Grant-Davie Re-Write Rationale

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Audience:

Being that our intended audience was meant to be other WRIT 221 students, we had to ask ourselves what we would rather have read. Grant-Davie’s original piece can be difficult for students to understand. What we wanted to do wasn’t really dumb down his original piece, just state it in a more plain, inviting way. The first draft we worked with was supposed to be a tri-fold pamphlet with the title “What Is It? and Why Do I Care?” The idea with this was to be a very concise document that someone could pick up, get all the information in a minute or two, and move on. We faced too many negative constraints here and decided to switch over to a website format with very similar content to the pamphlet. This allowed us to make something that took Grant-Davie’s content, reword it in a more student-friendly manner, and present it in an inviting and concise page. To really drive home the simplicity of the page, each section contains a “Why Do I Care?” paragraph so that we could make it blatantly obvious what the intended use for our knowledge was.

Exigence:

What was it about?: This was a re-written/reimagined version of Keith Grant-Davie’s article regarding the Rhetorical Situation.

Why is it necessary?: Grant-Davie’s article is hard to understand. We needed to make it easier to understand.

What is it trying to accomplish?: The ultimate goal of this assignment was to take something intended for one audience and adjust it so that it became more effective and accessible for an entirely different audience. To do this, we used different, often simpler terms for many things and emphasized only the most important pieces from the original article.

Constraints:

On the content side, we were both positively and negatively constrained by the idea that reading our webpage would be the first time our audience would be introduced to the Rhetorical Situation. Positively, if our audience hadn’t read Grant-Davie’s actual article, they would have no preconceived notions about any of our definitions and there wouldn’t be any misunderstandings about reading his confusing article. Negatively, our audience has likely never heard of many of our terms so we are indeed teaching something from scratch.

On the format side, we needed to have something that was inviting. This required some outer opinions to get just right. We presented both styles to different people during workshops and the website received universal praise while the pamphlet was confusing because it wasn’t printed out. The website also allowed for much more open space, making it the clear superior choice.

Us As Rhetors:

Our job as the rhetors of this piece was interesting because we weren’t necessarily creating anything. We were taking someone else’s work and presenting it differently. To retain the credibility of the original piece, it was vital that we didn’t sound too informal. People needed to read and understand our re-write, but still respect it as a viable piece of information. It’s easy to dumb down what someone says. It’s not so easy to compress and simplify it without making your audience feeling like you’re talking to a child.

Conclusion:

To re-write Grant-Davie’s article on the Rhetorical Situation, we initially chose to make a tri-fold pamphlet that was very straightforward. Content-wise this was acceptable for the most part but format-wise, we needed something that would be more appealing if it were consumed digitally, so we instead reformatted into a webpage. The webpage was simple in design. It contained and emphasized the most important points and then wrapped up each point with a “Why Do I Care?” section. At the end we wrapped the whole piece together with a “How does it help you?” section.