose. In raising their voices to instruct their children, women needed a vocabulary, not simply the terms associated with sexual organs and acts, but the metaphors necessary to begin discussing this previously forbidden subject. Similarly, they needed the narratives, the stories, which would imprint themselves on the minds of their children, and Sanger provides these as well.

Perhaps the other side of aesthetically pleasing language is that which is direct, factual and even slightly sterile. Sanger elects to incorporate this language as well and for good reason. By utilizing medical terms, she again builds her credibility while demonstrating respect for her audience. Sanger will not simplify technical terms or assume her audience incapable of understanding aspects of sexuality if couched in scientific language. Rather, Sanger assumes her audience intellectually capable and therefore employs terms which have been the purview of men, specifically medical professionals. She also demonstrates respect for another part of her audience - adolescents; they too can understand because they “no longer take for granted what has been told them by their parents, but are keen to form their own ideas and gather information independently” (8). Thus, she advocates, “[i]t is right, therefore, to give them the facts as science has found them” (8). This will include various anatomical terms, explanations of various bodily functions again utilizing terms known to the medical profession and providing several diagrams of the body. Her choice contrasts with many of her peers who “tried to protect themselves from criticism, avoid legal condemnation, and appeal to diverse audiences by strategically using ambiguous language to refer to sexual instruction” (Jensen 2). Indeed, it will be Sanger’s choice of language in *What Every Girl Should Know* which will lead to her arrest.

Most of Sanger’s linguistic choices are intricately tied to her audience, and this can be noted in her unconventional dedication: “[t]o the working girls of the world this little book is lovingly dedicated” (i). Sanger makes clear the book is not for the traditional audience of middle-class women, but for those of another class, a new class; one struggling for a position in society which lies outside the family model. As Robin Jensen notes Sanger’s audience was “a group that few sexual educators of the time viewed as worthy of their educational efforts” (26). The choice was perhaps influenced by Sanger’s socialist leanings. Nevertheless, by dedicating her book to

those women outside the family model, those with a modicum of independence, and therefore those most vulnerable to criticism, yet perhaps also the most capable of manifesting change – to these women Sanger gives her support and defines her audience.

What Every Girl Should Know was successful from the time it was first published and went on to be reprinted for the next sixty-five years. As Robin Jenson observes, “[e]ven the US government eventually recognized the merits of Sanger’s work and, without giving credit to its author, distributed the section of venereal diseases to troops during WWI” (26). Sanger continued to gain power and prestige in her position as an advocate for reproductive rights such that, as Layne Parish Craig notes it was Sanger along with Marie Stopes (another name now relatively forgotten) who “shaped international birth control politics and continue to do so today” (2). Nevertheless, Sanger’s texts from this period and much of the events which occurred have yet to be acknowledged as worthy of more examination. While explaining his unique choice to examine sex education materials Julian Carter notes his curiosity with “the stories actually put into children’s hands as sources of trustworthy sexual knowledge” which he judges as “dubious historical documents”. Later Carter notes, “[p]erhaps for that reason, sex-education materials have not been subjected to sustained scholarly scrutiny (Carter 217). Indeed, much of the material is inaccurate. Nevertheless, these works allow us to perceive the development of sexual attitudes which continue to be a part of our society. These texts provide a concrete means of understanding what so many individuals chose to fight for on the rhetorical field. In the case of Margaret Sanger, we can glimpse how she wields rhetoric to make a larger place for women in society; one with far more independence and freedom. Her stories, her words, once placed into children’s hands, are a form of history worthy of being remembered.

Works Cited

- Baker, Jean H. *Margaret Sanger: A Life of Passion*. Hill and Wang, 2011.
- Bauer, Heike. "Theorizing Female Inversion: Sexology, Discipline, and Gender at the Fin de Siècle." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 18.1, 2009.
- Bitzer, Lloyd F. "The Rhetorical Situation". *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, vol. 25, 02 Jan 1992, pp. 1-14.
<http://ezproxy.bgsu.edu:8080/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=hlh&AN=16241271&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.
- Carter, Julian B. "Birds, Bees, and Venereal Disease: Toward an Intellectual History of Sex Education." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*. vol.10, no. 2, April 2001, pp. 213-249.
- Clarke, Edward H. *Sex in Education: A Fair Chance for the Girls*. James R. Osgood and Company, 1873.
- Chen, Constance M. *The Sex Side of Life: Mary Ware Dennett's Pioneering Battle for Birth Control and Sex Education*. The New Press, 1996.
- Craig, Layne Parish. *When Sex Changed: Birth Control Politics and Literature between the World Wars*. Rutgers University Press, 2013.
- Detailed Timeline*. National Women's History Project, www.nwhp.org/resources/womens-rights-movement/detailed-timeline/.
- Gordon, Linda. *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America*. University of Illinois Press, 2002.
- Hayden, Wendy. *Evolutionary Rhetoric: Sex, Science and Free-Love in Nineteenth-Century Feminism*. Southern Illinois University Press, 2013.

Jensen, Robin E. *Dirty Words: The Rhetoric of Public Sex Education, 1870-1924*. University of Illinois Press, 2010.

Simmons, Christina. *Making Marriage Modern: Women's Sexuality from the Progressive Era to World War II*. Oxford Scholarship Online, May 2009.

www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195064117.001.0001/acprof-9780195064117.

Sullivan, Michael Anne. *Healing Bodies and Saving the Race: Women, Public Health, Eugenics, and Sexuality, 1890-1950*. The University of New Mexico: Dissertation. 2001.

Vitanza, Victor J. *Writing Histories of Rhetoric*. Southern Illinois Press, 2013.

Wheeler, Leigh Ann. "Rescuing Sex from Prudery and Prurience: American Women's Use of Sex Education as an Antidote to Obscenity, 1925-1932". *Journal of Women's History*. vol. 12, no. 3, 2000, pp. 173-195.

Yockelson, Mitchell. "They Answered the Call Military Service in the United States Army During World War I, 1917-1919". *Prologue Magazine*. vol. 30, no. 3, Fall 1998.

<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/fall/military-service-in-world-war-one.html> .

Appendix: Reproductive Rights During the First Wave of Feminism

Ida Craddock (1857-1902)

Southern Illinois University Morris Library Special Collections Research Center, Carbondale, IL. Ida Craddock Papers, 1877-1936 [6 boxes – no linear length provided]. No appointment necessary, unrestricted access. Craddock's materials are part of the larger A. Theodore Schroeder Papers held at the Morris Library. Therefore, correspondence in regards Craddock extends beyond her own life. The collection is divided into three sections, correspondence, manuscripts and printed material. The collection does not include Craddock's more well-known publications nevertheless it holds many lesser known works including: "Male Continence", "Records in Cases of Marital Reform Work", "Regeneration and Rejuvenation of Men and Women Through the Right Use of the Sex Function" and "A Woman's View of the Sex Question".

Ida Craddock Home Page. NewThought.NET/work Serving New Thought, 2014. newthoughtlibrary.com/craddock-ida/ida-craddock-homepage-with-bio.htm. NOTE: Items of interest include two instructional pamphlets *The Wedding Night* and *Right Marital Living*, Craddock's letters to her mother and the public written on the day of her suicide.

Passet, Joanne. *Sex Radicals and the Quest for Women's Equality*. University of Illinois Press, 2003.

Schaechterle, Inez L. *Speaking of Sex: The Rhetorical Strategies of Frances Willard, Victoria Woodhull, and Ida Craddock*. Bowling Green State University, Dissertation, 2005.

Schmidt, Leigh Eric. *Heaven's Bride: The Unprintable Life of Ida Craddock, American Mystic, Scholar, Sexologist, Martyr and Madwoman*. Basic Books, 2010.

Vere, Chappell. *Sexual Outlaw, Erotic Mystic: The Essential Ida Craddock*. Red Wheel/Weiser Books, 2010.

Rachelle Yarros (1869-1946)

University of Illinois, Chicago, Patricia Spain Ward Papers, Library of Health Sciences University of Illinois, Chicago, Patricia Spain Ward Papers, Special Collections, Office of the Chancellor. These holding include documentation regarding Dr. Yarros' case against Health Commissioner Herman Bundesen and the Hull House involvement in the Chicago Birth Control controversy.

Yarros, Rachelle S. "Birth Control and Its Relation to Health and Welfare". *Medical Women's Journal*, vol. 32, 1925, pp. 268-272.

Yarros, Rachelle S. "Experiences of a Lecturer". *Social Hygiene*, vol. 5, 1919, pp. 205-222.

Yarros, Rachelle S. "From Obstetrics to Social Hygiene." *Medical Women's Journal*, vol. 33, 1926, pp. 305-309.

Yarros, Rachelle S. *Modern Woman and Sex: A Feminist Physician Speaks*. Vanguard, 1933.

Yarros, Rachelle S. "Objections Disproved by Clinical Findings," *Birth Control Review*, vol. 15, 1931, pp. 15-16.

Yarros, Rachelle S. "The Prostitute as a Health and Social Problem." In Proceedings of the *National Conference of Social Work*. Rogers and Hall, 1919, pp. 220-224.

Yarros, Rachelle S. "Significance of Birth Control for Race Betterment," *Medical Woman's Journal*, 1928, pp. 32-35.

Yarros, Rachelle S. "Some Practical Aspects of Birth Control". *Surgery, Gynecology & Obstetrics*, vol. 23, 1916, pp. 188-190.

Emma Goldman (1869-1940)

Berkeley Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA. The Emma Goldman Papers. [69 microfilm divided into correspondence, government documents and Goldman's writing. NOTE: Several academic libraries hold copies of the archive which can be accessed via WorldCat]. The website for *The Emma Goldman Papers* also has numerous resources including a detailed chronology of Goldman's activities, a biographical essay regarding other items in the archive and indexes for correspondence and government documents, and various scanned and electronic copies. lib.berkeley.edu/goldman/PublicationsoftheEmmaGoldmanPapers/emmagoldman-aguidetoherlife-documentarysources.html.

Jewish Women's Archive: Women of Valor: Emma Goldman jwa.org/womenofvalor/goldman . This archive holds electronic versions of materials from the *Emma Goldman Papers Project*, including photographic images. Of interest are the sections on women's rights, love and sexuality, and free speech.

Goldman, Emma. *Red Emma Speaks: Selected Writings and Speeches*. Random House, 1972.

Mary Ware Dennett (1872-1947)

Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University: Arthur and Elizabeth Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America, Cambridge, MA. Papers of Mary Ware Dennett [18.35 linear feet with 5 oversized folders and 7 oversized folios]. Holdings are available via appointment and materials are preserved on microfilm. Series IV, titled birth control and sex

Mary Ware Dennett (continued) education (#228-596) is of primary interest. It contains office files of the National Birth Control League and the Voluntary Parenthood League including correspondence, reports, minutes and various publications from both organizations. Additionally, the archive holds materials from the legal case which centered upon Dennett's text "The Sex Side of Life," (SSL); these include correspondence, orders for SSL, materials from the Mary Ware Dennett Defense Committee as well as documents concerning the trial related to SSL. The archive also holds various writings by Dennett in regards sex education and birth control.

New York Academy of Medicine Library, New York, NY. The Drs. Barry and Bobbi Collier Rare Book Reading Room, Mary Ware Dennett Case Collection [1 linear foot]. The collection includes copies of "The Sex Side of Life: An Explanation for Young People", the correspondence of Mary Ware Dennett (1927-1930) and Robert Dickenson and Associates (who represented her in her SSL case), correspondence and documents from the Mary Ware Dennett Defense Committee, the appellant's brief for the United States vs. Mary Ware Dennett, and miscellaneous documents, notes and clippings.

Craig, John M. "'The Sex Side of Life': The Obscenity Case of Mary Ware Dennett." *Frontiers:*

A Journal of Women Studies, vol. 15, no. 3, 1995, pp.145-66.

Doak, Melissa, and Rachel Brugger. "How did the Debate between Margaret Sanger and Mary

Ware Dennett Shape the Movement to Legalize Birth Control, 1915-1924?" *Women &*

Social Movements in the United States, 1600-2000, vol. 4, March 2000.

Margaret Sanger (1879-1966)

Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Margaret Sanger Papers. [133 linear feet]. Please contact the library in advance as portions of the collection are stored off-site. Finding aid online: <http://rs5.loc.gov/service/mss/eadxmlmss/eadpdfmss/1998/ms998010.pdf>

The archive, available via microfilm, is concerned with the time between 1928 and 1940. Over 45,000 documents are included, focused upon Sanger's birth control efforts and include: correspondence (with several notable literary figures), diaries, speeches, lectures, articles, files from several birth control organizations, a few scrapbooks as well as printed materials. The collection is divided into eleven areas including personal, professional and conference-related correspondence; personal diaries; scrapbooks; an extensive professional file selection (divided primarily by organization including the American Birth Control League, Birth Control Clinical Research Bureau, National Committee on Federal Legislation for Birth Control, Birth Control Federation of America and the Margaret Sanger Research Bureau); conference files which include reports, minutes and press releases; drafts of various articles, lectures, pamphlets and writings of Sanger; loose newspaper clippings; and a printed matter section which includes brochures, pamphlets and further clippings. [NOTE: These holdings do include a large file on Planned Parenthood Federation of America; however, this organization was not established until 1943 and is therefore beyond the scope of this archive.] Finally, the Margaret Sanger Papers Project indicates

Margaret Sanger (continued) that the Library of Congress “has a searchable catalog of images, many of which can be viewed online. The Library of Congress generally does not require a use fee to publish its images”. Therefore, images of Sanger may best be accessed through this library.

Sophia Smith Collection, Women’s History Archives at Smith College, Northampton, MA.

The collection also includes the papers of other notable woman in the birth control movement such as Blanche Ames, Mary Ritter Beard, Dorothy Hamilton Brush, May Farquharson, Stella Hanau, Annie Porritt, Florence Rose, Emma Walker and Ira Wile. There are several subject collections of interest including abortion, birth control, health, midwifery, population problems and a substantial periodicals collection of over 1,500 publications including *Birth Control Review* and *Lucifer the Lightbearer*.

The Margaret Sanger Papers, part of the *Sophia Smith Collection* [divided into two large sections: items which have been microfilmed consisting of 39.5 linear feet, and the printed (unfilmed) material consisting of 73.5 linear feet]. The collections are primarily categorized via author; thus, the print collection is focused upon material related, but not authored by Sanger. The microfilmed collection is also accessible through the Library of Congress (please see the heading for full details). The print collection is divided into ten sections which include: biographical material, writings and speeches, third party correspondence, organization and conference files, countries, subject files, printed material, audiovisual material, photographs and oversized items. The subject files may be of interest, specifically the areas of sex education, women’s rights, venereal diseases, midwives, censorship, anti-birth control, birth rate, clinics, contraception, eugenics, feminism, infant mortality, laws and criminal statues on birth control, legal cases, legislation, Thomas Malthus, maternal health, population and pregnancy.

New York University, The Margaret Sanger Papers Project. Although not a formal archive the Margaret Sanger Papers Project has collected and organized some remarkable materials. At <https://www.nyu.edu/projects/sanger/project/index.php> . As explained on the website, the Project’s “primary goal is to publish material about Margaret Sanger in microfilm, book, and electronic forms”. The microfilm collections are being acquired by various libraries, while four volumes have been published “The Woman Rebel” (1900-1928) and “Birth Control Comes of Age” (1928-1939) would be of interest. The remaining two volumes cover 1939- 1966. Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the Margaret Sanger Papers Project is the fact many materials are easily accessible online as is the case with “The Woman Rebel” volumes, as well as correspondence, various articles, brochures and speeches penned by Sanger.

Kennedy, David M. *Birth Control in America: The Career of Margaret Sanger*. Yale University Press, 1970.

Masel-Walters, Lynne. “For the ‘Poor Mute Mothers’ Margaret Sanger and The Woman Rebel.”

Journalism History, vol. 11, 1984, pp. 3–10.

McClearey, Kevin E. “‘A Tremendous Awakening’: Margaret Sanger’s Speech at Fabian Hall.”

Western Journal of Communication, vol. 58, 1994, pp. 182– 200.

Sanger, Margaret. *Margaret Sanger: An Autobiography*. W.W. Norton & Company, 1938.

Reproductive Rights: General

Condit, Celeste M. *Decoding Abortion Rhetoric: Communicating Social Change*. University of Illinois Press, 1990.

D’Emilio, John, and Estelle B. Freedman. *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*. 2d ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Engelman, Peter. *A History of the Birth Control Movement in America*. Praeger. 2011.

Goldstein, Cynthia. *The Radical Press and the Beginning of the Birth Control Movement in the United States*. 01 Aug. 1985,

ezproxy.bgsu.edu:8080/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=eric&AN=ED265559&site=ehost-live&scope=site.

Hogan, J. Michael, ed. *Rhetoric and Reform of the Progressive Era*. Michigan State University Press, 2003.

Kunzel, Regina G. *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890– 1945*. Yale University Press, 1993.

Lord, Alexandra. “‘Naturally Clean and Wholesome’: Women, Sex Education, and the United States Public Health Service”. *Social History of Medicine*, vol. 17, 2004, pp. 423-42.

Nelson, Jennifer. *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*. New York University Press, 2003.

Reed, J. *The Birth Control Movement and American Society*. Princeton University Press, 1978.

Robertson, William H. *An Illustrated History of Contraception: A Concise Account of the Quest for Fertility Control*. Parthenon Publishing Group, 1990.

Rosen, Robyn L. *Reproductive Health, Reproductive Rights: Reformers and the Politics of Maternal Welfare, 1917-1940*. Ohio State University Press, 2003.

Rowland, Debran. *The Boundaries of Her Body: The Troubling History of Women's Rights in America*. Sphinx Publishers, 2004.

ENG 6800: Final Project

“I Was Told that I Better Keep Off that Subject”:
Margaret Sanger’s Early Rhetoric During the Sex Education Campaigns

I’ve been thinking about a quotation from Rudyard Kipling. He says, “[i]f history were taught in the form of stories, it would never be forgotten”. As I consider this statement I understand there are many histories which we likely *should* know, but don’t. However, I don’t think the reason we lack these histories is related to the form itself. Rather, there are stories or histories we are never told. Thus, they have no place in our consciousness. Only if we seek them out do we discover these histories. Such has been my experience in researching reproductive rights during the turn of the century. Not only have I been astonished at how little I knew about the forces and individuals involved in releasing women from various corporeal constraints, I’ve also discovered after several conversations, that other women, those separated by several generations of educational systems - those in their twenties to those in their eighties, possess a smattering of knowledge regarding this critical aspect of women’s history. As Victor Vitanza points out, “[w]riting history involves judgements about which scenes and actors and events are important and which are not” (121). Thus, it appears most areas of reproductive rights history have been ignored by many educational systems. And the natural result is that those early advocates, the women who spoke out, who wrote, who refused to accept prohibitive laws and social constraints — their stories, lacking enough voices, enough story tellers to sustain them are lost or perhaps worse wrecked upon the shores of factoids and misinformation: “Margaret Sanger, didn’t she have something to do with the pill? She was racist or into eugenics, right?”. Without the support of other voices, a history cannot survive the buffets of time. Nevertheless, as so many feminist historians and rhetorical historians have discovered, the residue of a history does remain within written texts.

Although I'm certainly no historian I've chosen to examine a text by Margaret Sanger, perhaps the woman most known for reproductive rights. I've selected an early work of Sanger's *What Every Girl Should Know*, a work for which she was arrested, a work which did not advocate (as did much of her later writings) birth control, but rather sex education, and perhaps most significantly, a text which landed in the midst of a flurry of conflict, questioning and repression. Sanger's text was written at a particularly contentious moment in U.S. history; one where rhetoric held a crucial role. In discussing rhetoric, Lloyd F. Bitzer explains a concept which he terms the "rhetorical situation"; this includes the "contexts which speakers or writers create rhetorical discourse" (1). Thus, the situation, or rather the circumstances surrounding a rhetorical work cannot be ignored. Or as Bitzer so aptly states, "[r]hetorical works belong to the class of things which obtain their character from the circumstances of the historic context in which they occur" (3). Thus, Sanger's text is a product of a particular moment. Therefore, in order to examine her text, it is necessary to have some understanding of the circumstances and voices surrounding it.

Rhetorical Climate of Sex Education:

To begin, it should be noted that Sanger was not alone in writing a text advocating sex education, nor was she alone in producing a text which was banned for obscenity by the Comstock Act, the willful distribution of which led to her arrest. Mary Ware Dennett had a similar experience with *The Sex Side of Life* which was published less than a year before Sanger's book (Chen 175).

Despite the rather pervasive forces behind Anthony Comstock, the rhetorical environment into which Sanger entered was not entirely unfriendly to a majority of the ideas she was advocating. In regards sex education, Leigh Ann Wheeler notes, "[s]ex education was not particularly new; handbooks and pamphlets had appeared in the popular press since the late nineteenth century" (177). Additionally, certain texts were slightly more progressive in their

portrayal of women. Dr. Edward Clarke in his book *Sex in Education: A Fair Chance for the Girls*, published in 1873, walks a somewhat ambiguous line with the following statement: “Woman in the interest of the race, is dowered with a set of organs peculiar to herself, whose complexity, delicacy, sympathies, and force are among the marvels of creation. If properly nurtured and cared for, they are a source of strength and power to her” (33). Clark both celebrates the female body (complexity, marvel, strength and power) while noting its weakness (dowered, delicacy). Clarke’s statement begins to elucidate aspects of the ideology of family and sexuality prevalent at that time which will be discussed later.

Women were also writing and publishing material on the topic of sex. As Wendy Hayden points out the nineteenth century public displayed an interest in anatomy and physiology such that “lectures to popular audiences and to women’s societies, textbooks and marriage manuals, and pamphlets advocating ‘reform physiology’” were proliferating (84). Within this environment Mary Gove Nichols became known for speeches which included such topics as feminine hygiene, very basic anatomy, dress reform, and the importance of exercise for women (Hayden 88). The topic of sex was being discussed by both sexes and heard by both as well. Nevertheless, there were limitations. Consider how the “1916 prize-winning pamphlet *Sex in Life: For Boys and Girls of Twelve to Sixteen Years*” explained reproduction.

Life itself you can learn only by living. That is why, until you yourself have married your true mate, and known the joy of being a mother or a father, you cannot really understand the beautiful truths of a baby’s creation ... When you yourself have learned of these holy things, of the splendor of life and love, by your own experience, you will know that no one could have told you about them (Carter 247).

The author, by cloaking reproduction in mystery and rather pat logic that such “holy” experiences cannot be articulated, helps to keep those seeking an education in the dark. Additionally, many texts utilized a system of euphemisms, created not only to avoid prosecution under the Comstock

Act, but also to soften the seemingly vulgar information. The proliferating use of euphemisms in sex education publications meant that immigrants or those without a strong grasp of the English language were prohibited from gaining knowledge even if they chose to use their money to purchase such a publication (Jensen 2-4). Thus, as Robin Jensen notes, “it should be no surprise that women, immigrants, racial minorities and members of the working class received little, if any, formal sex education” (3). Indeed, classist as well as sexist agendas held sway; men were the primary audience for sex education, and discussions by professionals calling themselves sexologists were gaining popularity. This group which originally included Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Havelock Ellis and Sigmund Freud demonstrated great interest in “abnormal” behavior; one of the subjects which was discussed at length was that of the hysterical female (Parish 10). Such discussions helped to further undermine the role of women. More importantly they perpetuated patriarchal justification for not educating women: they were too sensitive and therefore incapable of absorbing such vulgar or scientifically complex information.

Race Suicide:

However, within this deceptively vocal environment changes in social and economic tides contributed to an event which began to slow the halting progress of sex education. The decline in birthrates of “native-born Anglo-Americans who claimed the right to represent the core of national identity and well-being” became a major issue (Carter 215). The concern for class dominance sparked a sea change; one which turned against women who were primarily saddled with the blame for this population decline. Dr. Edward Clarke’s seeming support of women evaporated as he “blamed the threat of race suicide on the increasing numbers of middle-class, white women who were pursuing some form of higher education”, noting that “formal education interfered with women’s fertility and femininity” (Carter 214-215). Clarke demonstrates a form of pseudo-science

with such statements for his observations and opinions could not be proven or, even if so, only through weak deductions. Nevertheless, his position as a doctor legitimized his statements thereby making them inviolate. Additionally, Clarke is supporting the traditional role of women within the family model – a role essential to increasing population.

The concern over the decline in population was exacerbated by the fact that while Anglo-American birth rates declined that of immigrants continued at a steady pace. This trend, which was noted in the 1870's, was codified and fully articulated by Francis Amasa Walker in 1891 through his examination of U.S. Census records (Gordon 88). Furthering the argument women were at the heart of this decline, divorce rates were increasing, with “more than two-thirds of American divorces” being sought by women (Simmons, and Carter 215). The issue of “race suicide”, as it became known, reached its highpoint when President Theodore Roosevelt began directly addressing it in a number of forums. Roosevelt cemented the opinion of the ruling class: women were shirking their responsibilities in not giving birth. They displayed a “viciousness, coldness, shallow-heartedness” which was to be condemned. Roosevelt urged the public to shift its course by setting a standard: “[s]ix children were the minimum number for people of ‘normal stock’; those of better stock should have more” (Gordon 90-91). Roosevelt was reminding the public of the current, nonetheless long-standing and traditional model of family.

The Family Model:

The focal point of this family model was that of the male and their desire. Before examining this model it is important to realize this family model is founded upon capitalist ideals. Ideals which position each individual in a place where they are most productive to the economy and, as these two become conflated, by society. Male desire was portrayed as absolute, invincible even sacrosanct. This was supported by the long held “doctrine of necessity” or the belief that sex was

necessary for the health of men (Carter 218). Chaste behavior for men was simply *not* an option. Given this unadulterated “fact” women were placed in the untenable position of opposing this force of desire - at least before marriage. Women were the deniers of men, deniers of nature, deniers of an all-powerful force. Most importantly, women must deny men not simply for reputation, but to assure that traditional families are built (i.e. men will marry and support their children). Within this model the woman is without desire and yet is desired. She is also the weaker of the two sexes. Yet she is asked to oppose the natural, inborn and undeniable desire of the stronger sex. How does a woman overcome the stronger male? With her inborn virtue, an unshakeable ability to remain chaste. These roles with their exaggerated concepts of masculinity and femininity are clearly founded upon several romantic ideals.

Within this model, women exist *for* men. They can therefore serve only one of two roles upon reaching adulthood, each related to their role as sexual servicer, either mother and wife, or prostitute. As both roles are almost completely reliant upon men there is no possibility of independence. Independence is reserved exclusively for men who will financially provide for their children, wives, sisters and, if need be, mothers. Thus, within this model, attempts at independence by females would be perceived as a threat. Such was the case for working women who had, to some degree, removed themselves from the model. These women were quickly perceived as problematic; they were flouting the model – a model promulgated upon a special privileged form of democracy and capitalism. Thus, such targeted attacks as the ones provided by Dr. Clarke.

Given its patricentric emphasis this model also fails to acknowledge the toll children take upon the female body or the dangers of child birth. In fact, it works under the supposition that if a woman speaks of the pain associated with childbearing or childrearing she is abnormal, unfit,

spoiled or willful – and therefore should be admonished and indeed that was what lay behind the statements of Theodore Roosevelt.

Economic and Social Changes:

So population decline created space for more explicit classist, racist and sexist agendas to materialize. In regards women, the birthrate issue became a justification for targeting educated and working-class women (i.e. independent women) or those who were provided the freedom not to take part in the family model. True, educated women were choosing to marry later in life and having less children. Similarly, women who worked outside the house were also more likely to have less children (Carter 88-89). Thus, at this particular time, during the Progressive Era, a new class of women arose; one which inspired curiosity, fear and criticism. Christina Simmons, notes after 1890 working-class women became “very noticeable to reformers, journalists, and novelists seeking to document the ‘New Woman’”. This new class of women possessed a hitherto unknown autonomy; for despite contributing most of their wages to their families, “their earnings gave some leverage against parental control and allowed a few to live with peers and apart from family” (Simmons). By acquiring an education and/or finding employment women were taking on a level of independence previously reserved for men. Yet, population decline became the weapon, the evidence proving women’s equality had gone too far. Nevertheless, those privileges so hard won could not be removed without significant backlash; thus, the only course within this patriarchal agenda was to shame those enjoying such privileges.

There were, nevertheless, other factors contributing to the shift in family size of the dominant class and these factors were again used as the justification for further constraints:

The need for moral policing ... arose from political and economic shifts that were eroding older hierarchies of authority, including the patriarchal family. The factory system began to replace household economic production, pulling young people out of immediate family supervision. Growing cities enticed some to seek fortunes

in the volatile business economy, while others escaped traditional family and community authority by moving west. Culturally and psychologically, these transformations were related to a developing concept of individual self (Simmons).

However, the individual self was again proving to be a concept exclusive to men. Women were expected to remain within the control of, and indeed continue to reside with, the family for they had no acceptable place outside the model.

The Rise of Venereal Disease:

Most rhetoricians focused upon the threat to the American family when discussing the need for sex education. However, the population issue and indeed questions in regards family were complicated by several social issues. One particular hot potato topic was that of venereal disease, which was on the increase. Jean Baker when discussing the recruitment of WWI soldiers notes that, “15 percent of all draftees were found to suffer from venereal disease, so many, in fact, that Secretary of War Newton Baker ended the disqualification [of men with venereal disease from joining the military]” (130). This number may not at first glance appear significant. However, it represents only a portion of the male population with such diseases: “over 25 per cent of the entire male population of the country between the ages of 18 and 31 were in military service” during WWI (Yockelson). Thus, a significantly larger percentage of men likely suffered from one venereal disease or another. These diseases were usually acquired through prostitutes then passed on to wives and children with devastating and debilitating, even fatal results. Strangely, the family model somehow supported vilifying prostitutes, literally depicting them as the enemy of the family; for how could men be blamed for their desires (Carter 220-221) ?

Groups had already formed to help stem the tide of venereal disease including the American Social Hygiene Association, National Congress of Parents and Teachers and even the federal government in the early part of the century (Wheeler 177). So it was, as Julian Carter

indicates, the danger and “increasing concern about the transmission of venereal disease [which became] one of the vectors along which Americans were drawn into a widespread public conversation about the transmission of sexual knowledge” (216). However, the family model dictated that the topic of sex again be focused upon men as the subject and men as the audience: “knowledge was the weapon a virile man could use to protect ‘innocent wives’, ‘newborn infants’, and the nation itself from the venereal threat” (Carter 222).

The Rhetorical Battle:

The discussion of sex was to prove contentious not the least because concepts about sexuality and the roles of men and women were being rewritten and codified. Consider women’s sexuality which had rather recently been reconceived through the auspices of evangelical Christianity. The banner of seductress had been replaced; women were now “passionless” and morally upright (Simmons). While men continued to be defined by their unimpeachable sexual desires. Such sexual roles helped to perpetuate social problems. They “served as the ideological foundation of the sexual double standard: if men had to have sexual intercourse to preserve their health, then it made sense for society at least tacitly to countenance men’s premarital sexual activity, which reformers deeply opposed” (Simmons). The model, in essence, supported prostitution which naturally lead to the spread of venereal disease. Nevertheless, the damage wrought by ignorance and silence necessitated not simply that sex education become a part of every adolescent’s life, but that a system be instituted to disseminate this knowledge.

The double threat of race suicide and venereal disease shifted the topics of sex and sex education from the personal and private to the public and more importantly political -especially when these issues began to effect military recruitment. Sex education was now a political matter: one where the power to define family and sexual roles could potentially, and likely have long-term

effects upon the nation. At this point, Victor Vitanza's words take on a poignancy when he explains:

[r]hetorics ... codify who can and cannot speak; what can and cannot be said; who can and cannot listen and act and the very nature of the language to be used. Rhetorics do not make these decisions on their own. They are constructed at the junctures of discourse and power, at the points at which economic, social, and political battles are waged in public discourse (116-117).

Those who could grab the larger audience and retain it would be the ones to define the actions and attitude of the public regarding sexuality. The battle was on for the right to educate the next generation about sex. There were, however, not two but several camps vying for the privilege including the social purist school, the developmental school, the social hygienists, the progressive reformers, and the scientific community. At stake, among many issues, was what institution would define sexual and family roles, science/academe or the church? The largest and most controversial question was that of the act of intercourse itself; was sexual intercourse for reproduction only or was it also for pleasure? If science won this battle where did religion stand in regards the body, marriage and family? Similarly, if religion won out how was science to engage with issues of the body? Further complicating the issue was the fact most groups were comprised almost entirely of upper and middle class whites who felt they could "help" immigrants and African Americans by making the right decisions for them (Carter 218-219). Conflict arose rapidly and criticism began to fly in all directions. Not surprisingly criticism began flying between groups which were dominated by one sex (the female-dominated purists) or another (the male-dominated scientific community). William Trufant Foster, head of Reed College, in 1914 attacked purist reformers stating, "[s]ome are ignorant and unaware that enthusiasm is not a satisfactory substitute for knowledge. Some are hysterical" (Simmons). Here Foster is able to exploit both the new trope of the hysterical women with that of the more traditional female, religious enthusiast to rather deftly

discredit them. However, Foster raises an important point which concerned many – the dissemination of inaccurate information. The scientific community was not immune to criticism within its own ranks of inaccurate information as well as issues of moral turpitude. Within this skirmish each group attempted to present their agenda for sex education while simultaneously criticizing the agendas of other groups. And it was during this complex battle that Margaret Sanger began publishing her ideas about sex education.

An Examination of Margaret Sanger's *What Every Girl Should Know*:

The text for *What Every Girl Should Know* began as sex education lectures Sanger provided in her own home to mothers and children in 1911. These, in turn became the fodder for public lectures and eventually a column of the same title published in 1912 and 1913 for the socialist magazine *New York Call* (Chester 65 and Jensen 25). Sanger's title may have been influenced by or borrowed from an earlier popular work, Dr. Mary Wood Allen's *What a Young Woman Ought to Know*, published in 1899 and reprinted in 1905 and 1913 (Carter 228). Sanger's book, represents a collection of the best texts from her column. As these pieces were written by the same author within a short period of time and are concerned with a specific topic the chapters appear to flow together quite harmoniously.

The one major addition to this collection is that of an introduction. Given the book was to be distributed to a wider audience; an audience which may not be as forward thinking as the socialist audience of *New York Call* Sanger uses the introductory section as a space to justify the existence of her volume by presenting some of the concomitant issues related to a women's ignorance of her body as well as her role beyond family in society. In order to provide a thorough examination given the page limit, this essay will focus exclusively upon the introduction.

Sanger is a direct writer and this is evidenced in her introduction where she dives into her justification in the first paragraph;” [s]tudents of vice, whether teachers, clergymen, social workers or physicians” may have their different opinions about the cure to vice, but they are united in their belief that “ignorance of the sex functions is one of the strongest forces that sends young girls into unclean living” (7). Thus, Sanger, by aligning herself with other, perhaps more respected experts in the field, justifies the need for educating women to save them from vice. This strategic technique, of associating herself with experts, a concrete means of establishing her ethos, is something Sanger wisely relies upon throughout her text. In this way, she legitimizes her position placing herself among the medical professionals such as Clarke and Allen. Additionally, Sanger identifies the issue on so many minds at the time - prostitution.

Sanger’s concise argument continues via logical means; her second paragraph raises the obvious specter of venereal disease – a consequence of prostitution. This represents a bold move, to raise the topic so early in her discussion. However, by introducing the topic Sanger understands she is touching upon a sensitive, even taboo topic; one which elicits fear. For no human being wants to acquire a venereal disease, especially something as dangerous, debilitating and potentially deforming as syphilis. Nevertheless, what Sanger realizes is that along with the dread of venereal disease is the desire to want to eradicate it or at the very least slow its progress. Sanger taps into the human motive to want to not only save ourselves, but others from suffering through the simple, and as Sanger presents it, seemingly innocuous process of education. By marrying the audience’s motive to alleviate the suffering caused by venereal disease with her own motive to, as James Herrick might say, gain “converts to a point of view” that education of the body is necessary for women, Sanger effectively and subtly uses an underlying fear to motivate action (10).

But Sanger does not stop there. She perceives the larger implications of such forms of education. The act of educating women will lead directly to a “saner and healthier attitude on the sex subject” (7). And this, indeed, may be seen as Sanger’s ultimate goal. For Sanger is aware that “[r]hetoric often plays a critical social role” in shaping knowledge or as James Herrick explains it, in “knowledge-building” (21). If women embrace the process of educating one another about their bodies and the natural process of sex, they are helping to reinforce a knowledge which exists in certain publications (like those of Sanger) and by perpetuating a healthy ‘truth’ about the subject of sex. In essence, Sanger’s goal is to remake the subject of sex; to rescue it from “offensiveness”, “shame or mystery” and “prudishness” where it had been historically mired and remake sex into an act which is “natural, clean and healthful” (Sanger 8). For if the topic is refashioned it can be removed from its previous place of darkness and silence.

Another aspect of Sanger’s introduction to be considered is the fact that it can be perceived as in response to those who had read these articles previously in *New York Call*. As Jean Baker mentions in her biography of Sanger, the “response was outrage”; some readers were so offended they cancelled subscriptions (70). Indeed, Sanger’s final column in the *What Every Girl Should Know* series, titled “Some Consequences of Ignorance and Silence” which discussed gonorrhea and syphilis in detail were suppressed by the office of Anthony Comstock. In this instance, the *New York Call* made an audacious move. On one page of the magazine in bold type read the title *What Every Girl Should Know* “over a blank box under which the word NOTHING appeared” (70). This circumstance highlights the “dialogic” or “response-making” nature of rhetoric (Herrick 11). Sanger’s article invoked a response from Comstock (suppression) whose response, in turn, was responded to by the *New York Call*. However, within this dialogic system Sanger had not personally responded. Thus, her choice to use the very first paragraph in her introduction to discuss

the topic of venereal disease is indeed Sanger's assured way of stating that such topics are not verboten or obscene, and to ignore them is to do a grave disservice to society.

So if education is absolutely necessary then, Sanger logically asks, "[w]ho shall instruct" (7). In directly raising this question Sanger hits upon a significant point in regards the relationship between power and rhetoric. As James Herrick mentions, "[h]ow influence gets distributed in a culture is often a matter of who gets to speak, where they are allowed to speak, and on what subjects" (19). And Sanger's response? "To the writer the answer is simple. The mother is the logical person to teach the child as soon as questions arise" (7). And with this answer Sanger accomplishes several rhetorical goals with one simple statement.

By suggesting that mothers should be responsible for sex education Sanger removes the subject from both the medical and educational fields (i.e. those fields which are patriarchally defined and controlled) and re-situates it in the home where the subject is under the personal control of women. Sanger's choice does presuppose women as those who control the domestic sphere. Likely, Sanger would prefer the choice be understood as a small concession for more direct control of corporeal freedom for women. For, the same choice of nominating mothers empowers women as educators and the main disseminators of information. Furthermore, the discussion of sex is repositioned; it shifts from a subject which is not discussed, even avoided, to that which is discussed between family members as a natural process of life learning – like any other form of knowledge handed down from mother to child. Thus, Sanger, by repositioning sex education, bequeaths the dignity of domesticity to the topic. For by enlisting domesticity which is based upon the purity of women within the home, Sanger wields a trope with significant cultural sway especially among men (her most adamant critics).

It is within section, where Sanger justifies her belief that women should educate children on the subject of sex that her aesthetic talents become more visible. Sanger, as has been mentioned, describes sex as “natural, clean and healthful” to which she adds only a few sentences later the phrase “the beauty and wonder and sacredness” of sex. These words particularly “beautiful” and “natural” will be the palate from which Sanger will paint her images of sex. For it is through repetition of these words and associating phrases that Sanger attempts to shape the way sex is discussed. And this is a significant point; for Sanger is endeavoring to marry aesthetics to the rhetoric used to discuss sex. She is invoking language which is simple, but aesthetically pleasing to overcome the “shame and mystery” (a mystery created largely by silence) which has historically dogged discussions of sex. Additionally, in raising their voices to help their children, women were in need of a vocabulary, not simply the terms associated with sexual organs and acts, but the metaphors or symbols necessary for women to begin discussing this previously forbidden subject. Similarly, they needed the narratives, the stories, which would imprint themselves on minds of their children, and Sanger provides these as well.

Perhaps the other side of aesthetically pleasing language is that which is direct, factual and even slightly sterile. Sanger elects to include this language as well and for good reason. With this language, she again builds her credibility while demonstrating respect for her audience. Sanger will not simplify technical terms or assume her audience incapable of understanding aspects of sexuality if couched in scientific language. Rather, Sanger assumes her audience intellectually capable and therefore employs a language which has primarily been the purview of men, specifically medical professionals. She also demonstrates respect for another part of her audience - adolescents; they too are capable of understanding because they “no longer take for granted what has been told them by their parents, but are keen to form their own ideas and gather information

independently” (8). Thus, she advocates, “[i]t is right, therefore, to give them the facts as science has found them” (8). This will include various anatomical terms, explanations of various bodily functions again utilizing terms known to the medical profession and providing several diagrams of the body. Her choice contrasts to many of her peers who “tried to protect themselves from criticism, avoid legal condemnation, and appeal to diverse audiences by strategically using ambiguous language to refer to sexual instruction” (Jensen 2). Indeed, it will be Sanger’s choice of language in *What Every Girl Should Know* which will lead to her arrest.

Sanger’s linguistic choices can be seen as tied to her audience, and again she makes an unconventional choice as evidenced in her dedication: “[t]o the working girls of the world this little book is lovingly dedicated” (i). Sanger makes clear the book is not for the traditional audience of middle-class women, but for those of another class, a new class; one struggling for a position in society which lies outside the family model. As Robin Jensen notes Sanger’s audience was “a group that few sexual educators at this time viewed as worth their educational efforts” (26). The choice was perhaps influenced by Sanger’s socialist leanings. Nevertheless, by dedicating her book to those women outside the family model, those with a modicum of independence, and therefore those most vulnerable to criticism yet perhaps also the most capable of manifesting change – to these women Sanger gives her support and defines her audience.

What Every Girl Should Know was successful from the time it was first published and went on to be reprinted for the next sixty-five years. As Robin Jensen observes, “[e]ven the US government eventually recognized the merits of Sanger’s work and, without giving credit to its author, distributed the section of venereal diseases to troops during WWI” (26). Sanger continued to gain power and prestige in her position as advocate for reproductive rights such that, as Layne Parish notes it was Margaret Sanger along with Marie Stopes (another name now relatively

forgotten) who “shaped international birth control politics and continues to do so today” (2). Nevertheless, Sanger’s texts from this period and much of the events which occurred have yet to be seen as worthy of more examination. While explaining his unique choice to examine sex education materials Julian Carter notes his curiosity with “the stories actually put into children’s hands as sources of trustworthy sexual knowledge” which he judges as “dubious historical documents”. Later Carter notes, “[p]erhaps for that reason, sex-education materials have not been subjected to sustained scholarly scrutiny (Carter 217). Indeed, much of the material is inaccurate. Nevertheless, these works allow us to perceive the development of sexual attitudes which continue to be a part of our society. These texts provide a concrete means of understanding what so many individuals chose to fight for on the rhetorical field. In the case of Margaret Sanger, we are able to glimpse how she wields rhetoric to make a larger place for women in society; one with far more independence and freedom. Her stories, her words, once placed into children’s hands, are a form of history worthy of being remembered.

Works Cited

- Baker, Jean H. *Margaret Sanger: A Life of Passion*. Hill and Wang, New York: 2011. Print.
- Bitzer, Lloyd F. "The Rhetorical Situation". *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1 (1968): 1-14. Pdf.
- Carter, Julian B. "Birds, Bees, and Venereal Disease: Toward an Intellectual History of Sex Education." *Journal of the History of Sexuality*. 10.2. (213-249). April 2001.
- Clarke, Edward H. *Sex in Education: A Fair Chance for the Girls*. James R. Osgood and Company, Boston: 1873. Ebook.
- Chen, Constance M. *The Sex Side of Life: Mary Ware Dennett's Pioneering Battle for Birth Control and Sex Education*. New York: The New Press. 1996. Print.
- Craig, Layne Parish. *When Sex Changed: Birth Control Politics and Literature between the World Wars*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press. 2013. Pdf.
- Gordon, Linda. *The Moral Property of Women: A History of Birth Control Politics in America*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press. 2002. Ebook.
- Hayden, Wendy. *Evolutionary Rhetoric: Sex, Science and Free-Love in Nineteenth-Century Feminism*. Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale: 2013. Ebook.
- Jensen, Robin E. *Dirty Words: The Rhetoric of Public Sex Education, 1870-1924*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana: 2010. Ebook.
- Simmons, Christina. *Making Marriage Modern: Women's Sexuality from the Progressive Era to World War II*. Oxford Scholarship Online. May 2009.
www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195064117.001.0001/acprof-9780195064117. Accessed December 2, 2016.

Sullivan, Michael Anne. *Healing Bodies and Saving the Race: Women, Public Health, Eugenics, and Sexuality, 1890-1950*. The University of New Mexico: Dissertation. 2001. Ebook.

Vitanza, Victor J. *Writing Histories of Rhetoric*. Southern Illinois Press, Carbondale. 2013. Ebook.

Wheeler, Leigh Ann. "Rescuing Sex from Prudery and Prurience: American Women's Use of Sex Education as an Antidote to Obscenity, 1925-1932". *Journal of Women's History*. 12.3. (173-195). 2000.

Yockelson, Mitchell. "They Answered the Call Military Service in the United States Army During World War I, 1917-1919". *Prologue Magazine*. 30.3. Fall 1998.

www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/1998/fall/military-service-in-world-war-one.html .

Accessed December 3, 2016.

Hi Mary Ellen,

From your helpful phone call, I have a proposal for revision on your very fine Margaret Sanger paper. What if you keep the paper as it is, working in the revisions that you have in mind? In the reflective essay for the portfolio, you could simply say that one way the paper functioned within the course was to help me appreciate that the issue of reproductive rights/birth control was also an important issue in the first wave of feminism, yet this issue was not covered in the materials for the course. Does that sound/feel good to you?

All best,

Sue