ABSTRACT

MELANIE MARIE CREGGER. Hearing Voices: Addressing Student Reflection in the Genre-Based Classroom. (Under the direction of Dr. Fedukovich.)

Reflection, the retrospective practice of assessing and gaining knowledge from a past learning experience, has long been used as a pedagogical strategy in composition, fostering cognitive development, transference of skills, and heightened awareness of compositional choices. However, reflective assignments often fail to take into account the complex frames of reference students bring to and encounter in the classroom as well as the various ways these structures impact their learning. More specifically, the situation of student writing to instructor and the eventual assessment of the project lead students to make evaluative claims about their writing when they reflect rather than critically analyzing their texts. In order to improve the pedagogical effectiveness of reflection, instructors need to consider the complexities of the genre and how it is socially constructed and constructive. In my analysis, I draw primarily on Carolyn Miller’s and Anis Bawarshi’s theories of genre as social action as well as Charles Bazerman’s research into classroom genre systems. In reconsidering reflection, I propose that instructors move beyond thinking of reflective texts as just process descriptions, and push students to view their texts through a more sophisticated rhetorical, genre-based lens. I situate this study within in the context of my first-year writing classroom, offering my own reflection about my search for ways to better frame the genre and to stimulate more productive student texts. While my attempts at finding a solution present many issues, I am hoping that my experiences can start a dialogue about the complexities of situated classroom reflection and provide a base point for improvements.