

COLLABORATIVE ARGUMENTATION:
TOWARD A MORE CIVIL RHETORIC

A Paper
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
North Dakota State University
of Agriculture and Applied Science

By

Craig James Rood

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

Major Department:
English

April 2011

Fargo, North Dakota

North Dakota State University
Graduate School

Title

Collaborative Argumentation: Toward a More Civil Rhetoric

By

Craig Rood

The Supervisory Committee certifies that this *disquisition* complies with North Dakota State University's regulations and meets the accepted standards for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

North Dakota State University Libraries Addendum

To protect the privacy of individuals associated with the document, signatures have been removed from the digital version of this document.

ABSTRACT

Rood, Craig James, M.A., Department of English, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, North Dakota State University, April 2011. Collaborative Argumentation: Toward a More Civil Rhetoric. Major Professor: Dr. Amy Rupiper-Taggart.

I first describe competitive and cooperative approaches to argumentation, and I claim that cooperative argumentation aligns with the rhetorical tradition yet needs to be developed further. I focus on civil rhetoric as one form of cooperative argumentation. Building off the abstract description of civility offered by Theresa Enos and Kathleen Blake Yancey, I move to the practical level. Blending a quantitative and qualitative approach, I analyze students' writing from an anthology assignment (which pairs collaboration and argumentation) to determine: What kind of civility moves does the anthology assignment foster? In my analysis, I identify six civility moves: (1) common ground, (2) counter-arguments, (3) logic, (4) nuance, (5) openness, and (6) tone. I then claim that rhetoric which includes the six civility moves—along with attention to ethos and the rhetorical situation's structure—can lead to more productive arguments and argumentation in both our classrooms and wider culture.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I spent many hours alone thinking, researching, reading, writing, and revising. But I also benefitted enormously from the help of others.

First, I thank Amy Rupiper-Taggart. She represents the best qualities of an advisor—encouraging and patient yet critical and focused. She stood her ground when I tried to get out of writing a proposal for this project. She was right, of course, and working through the proposal with her has made the writing of this paper enlightening and fun.

Second, I thank my committee members—Andrew Mara, Zoltan Majdik, and Kevin Brooks—for their time and feedback. Both the paper and I are better because of their help.

I thank Becca Hayes, who jokes that I must include a footnote whenever I mention the collaborative anthology assignment; indeed, she was the one who first suggested the general idea of an anthology before I created the assignment, used it, and researched it.

Kelly Sassi was essential when I began this project in her course, Composition Research. I thank her for her time in class and during office hours, where she helped me sketch a research design and prepare my first IRB protocol.

Abigail Bakke and Rebecca Oster—thanks for your enthusiasm in trying this assignment in your classes and your willingness to help me collect student writing. Thanks also to all of the students who consented for me to use their work.

I also want to thank all the other folks I work with in the English Department and Center for Writers who were gracious with all of my questions and who helped me with their own. I am better because of my colleagues—and I will remain grateful.

Last, thanks to my parents for helping make this life of mine possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
Cooperative and Competitive Argument.....	7
Civility.....	11
CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY.....	16
CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.....	19
Students' Self-Assessment.....	19
Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis.....	23
Common Ground.....	24
Counter-arguments.....	27
Logic.....	31
Nuance.....	33
Openness.....	35
Tone.....	37
CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS, FUTURE WORK, AND IMPLICATIONS.....	40
Findings.....	40
Limitations of the Study.....	42
Future Work.....	44
Implications for the Public Culture.....	48
Return to Theory.....	51

WORKS CITED	54
APPENDIX A. ANTHOLOGY ASSIGNMENT SHEET.....	59
APPENDIX B. ASSIGNMENT REFLECTION FORM.....	61
APPENDIX C. CODED ANTHOLOGIES	62
APPENDIX D. TITLES OF ESSAYS.....	63

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

“it is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.”

--attributed to Aristotle

During the weekend of October 30, 2010, just days before the mid-term election, tens of thousands of people showed up to the “Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear.” Neither of the hosts, satirists John Stewart and Stephen Colbert, made an explicit endorsement of any candidate; instead, they intended to counterattack the divisive rhetoric of politicians, media commentators, and politically engaged citizens. The rhetoric provided a contrast to many political rallies in Washington D.C. One supporter displayed a sign with the words “I’m using my inside voice;” another, “team fear.” Others included: “I *respectfully* disagree with your *opinions*, but I still *value* you as a person;” “somewhat irritated about extreme outrage;” “objective journalism is sexy;” “be nice;” “politics has been too concerned with right or left instead of right or wrong;” “be quick to listen, slow to anger” (NPR).

Politics have always been contentious, but the rally is one indication of resistance to the divisive rhetoric we see so often. As Deborah Tannen points out in *The Argument Culture*, many westerners mistakenly think of all argumentation as adversarial, or what Louis Menand describes as “two, and only two, diametrically opposed positions” where “the representatives of each side blast away at each other single-mindedly until interrupted by a commercial” (qtd in Lynch, George, Cooper 62). Beyond politics, we see this hyper-competitive, agonistic form of argument over and over again. Cable news shows push an agenda, and hosts heighten the clash between one person or idea and another to boost a

show's ratings. Too often, agreement and disagreement occur by affiliation rather than reasoned judgments.

While developments in communication technology present certain advantages, the 24-hour flow of information can also foster entrenched belief and superficial argument. We may well live in what Marshall McLuhan calls the global village, yet people nevertheless divide into sects by seeking out shows, articles, and positions that reinforce what they already believe. When sectarianism means isolation, individuals become more set in their own beliefs and unable or unwilling to understand others'. When people do engage, it is for briefer and briefer periods—whether it is with a sound-bite on television, a response to a Facebook post, or a flurry of text messages. The irony is that as we become more and more connected we can also become disconnected. In our rapid-fire mode of communication, it becomes difficult to recognize and respect the humanity of others.

These trends within our larger culture help me understand something I have noticed within my writing classroom. Near the middle of the semester, when students begin the anthology assignment, I use Kenneth Burke's conversation metaphor from *Philosophy of Literary Form* to help students understand research and argumentation. Burke writes:

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you

answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (110-111)

When I share this passage from Burke, students are quick to identify that the metaphor is not completely accurate. In a conversation, others respond to us immediately; in writing, we either have to imagine readers or wait until another writer responds in print.

Unfortunately, when I ask students to think of their writing as a conversation, their work often resembles a monologue, or, at most, they take snippets of what others have said to support their argument, without much engagement with ideas.

There are several reasons that students do not seem to engage with ideas. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein convincingly argue in *They Say/I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing* that students need a guide to understand and apply forms of argument, since “helping student writers actually ‘enter a conversation about ideas’ remains a formidable challenge” (ix). A lack of research is also part of the problem. However, even with research and argument templates, it is much more difficult to have a deep “conversation” with people who are not physically present (or even alive); it is much easier to dismiss or distort a perspective when “talking” with those who do not immediately talk back, rather than talking with a living, breathing person. More productive arguments require more energy devoted to considering how different perspectives can be reconciled, or, at least, understood. This can occur, in part, if people are closer together, either physically (when possible) or emotionally-intellectually.

To help student writers argue more civilly I collaboratively developed an argument anthology assignment (Appendix A). In brief, the assignment requires students to write an argumentative essay individually first and then work with two to three group members who have written about a similar issue (the groups are self-selected based on interest in topic) to create an introduction and conclusion to the anthology, as well as a cover. While Dana Herreman points out that “literary magazines or anthologies that feature student work” are “used frequently” (8), this anthology assignment requires what Benjamin S. Bloom calls higher order thinking skills, like synthesis and evaluation. The collaborative writing portion of the assignment requires students to establish and negotiate similarities and differences between group members, and then the group must identify how their work relates to larger academic and cultural conversations. The group work has many benefits similar to peer-response, but what makes this assignment unique is that students are invested in the shared goal of synthesizing their views in writing.

While my larger, long-range goal is to understand argumentation and ensure that mutually productive arguments are maximized, in this paper I focus on the ways argumentation and collaboration can work together. Specifically, I use the anthology assignments and assignment reflections gathered from first-year composition courses (English 120: College Composition II) at North Dakota State University during the spring and fall 2010 semesters. In this study, I ask: What kind of civility moves does the anthology assignment foster? In doing this, I see myself aligned with Frans H. van Eemeren and Rob Grootendorst’s work, particularly their examination of everyday arguments and efforts to improve argumentation, as described in *A System Theory of Argumentation: The Pragma-Dialectical Approach*.

One of my contributions is the analysis of students' work. While it is true that no research has been done on this particular anthology assignment (since it is new), what is more relevant to the disciplines of rhetoric and composition is that the blend of collaborative and argumentative work in the anthology model has not been examined. The research that most closely resembles my own is Patrick Slatterly's study "The Argumentative, Multiple-Source Paper: College Students Reading, Thinking, and Writing about Divergent Points of View." Similar to me, Slatterly is concerned about students' use of sources and ways of arguing. Rather than use collaboration, Slatterly gave each student a series of questions to reflect on—and challenge—their preconceptions about a topic. Using students' answers to these questions, along with an analysis of their individually written essays, he categorizes different approaches, including the "dogmatic," "non-committal," and "analytical" approach to argument. While I also use students' reflections and examine their writing, my focus is on using peers rather than generic questions as a heuristic. I do not dispute the value of questions, but one of my assumptions is that student writers—and even professional writers—can only go so far in isolation, and that they can benefit from collaboration at an appropriate time. Moreover, I also categorize and examine the rhetorical moves students use to display civil rhetoric.

In what follows, I first describe cooperative and competitive argumentation; within this framework, I delineate what civility means as a rhetorical practice. Next, I examine students' self-assessment and examine the moves students made in their anthology assignment to determine if students actually demonstrated civility in their writing. I then consider how the assignment might be adapted to meet the assignment goals more

effectively. Finally, I build on my initial findings to begin to articulate how we might re-conceptualize rhetoric to support civility both inside and outside of our classrooms.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

I first describe competitive and cooperative approaches to argumentation; I claim that cooperative argumentation aligns with the rhetorical tradition, yet needs to be developed further. In the second part of this section, I focus on civil rhetoric as one form of cooperative argumentation. I build off of the general description of civility given by Theresa Enos and Kathleen Blake Yancey to identify what civility means as a specific rhetorical practice.

Cooperative and Competitive Argument

For students and non-rhetoricians, variations of the word “argue” usually connote two or more people yelling at each other, often in vain. In an academic context, however, we are quick to say that “argue” means something much more restrained and productive. According to van Eemeren and Grootendorst’s definition, “Argumentation is a verbal, social, and rational activity aimed at convincing a reasonable critic of the acceptability of a standpoint by putting forward a constellation of propositions justifying or refuting the proposition expressed in the standpoint” (1). Put simply, Tracy Bowell and Gary Kemp explain that to argue is “to attempt to persuade by giving good reasons” (2). Within rhetoric, unlike formal logic, what constitutes a good reason largely depends on the audience and context. Stephen Toulmin, among other theorists of argumentation, reiterates that argumentation occurs between human beings, and thus, good arguments are not absolute, intrinsic, nor universal. Pointing to the influence of Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, van Eemeren and Grootendorst explain that “Argumentation is considered sound (or argumentatively valid) if it is successful in influencing the audience for which it is intended” (47). In Toulmin’s terms, the strength of an argument’s warrant

and backing—and thus the effectiveness of the overall argument—largely depend on context, including consensus by the group or discourse community.

To persuade, a rhetor must convince her audience that she and they share values or a vision. In Burkean terms, persuasion is a type of identification; a rhetor and audience must become consubstantial by means of “common sensations, concepts, images, ideas, attitudes” (*Rhetoric* 21). As Burke states in *A Rhetoric of Motives*: “you persuade a [person] only insofar as you can talk [their] language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, —identifying your ways with [theirs]” (54). Later, he claims that persuasion requires negotiation; he explains that a rhetorician must balance trying to change an audience’s opinion, yet “yield to that audience’s opinions in other respects” (55). Andrea Lunsford points out that Burke’s idea of consubstantiality dates back to at least “Aristotle’s use of the commonplaces [and] enthymeme” (150). While agonism coincides with rhetoric’s birth during the days of Corax and land disputes, the work of Aristotle and Burke signals that there is at least room for cooperation within the study of rhetoric and that my work has common ground with the rhetorical tradition.

In *Cooperative Argumentation: A Model for Deliberative Community*, Josina M. Makau and Debra L. Marty explore what cooperative argumentation means. They contend that “ideally, argumentation is a communication process people use to understand and make sense of differing perspectives on a given topic, and to help them decide where they stand on the relevant issues” (81). In contrast to more conventional notions of argumentation as competitive, Makau and Marty claim that argumentation should be cooperative. They reason that “arguments and critiques that are hostile or intended simply to defeat someone else’s arguments do not serve the purposes of argumentation” (241).

Such attempts to win or defeat others prohibit us from sustaining a “reciprocal relationship” (84). In advocating a collaborative approach to argumentation, Makau and Marty point to empirical studies from educational psychologists, including Pamela George, that document students’ increased engagement that comes from work in pairs and small groups over independent work (86). Collaborative activity paired with argumentative writing can help students “recognize that their views can only be enlightened by as comprehensive and open an exchange as is possible. They view those who disagree with them as colleagues potentially capable of enlightening them” (87). Thus, students not only can improve the “quality of group decision making” but cooperative argumentation also “significantly contributes to good personal decision making” (Makau and Marty 97). Makau and Marty’s research thus provides a rationale for encouraging students to work through ranges of agreement and disagreement collaboratively.

Of course, attempts at a more collaborative or dialogic approach can become an overcorrection. Slatterly’s comment about critical thinking applies to one of the hazards of collaboration: “Students cannot, and should not, will their beliefs and values out of existence” (372). Going a step further, I want to point out that collaboration, cooperation, and empathy need not necessitate epistemological egalitarianism. Some ideas are better than others; conversely, some ideas are blatantly false and harmful. I am not claiming that that we should all “just get along, somehow” or avoid disagreement; my critique is that we might find ways to get along better—and that with this renewed commitment to understanding and negotiation, we can minimize unnecessary disputes and maximize mutually productive arguments. The anthology assignment is designed to protect individual conviction and expression, as students first complete an individually written essay before

writing collaboratively; in other words, compromise is not central, but understanding is. In broader terms, I acknowledge the value of agonistic rhetoric. Similarly, in reacting to the blossoming of collaborative learning brought about by Kenneth Bruffee and others, John Trimbur cautions us from too quickly latching on to consensus while ignoring the power and value of disagreement (476).

In opposition to Makau and Marty (as well as Tannen, Sonja K. Foss and Cindy L. Griffin, and others who have questioned competitive argumentation), David E. Foster describes how adversarial argumentation benefits society and how “teaching of argumentation skills is important if students are to be prepared in a manner that will maximize their chances of being successful” (13). David E. Williams and Brian R. McGee respond to Makau’s earlier work by proclaiming that “we are not convinced that competition is without value” (109). Others take a moderate stance, recognizing that argumentation can have *multiple* purposes and approaches. Irwin Mallin and Karrin Vasby Anderson point out that in situations where things like liberty or property are at stake, such as in courtroom practice, adversarial argumentation can be justified. However, such an approach is “much less appropriate when the disputant is someone with whom you need to have an ongoing relationship, such as a spouse, employer, or colleague” (130) because these rhetorical situations require individuals to “bridge opposition and negotiate for solutions to shared problems” (120). Mallin and Anderson reconfigure the debate between competitive and cooperative argumentation from an either/or to a both/and scenario when they explain that “an interlocutor should learn a multiplicity of interactional practices for the multiple contexts in which she finds herself” (124).

In making the case for more cooperative argumentation, then, I do so as a matter of emphasis, not as an either/or choice (and in so doing, I join with others, including Foss and Griffin; Dennis A. Lynch, Diana George, and Marilyn M. Cooper; Makau and Marty; Mallin and Anderson; and Tannen). Rhetoric can be both cooperative and competitive. We must recognize that there is more than one “available means of persuasion” (Aristotle 24). Indeed this is not far from how we typically think of argument, at least in theory. Burke explains that, “For even antagonistic terms, confronting each other as parry and thrust, can be said to ‘cooperate’ in the building of an over-all form” (*Rhetoric* 23). Pointing out the reciprocal relationship between unity and division, he writes, “For one need not scrutinize the concept of ‘identification’ very sharply to see, implied in it at every turn, its ironic counterpart: division. Rhetoric is concerned with the state of Babel after the Fall.” (23). Later Burke explains that rhetoric “is rooted in an essential function of language itself...language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperation in beings that by nature respond to symbols” (43). Despite this theoretical understanding, however, I think our present culture—including the academic, private, and public spheres—makes it clear that we need to consciously work to restore civility in argumentation, and this will be done in part by tempering the competitive spirit of argumentation with a more civil, cooperative practice.

Civility

Burke’s work shows there is room for cooperation within rhetoric, and the work of Makau and Marty, as well as Lynch, George and Cooper, along with others, explores what cooperative argumentation means. Within this context of cooperative argumentation, some within the disciplines of composition and rhetoric have begun to develop a notion of civil

rhetoric. Theresa J. Enos begins to describe a more civil rhetoric in “A Call for Comity.” Enos starts by reminding us that civility has a clear connection to politics: “Citizenship, civility, civilization are cognates from the *civis* (“citizen”) and *civitas* (“city”), Latin equivalents of the Greek polis (interestingly, the word polite has its root in polis)” (212). By using the word “civility,” (despite its relation to colonization) I want to appeal to our role as citizens and our place in our communities, and I also want to appeal to contemporary connotations of the term, such as courtesy, politeness, decent respect and consideration (*OED*).

In the conclusion of “A Call for Comity,” Enos clarifies: “I am not arguing here for another of those pendulum swings that too often seem characteristic of our field....A society that is wholly civil not only is difficult to imagine but perhaps even undesirable” (232). Her point is one of degree: “We don’t have to argue for a conflict-free society, but we can work toward more constructive, and civil, ways of expressing opposition” (Enos 232). In response to Enos’s article, Kathleen Blake Yancey identifies that—because of our “hypersaturated, overmediated, and ever-escalating” environment—“Enos’s concerns merit consideration” (290). Yancey connects Enos’s call to Edward Corbett’s distinction between “the rhetorics of closed fist [and] open hand” (290). Yancey then asks: “Is the open hand of comity even possible?” (290). By the end of her essay, Yancey answers yes, and points to technology as one way of bringing people together. Enos, on the other hand, suggests that computer mediated communication may tear people apart. Both agree, however, that we can—and should—argue more civilly.

Enos makes several attempts to articulate what comity or civility means, at least on a theoretical level. She refers to Arthur Schlessinger who explains that “To some, the

purpose of civility is to enable one to seem a gentleperson without being one. To others, the precepts are intended to make one seem externally what one ought to be internally” (qtd. in Enos 221). This first part highlights a critique offered since Plato: rhetoricians are just concerned with *appearing* good (or just or honest) without actually *being* so. The latter part of Schlessinger’s definition connects to Quintilian’s conception of the “good person speaking well.” Linking civility to invitational rhetoric, Jennifer Emerling Bone, Cindy L. Griffin, and T.M. Linda Scholz claim that rhetoric can be “rooted in reciprocity and respect” and that the goal should not be to change another person but to “enter into a dialogue in order to share perspectives and positions, to see the complexity of an issue about which neither party agrees, and to increase understanding” (436). Enos cites Stephen Carter who writes: “Civility has two parts: generosity, even when it is costly, and truth, even when there is risk” (213). Carter’s point highlights the difficulty of civil communication and why it is not a given. More precisely, however, throughout the description of civility by Carter, Enos, Yancey, as well as Bone, Griffin, and Scholz, it is not clear how civility translates from abstract statements about reciprocity to specific moves within a specific rhetorical situation. In my method section, then, I will use this abstract description of civility to begin to delineate what “moves” signify civil rhetoric.

Reflecting the work of developmental theorists like William Perry, one of Slatterly’s conclusions is that students’ misrepresentation of a source, for instance, may be rooted in their psychological development. This point reminds me of the obvious—though important—point that one assignment will not cure the world’s communication problems. To address larger issues, we will at least need (1) a conceptual shift within our entire culture about the purpose and processes of effective argumentation, as well as (2) repeated

effective practices that become habitual. Progress is being met toward the first goal, due to the work of many theorists, including Enos; Foss and Griffin; Lynch, George, and Cooper; Makau and Marty; Carl Rogers; Tannen. Like many other instructors, I am indebted to this theoretical understanding and I recognize it as an essential framework or backdrop for approaching countless rhetorical situations. However, I know that the theoretical understanding is not enough, so I seek to examine how the theory translates to practice. To rephrase this in medical terms, while others have diagnosed that there is a problem (and their diagnosis is wide ranging, including all the facets of our public and private lives), I am testing out a specific approach to help remedy this diagnosis. (Makau and Marty, as well as Tannen do offer suggestions for improving argumentation, but their suggestions are not systematic). While I hope to return to the theoretical work and to contribute insights and a more thorough understanding of argumentation, my paper is rooted in, and focuses on, specific classroom practice.

In acknowledging that my theoretical understanding of “civil rhetoric” largely rests on others’ work, I should briefly clarify the different labels used. Cooperative argumentation (Lynch, George, and Cooper) is roughly equivalent to dialogic communication (Tannen) or listening rhetoric (Wayne C. Booth) or invitational rhetoric (Foss and Griffin). While all of these labels are very similar in meaning, I have chosen to use civil rhetoric for a number of reasons. First, I dislike the label “cooperative” argumentation because of its close association with consensus and compromise, neither of which I view as essential (or sometimes even proper) to a civil approach to rhetoric. Second, the existing description of civil rhetoric given by Enos and Yancey as a rhetorical stance that focuses on conflict resolution or understanding aligns with the approach I have

used in my teaching. Moreover, as I indicated in the literature review, “civil rhetoric” still remains flexible enough to develop. Third, civil rhetoric best captures my emphasis on ethos for effective rhetorical practice.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

In my analysis, I attempt to track civility within first-year students' anthology assignments—and thus gauge the effectiveness of this assignment— by asking the following questions:

- (1) How does the group convey each **group member's** position?
- (2) How does the group convey **outsiders'** positions?
- (3) How does the group convey **the issue** or issues addressed in their argumentative essays?

To answer these questions, I refer to the following indicators of civil argument, which I have synthesized from several sources (as indicated in each individual section of my analysis).

- A. Common ground—A rhetor will work to identify shared values, beliefs, or intentions and to clarify what issues the writers and others really disagree about.
- B. Counter-arguments—A rhetor will acknowledge objections (and address them with respect and attention). Relative to each group's project, the writers will need to find a balance between the number of counter-arguments they identify and the comprehensiveness of each response.
- C. Logic—A rhetor will be well informed, will make valid inferences (based on reliable information), and will work to avoid logical fallacies (particularly ad hominem, hasty generalization, and straw-person).
- D. Nuance—A rhetor will acknowledge limitations to her own argument(s). For instance, rather than making categorical, absolute claims, she will explain the

conditions and contexts in which her argument would be (partially) true or false.

- E. Openness—A rhetor may reach firm conclusions, but she will recognize argument as a conversation, and thus, will tolerate differences of opinion and will probably not assume the issue is definitively settled.
- F. Tone—A rhetor will acknowledge and attempt to understand and respect her peers and outsiders, and limit emotionally charged language. For instance, a writer may claim that another person is wrong, but will work to understand and present this position in good faith, rather than caricaturize the other person/position.

Using the questions and categories I outlined above—which have been refined from preliminary analysis of students’ texts—I analyze the writing from students in the first-year composition course (English 120: College Composition II) at North Dakota State University. I analyze 28 anthology assignments, 15 of which came from my own classes and 13 of which came from two other instructors’ classes (all instructors are experienced graduate students). The data were gathered from seven total sections of first-year composition from the spring and fall 2010 semesters. All data included have been obtained with students’ consent. In accordance with NDSU’s Institutional Review Board, where I quote students’ work, I have assigned pseudonyms to protect students’ privacy¹.

In my analysis, I focus on the collaborative portions of the assignment, which include the anthology’s introduction and conclusion. I also examine the individual self-assessment (Appendix B) that students completed after their group finished the anthology assignment and oral presentation. The assessment asks students to reflect on their learning,

¹ Protocol #HS10275

including both positive and negative aspects of the assignment and their group work. Given my research question and data, I have decided to use a quantitative and qualitative approach: quantitative to establish trends; qualitative to provide context, content, and nuance to the numbers.

To monitor change, I use students' self-assessment, rather than contrast students' abilities before and after the anthology assignment. The self-assessment approach seems most fitting for this study because students are not pressured into a particular response; additionally, it would be difficult for an outsider to assess students' changed beliefs or practices, especially since students are encouraged to revise their work throughout the course. As to students' writing, my analysis focuses on the approaches students use in the collaboratively written portion of the anthology assignment (the introduction and conclusion), which only allows me to say "here are the moves/skills that students did or not demonstrate in their project" but not "here is how the moves/skills *changed or developed*." I recognize this is a limitation, but still think this approach is most useful at this point because it will give me a snapshot of what typical first-year students do rhetorically when they are asked to negotiate and will allow me to better articulate, codify, and refine the patterns of civil rhetoric that I have already begun to establish.

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter is divided into two main parts: in the first part, I analyze students' self assessment to gauge the assignment's effectiveness; in the second part, I blend a quantitative and qualitative approach to analyze students' writing within the anthology assignment. Within this second part, I have six sub-sections in which I examine the six civility moves I described in my method section: common ground, counter-arguments, logic, nuance, openness, and tone.

Students' Self-Assessment

To identify the influence the assignment had on students' thinking and arguing, I categorized students' open-ended responses to question #3 of the self-assessment (How did this collaborative anthology assignment change the argument you made in your individual commentary or your thoughts about your group's topic?). Sixty-five percent of students who consented for me to use their work reported that the anthology had some influence on their thinking or writing. While I would have liked to see higher numbers, this response at least shows that a majority of the students who consented were influenced by the assignment.

What is perhaps more insightful are the different types of influence that students identified. Of the 47 out of 72 students who identified some influence, 17 (24% overall) said their argument changed from the anthology assignment, 19 (26% overall) said they learned from the anthology assignment, and 11 (15% overall) said that their argument was strengthened from the anthology assignment. Let me explore these differences in a bit more detail.

The **change** category includes students who responded that their view is no longer the same as before the assignment. In some cases, student indicated a drastic shift, moving from believing to not believing something. For instance, one student responded, “I learned more about my other group members’ topics and I changed my view in regard to wind energy. Before I was strongly opposed to it, but now, I see that it can be of help in areas, such as North Dakota.” It still seems like the student holds on to his arguments against wind energy, but now the issue shifts from “wind energy is wholly good or wholly bad” to “judging the appropriateness of wind energy should be attentive to the context.” A similar scheme can be found in other responses. For instance, one student who reflected on their essay about strict immigration policy reported that “one minor change I had was about the immigrants that fled genocide.” In other words, the students’ argumentative approach seemed to shift from “illegal immigration is wholly bad” to “illegal immigration is generally bad, but really depends on the reasons.” Similarly, one student from a group that wrote about freedom of religion (#16) realized that he was not anti-Muslim but just against the decision to build a mosque near Ground Zero in New York. The student wrote: “Although in my paper I tended to have some anti-Muslim policies, I found that [my group member’s] paper fought for their rights. It made me realize that I do not want to be anti-Muslim, but in this particular policy, I am fighting against it.”

Other students whom I have identified as changing did not describe a drastic shift from believing to not believing, but indicated that their argument changed because they had to include or accommodate objections raised by their group members. One student responded that “After talking to the guys in my group I realized I should present some arguments from both sides of the fence. I might not have done that on my own.” Another

student who wrote about teenage pregnancy identified an aspect that had gone overlooked when writing alone. The student wrote: “I had to change the way I presented my argument and focus on the financial aspects as well.” In another case, a student who was writing about performance enhancing drugs recognized that the best solution might combine approaches: “It brought up other solutions to my topic’s problem, such as combining both the performance enhancing drug test and education, which is far more effective than just one or the other.”

The changing and learning categories contain many similar responses; however, I distinguish these because students in the **learning** category claimed to learn new skills (e.g., collaboration) or new content, but this did not lead them to change their argument; more often, they claimed that their arguments stayed the same, but that they became aware of the wider context. For example, here are two typical responses: “it opened my eyes to different issues and sides of the argument” and “It didn’t change my arguments in my commentary, but it made me more aware of the issues relating to my topic.” This type of response seems very beneficial. In creating the anthology assignment, my eagerness led me to imagine that students would radically change their arguments or ways of arguing; these students’ responses remind me that with argumentation, most change is gradual. Gradual change can be good if it means students are thinking carefully about ideas and arguments. The student responses within this category are valuable because they show that even if their views did not change, students learned from their assignments and are therefore more likely to understand the complexities surrounding the issue they wrote about. While some of the responses appear like they might have been performative for their instructor, other

responses seem immune from this charge. One group that titled their anthology “Hidden Facts” (#17) included a member who reflected:

Overall, I don't think the collaborative assignment changed my argument. I still feel very strongly about my argument and my opinion is not going to change. However, after reading some of the other commentaries of my group members, my opinion [of those issues] did change. I did not know all the facts about the mosque and I feel differently about it now. I'm not so against it, as well as marijuana for medical purposes.

This student makes it clear that she has a firm belief about some issues and is not going to change. On the other hand, with other issues that group members addressed, the student did change her opinion.

The third category of influence that I identified includes responses where students **strengthened** their argument because of the anthology assignment. Many of these responses were straightforward, as in this example: “[The anthology assignment] didn't change [my argument] at all, but it fed more to it, because [my peers] had more ideas, and it gave me more for my argument.” In other instances, it is evident that individual members were able to gain confidence in their own argument, such as the student who responded that the anthology assignment “made my argument stronger because I knew some people believed in it.” Another student noted how the group members all worked together to strengthen the arguments: “I don't believe my argument was changed. I do believe it was strengthened—not only mine, but we all strengthened each other's arguments and tied them together well to get our main points across.”

My hope for the anthology assignment is that students will encounter different points of view, which will help students rethink and refine their own view. Given this, the strengthened category is potentially problematic. While the anthology assignment may provide students with intellectual confidence, it may also lead to intellectual arrogance or collective error, if all group members agree (i.e., groupthink). My biggest worry is for a group to rally around a false and destructive idea, with the collaborative effort legitimizing rather than scrutinizing incorrect or narrow thinking (as has happened throughout history). There is no foolproof plan to prevent this, but I think several strategies can help. In my class, I confer with students about their individual essay and help them assess the logic of their argument; I encourage groups to extend beyond the group discussion and imagine (and research) objections readers might raise; and I have groups orally present their work during the final exam period, at which time there is a question and answer period with the entire class.

I should clarify, however, that the primary purpose of this assignment is not to have students change their opinion. Sometimes, then, the assignment may still be effective, even if students ultimately strengthen their arguments. Similarly, students who do not change their arguments at all may still benefit in the long-term by modifying how they think about argumentation. The direct purpose is to have students engage in civil argumentation and the hope is that they will develop this habit as they transition to new situations, situations where they may or may not change their minds.

Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis

In the following section, I blend quantitative and qualitative analysis: I use the former to identify trends and the latter to provide context, content, and nuance to the numbers. The

data were coded for the civility moves, since frequency is one determiner of success. These results are shown in Appendix C. My analysis below is divided into six sections, reflecting the civility moves outlined in my method section: common ground, counter-arguments, logic, nuance, openness, and tone. While this division seems justified for the sake of analysis, as a writing instructor, I am conscious of the holistic nature of writing and do not deny the overlap among these categories.

Common Ground

The most frequent move used was the appeal to common ground, where students tried to identify values, beliefs, or intentions that were shared among writers or between writers and readers. This move occurred on average over three times per anthology, with appeals to peers occurring more frequently than appeals to readers (1.75 to 1.43 times, respectively). It seems logical that students would appeal more frequently to their peers, since they are most closely working with their peers; more surprisingly, however, is the frequency of students' appeals to general readers, since that audience was not physically present. This suggests that collaboration may have made students less agonistic.

I should acknowledge that the frequency of common ground was likely influenced by the prompt in the assignment sheet, since I asked students to explain the relevance of the topic (and this often took the form of common ground, because students tried to identify what readers are concerned about) and to identify similarities and differences among peers' papers (thus establishing common ground among peers). As one example, a group that wrote about government influence (#21) tried to establish common ground with readers by identifying the role that government plays in our society:

Many daily tasks are impacted by decisions the government makes or fails to make. Throughout a standard day, citizens will likely use government built roads to drive around, work throughout the day to receive money both for themselves and the government and enjoy the other benefits the government provides. The United States government does provide many tangible benefits to the citizens of our nation, but some problems do exist in our current system.

This paragraph implies that the group cares about readers' well being. By noting the many ways in which we benefit from the government, the group makes it clear that the issue they are concerned about is not "complete government versus no government"; rather, they suggest that government is necessary, but they are concerned with a particular aspect: when government influence leads to corruption. This instance hints that some attempts at common ground may lead to a more nuanced argument. In another example, this connection is even clearer. After the group identifies that "some readers may contend that government is designed to be slow and deliberative," the group goes on to establish common ground and to nuance their argument: "This is true to a point, but when a single political party controls two branches of government and is still unable to pass significant legislation, something is seriously wrong."

To stay with the group writing about government influence (#21), they also identify several places of common ground between peers. For example, the writers agree that: "government could pass legislation that would increase speed and efficiency on Capitol Hill"; "our government is not representing the will of the people very well"; and "most people don't realize what is going on in DC and most don't care." In this case, the group

members did not have radically different viewpoints, but they did offer alternative solutions to improve government: cutting down on lobbyists' influence versus increasing voter involvement.

Given my data, I cannot determine whether the anthology assignment led to more or fewer appeals to common ground than students would normally include in an argumentative essay. What my analysis shows is that given the confines of the anthology assignment students did use this appeal relatively frequently. I also hope that my analysis has given some sense of how the appeal to common ground takes form in students' writing and suggests its relevance to civil rhetoric. The obvious value is that identifying common ground builds a connection between a rhetor and the audience and signals the rhetor's ethos. Abstracting slightly, another benefit of common ground is perhaps best epitomized in a line from President Thomas Jefferson's First Inaugural—"every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle" (874)—which points out that productive argument needs a starting place; similarity ought to precede difference. If rhetors become more adept at establishing common ground, it seems like they will be better able to identify their disagreements—or the stasis point of the dispute—thus leading to more productive argumentation. Many of the instances of common ground that occurred in the anthologies were quite general (e.g. in #15, "We believe this issue is vital because education is the fundamental basis for children's growth and generations to come"), which seem acceptable for relatively inexperienced writers; the hope, of course, is for more detail and precision to help rhetors sort out what they are arguing about and what they are not.

Counter-arguments

In looking at my quantitative data there is an interesting relationship between counter-arguments and openness (again, openness refers to tolerating differences of opinion and probably not assuming the issue is definitively settled). In anthologies #1, 18, and 23, three or more counter-arguments were presented throughout the introduction and conclusion, but there were no indicators of openness. On the other hand, those anthologies with the highest frequency of openness (three or more occurrences) addressed two or fewer counter-arguments. In other words, there is an inverse relationship between openness and counter-arguments. This suggests that, on the whole, counter-arguments were not used as concessions or to acknowledge limitations, but as a way to explain away readers' opinions (Bator cited in Corder 23-4). On the surface, this opposition seems to make sense, but I suspect it might be more indicative of how counter-arguments are conceived, rather than anything inherent in argumentation. In other words, as rhetors—as well as scholars and teachers of rhetoric—we might explore how counter-arguments can be used to acknowledge a limitation or uncertainty, instead of simply refuting someone else's position. More broadly, Makau and Marty point out that arguers can benefit if “refutation is reconceptualized as a communicative practice that enables us to learn through diversity and disagreement, rather than using those moments to shut down deliberation” (229). In contrast to the general trend pointed out here, anthology #21 proved an exception to the rule, with a maximum frequency of counter-arguments (5), common ground appeals to peers (5), and nuance (6). Instead of viewing objections as something to necessarily knock over, this group pivoted off of objections to refine their own arguments. This argumentative

strategy may not be appropriate for all rhetorical situations, but it does signal that it is possible for counter-arguments and openness to coexist.

The group writing about gay rights (#1) identified a total of five counter-arguments in the course of their two page conclusion. While many of these counter-arguments were ones that had already been acknowledged in an individual essay, this group was able to synthesize their views to offer a more comprehensive response. For instance, responding to the imagined objection that “homosexuality is contrary to many world religions,” the group directed readers to specific page numbers where one group member had attempted to address this argument in relation to Christianity; the group then pointed to specific page numbers in which a different group member addressed this in relation to eastern religions, like Buddhism. Even though the group was unable to identify new objections as a group, their responses indicate that they came together and considered the wider context of this issue. While they did show they understood the wider context (and that the assignment required them to make connections), the tradeoff was that their attempts to mention numerous objections meant their responses were not detailed. For instance, in connection to the argumentative essay on housing laws, they note that readers might raise “objections based on previous legislation,” but the group does not explore this objection nor clearly indicate whether they find it convincing.

Just over 70% of anthologies included at least one counter-argument. This is not remarkable, since in the assignment sheet I asked students to do this. What is interesting, however, is that citations for counter-arguments or objections were atypical in the collaboratively written portions (while they exist throughout the individually written essays). On the one hand, students may have been repeating arguments brought up in an

individual essay or they may have been aware of such arguments, but not included them until the group wrote together. On the other hand, though, this trend suggests that to at least some extent, students were able to generate counter-arguments from the group work. For example, consider the government responsibilities group (#18). In contrast to the students who wrote about gay rights (#1)—where all group members shared views about a similar issue and worked together to identify counter-arguments that outsiders would raise—the government group (#18) disagreed about all of their issues (issues which did not have a lot of overlap, as “government” was very broad), and, thus, collaboratively wrote about counter-arguments that were generated from the group’s discussion. In some places, group members objected to a peer’s essay via their own essay about a different topic:

Billy wants to lower **the drinking age** to 18, but Lana argues that doing that may raise **youth violence in schools** and neighborhoods. Billy argues that it would not raise violence because it would make the 18 year olds feel more mature. Lana presents facts that alcohol tends to raise aggression in people, and most teens would not be able to handle drinking at a young age and would more than likely react violently.

This example struck me because the students were not writing about the exact same issue, but they still suggest that the conversation metaphor became literal during their group work. The group mentions that after Dominic brought up the argument about people being able to serve in the military at 18, the group came to the conclusion that 18 year olds should be allowed to drink, despite the implications for violent behavior. For this issue, the group fails to identify counter-arguments that outside readers might still have; nonetheless, I was impressed by how careful and respectful the group was in describing each member’s

stance, indicating the kind of group discussion that took place and indicating whether or not they could come to consensus.

For two of the issues, group #18 concludes that their decision is split (suggesting that Lana's change of mind in an earlier example was sincere and that she was not just giving in). Referring to one student's essay on immigration policy, the group writes:

Dominic and Billy agree as Lana and Roberto disagree. We all agree on strengthening our borders. But Roberto says they deserve citizenship. Lana agrees with Dominic in every way except in certain cases. She thinks that if there is no war in your country you should stay out unless you come legally. Roberto totally disagrees with the other group members and thinks they should be able to stay here. There will be no resolving this argument.

This passage shows there was a dialogue and that group members were engaged in the discussion. Even though Lana agrees with Dominic and Billy, she is able to identify that war is at least one exception in which illegal immigration should be permitted. In his self-reflection, Dominic acknowledged that Lana helped him understand that there is at least one exception to his tough stand on immigration. To follow up, I would be curious to know if Dominic had not heard of the objection, or if he had but was not fully convinced by the objection until talking with his group members. Nevertheless, this group's careful delineation of everyone's perspective and their tracking of the back and forth suggests that the essential, broader lesson to foster civil argument is to create assignments and allow class time for forms of collaboration in which students are not too quick to compromise, but are encouraged to take their own and their peers' opinions seriously, even if they do not accept these opinions. More broadly, we might recognize that counter-arguments have the

power to teach, to change or refine our position and others'. In the words of Socrates in Plato's *Gorgias*: "...if my opponent clearly has a point, I'll be the first to concede it....And if you refute me, I shan't be upset with you as you were with me; instead you'll go on record as my greatest benefactor" (850).

Logic

As mentioned in my discussion of counter-arguments, students tended to use their individual essay, rather than the collaborative portion, to argue for their position (which is understandable, since the individual essays had a longer required page length of six pages). The collaboratively written introduction and conclusion more frequently referred to arguments from the individual essays or made connections between arguments, rather than explored a completely new line of reasoning. Given this, my analysis of logic has a negative focus: students' writing was presumed to be logical and I identified places where there seemed to be a logical problem. This took the form of gaps in reasoning (e.g., in discussing approaches to reduce the number of pregnancies in America, group #9 writes, "If the erectile dysfunction drug, Viagra, is often covered by insurance, shouldn't birth control be government funded?") and fallacies such as the straw man and hasty generalization (e.g, the student in group #1 who argues against the don't ask don't tell policy based solely on his personal observation that heterosexuals and homosexuals coexisted peacefully and "was not a detriment to unit morale").

Logical problems occurred at least once in 11 out of 28 (40%) of the anthologies. Part of the challenge in identifying logical problems is that students typically used the collaborative written portion to reiterate points made in individual papers. While I would have liked to see them go more in depth to detail and respond to objections that readers

might pose to their anthology, most groups did not seem to deliberately distort others' views, nor make personal attacks. Interestingly, the highest frequency of logical problems (2-3 occurrences) correlates with a low frequency of counter-arguments (2 or fewer), suggesting that the logical problems were likely the result of a group's failure to understand and convey an issue or perspective, rather than deliberate distortion.

The group writing about government responsibilities (# 18) was one group that did not go into detail with claims and evidence in their introduction and conclusion. For instance, when the group mentions that Billy says alcohol does not raise violence, whereas Lana says it would, undecided readers are not sure which side to take. Without including details, it seems that the students' arguments are based more on hunches than strong support. This suggests that instructors using this assignment might spend more time working with students to have them emphasize claims and evidence in their anthology, although it might also suggest that a comprehensive treatment of claims and evidence is best suited for the individual section, whereas the collaborative writing portions entail trading off depth for breadth.

Similar to the argument about school violence, the group's appeal to changing the drinking age to 18—because that is also the age that people can serve in the military—seems to simplify the debate. While the group members seem content with this argument, I expect that outsiders might still have many objections. For instance, it's not clear why they assume the drinking age should be lowered, rather than say the age to serve in the military should be raised; furthermore, they do not describe the rationale given for the current drinking age or explore why drinking and military service are analogous. This failure to engage outsiders indicates one area where they can build on the strengths they

demonstrated in addressing each other. In other words, this analysis suggests that while the anthology assignment may help students synthesize counter-arguments or detail disagreements within the group, this collaborative writing did not seem to improve some students' ability to articulate claims and generate evidence for those outside the group.

Nuance

Nuance refers to moves where a rhetor acknowledges limitations to her argument(s). For instance, rather than making categorical, absolute claims, she will explain the conditions and contexts in which her argument would be (partially) true or false. Of all 37 instances of nuance across all of the anthologies, no students cited an actual source to justify their nuance. This suggests several possible interpretations. The most striking, I think, is that students do not see the collaboratively written portion of the assignment as a spot for integrating outside sources (whereas all of the individual essays contain several sources on the works cited page and cited in their paper). To state this a little differently, students are able to formulate objections and then describe limitations to their arguments based on their work with peers. This suggests that (a) students may have added more nuance by just spending more time with their individual essay, (b) the act of collaboration helped students generate more ideas than they could have on their own, or (c) they are just mentioning things they knew but did not include in their individual essay. (To be more precise, I suspect it may be (a), (b), (c) and other factors, such as the juxtaposition of essays.) I mention this not to claim that students should cite information in the collaborative portion, but rather, to point out that students seem to be generating ideas on their own or that their notions of intellectual ownership change as they transition from writing alone to writing collaboratively.

A group that wrote about the influence of media (#8) seems to have been influenced by this juxtaposition of different essays on a topic. This indicates that the anthology assignment can help students abstract from their individual argument to understand the larger context of the issue they are writing about (which is something first-year students often struggle with). For instance, two writers in the group had argued against media; one referenced the detrimental effects on sports and the other wrote about how magazines and movies create unhealthy concepts of body image. On the other hand, two other writers wrote arguments that considered both the benefits and harms of media; one writer focused on social networking, while the other mentioned video games. By the end, all four writers seem to have broadened their perspective. The student who focused on social networking recognized even more objections, such as issues with security and fraud. Similarly, the student who was mostly critical of sports identified that “relating to sports teams can help people develop an identity with the team and can build their self-esteem,” and the student who raised concerns about how body image is presented in the media recognized that images in the media can also have a positive effect, which “can motivate people towards their goal of having the ‘perfect body’.”

I noted earlier that counter-arguments and openness seemed to exist in opposition, and that we may benefit from Makau and Marty’s vision, where “refutation is reconceptualized as a communicative practice that enables us to learn through diversity and disagreement, rather than using those moments to shut down deliberation” (229). One exception to the trend I saw—and one example of Makau and Marty’s point—is the anthology in which group members wrote about government influence (#21). Instead of viewing counter-arguments as something to tackle down (which, to be fair, is sometimes

appropriate), this group repeatedly stated an objection and then used the objection to refine their stance. For instance, they write, “some people may argue that people do have a voice because they can still vote,” and then they acknowledge that people do have the right to vote, but the group is concerned that Americans are not taking advantage of it. Later, they anticipate the objection readers might raise that total commitment to refining government is not possible; the authors state, “We don’t expect people to go to every political rally or know everything about every candidate, but it doesn’t take that much effort to know the basics about the bills going through Congress or vote every two years.”

Openness

Openness refers to tolerating differences of opinion and probably not assuming the issue is definitively settled. Of the 35 instances of openness throughout the anthologies, writers frequently signaled the readers’ autonomy by identifying other lines of research or allowing space for readers to change (or perhaps form) their own opinions based on the anthology. For instance, the group writing about the media (#8) began the last paragraph of their conclusion by writing, “Our hope is that with this anthology readers are exposed to various and opposing viewpoints in the media and can then form their own views on the matter.”

As I implied when analyzing the counter-arguments, the group writing about government (#18) included a lot of nuance in their arguments, at least within the context of the group discussion about how each member related to another. This group seems comfortable being open-ended. In a few examples (such as the drinking age) they mention that one of the writers changed her opinion based on the group discussion. In other instances, it becomes clear that the group members are pretty settled in their beliefs, since

they conclude by declaring some issues a “split decision”. I initially hoped they would have said “I am open to changing my mind,” but after reflecting on this, I think that their commitment is fine—and especially so since the group was respectful of disagreement on heated issues, and they were still able to work together to complete the anthology assignment.

On the other hand, the group writing about gay rights (#1) does reach firm conclusions (which is fine), but they do not give much weight to differing opinions (which is problematic, particularly if they are trying to persuade anyone who does not already agree). For instance, in their conclusion, they write that “this collective work has thoroughly explained the unfair treatment endured daily by the LGBT community” and then they continue “even those who yet disagree must now regard these people as equals, and must support extending their rights as human beings. This unacceptable treatment cannot continue.” While I think it is good that these students are committed to their argument (and they waited to make this call to action until the conclusion, when a reader has already read their individual arguments), there also seems to be a problem with exaggerated rhetoric of “those who yet disagree must now regard these people as equals”; the group assumes that readers who disagree will automatically switch over and the issues are now definitively settled; in reality, the conversation will probably continue.

As I reflect on these students’ work, I recognize that openness requires intellectual maturity and a unique rhetorical stance. Bone, Griffin, and Scholz explain that “Civility involves a willingness to enter into a conversation with others, what Hauser calls a multilogue ‘from which *civil judgments* sustainable in multiple perspectives may emerge’” (448). They explain that “When we are civil, we attempt to understand the profound

differences that divide us and to ‘transcend the difference in deep and humane ways’” (457). Going beyond, or at least understanding, differences not only requires students to complete an assignment, but—as Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca caution—also requires students to “display a willingness to eventually accept [another’s] point of view” (17). Lynch, George, and Cooper extend this line of reasoning by identifying that “the risk in argument is not that you may lose but rather that you may change” (80). While this willingness requires a lot of courage, it can also be extremely rewarding, allowing student to learn that their “experiences and needs are not necessarily the same as those of others and that there are benefits and drawbacks to the differing decisions made” (80).

Tone

In regard to tone, two of the groups with the highest frequency of counter-arguments (4-5) had a high frequency of negative tone (2); on the other hand, two groups with the highest frequency of counter-arguments (5) had no occurrence of negative tone. This indicates that negative tone and counter-arguments do not exist in a stable relationship, but are relative to the situation (including the group members’ attitudes and topics). Overall, major deviations in tone occurred relatively infrequently, and when they did occur, a positive tone (0.43) was slightly more frequent than a negative tone (0.39). This coupled with the relatively stable tone suggests that students recognized this assignment as a chance to calmly examine arguments, rather than get riled up.

Throughout all of the anthologies, authors seemed respectful of each other. This was evident by equal name use (all first name or last name), relatively equal space given to each writer, and no ridicule or blatant misstatement of a position. In the instances of

negative tone (which occurred relatively infrequently at 0.39 times per anthology), the author(s) were discussing a position of someone outside of their group.

The group writing about gay rights (#1) demonstrates respect for one another (which is not too surprising, since they all seem to agree with each other). For instance, all group members are referred to by last name; when discussing the individual argumentative essays, each author is given equal space; they seem to respect all of the group members' arguments and work to synthesize these. Although they demonstrated respect for each other, their treatment of those outside the group who might disagree is more mixed. On the positive side, they write "*misconceptions* about homosexuals" rather than "outright lies" or "bigotry." Similarly, this respectful stance is evident in their appeal to human agency in the end: "every person in each community described has the ability and the responsibility to change this. The one with the power to stop it is you." In other places, however, their tone is more aggressive. Illustrating what George Lakoff and Mark Johnson label the "argument as war" metaphor, the group writes that they have organized their essays in such a way to "disarm our adversaries." Given the plea in the conclusion for readers to change, the language of disarming adversaries seems confrontational: the conclusion will likely scare away any readers who disagree and the group shuts down the possibility that the group is open to changing their position. Part of the struggle here, as Paul Bator explains, is that even the most carefully reasoned arguments will not be effective "in a rhetorical situation where the audience feels its beliefs or values are being threatened" and neither will reasons be heard "if the audience senses that its opinions are somehow being 'explained away'" (qtd. in Corder 23-4). Furthermore, the group does not fully achieve Makau and Marty's

ideal of a rhetorical stance that “fundamentally reconceptualizes advocates as people who enact their commitments with the spirit of an ally, rather than an adversary” (233).

The group writing about government (#18) also showed respect for one another and did seem to treat each other as allies rather than adversaries (which is more remarkable since the issues they wrote about did not overlap and yet they disagreed). This group does an excellent job of tracing the difference of opinions between group members, but they fail to reference any actual or imagined outsiders beyond their group; thus, readers might be intrigued by looking in at this group’s anthology, but a bit surprised that the group does not look out and acknowledge them directly.

CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS, FUTURE WORK, AND IMPLICATIONS

I begin this chapter by describing some of the most intriguing findings from my study. Next, I acknowledge limitations to my study and then describe future work. Afterwards, I discuss how my analysis of student writing lends itself to the ways of arguing in our larger public culture. I then conclude by returning to the theory of argumentation and calling for a more civil rhetoric.

Findings

When I started researching cooperative argumentation and civil rhetoric, I was grateful to hear Lynch, George, and Cooper articulate what I thought implicitly when I designed this particular anthology assignment: “Asking students to research issues and to learn from people they disagree with does not prevent them from taking strong positions, though it does result in positions that are more reasonable and thoughtful” (82). I wanted students to be confident and assertive in their beliefs, but not so confident that they ridiculed or ignored others’. As a teacher, I suspected that students did develop more reasonable and thoughtful positions, though my analysis of this data suggests a more nuanced interpretation.

Only 65% of students reported that the anthology influenced their argument in some way. I believe these numbers can be improved (as I will discuss later in this chapter), though I am also cautious about using *influence* on one’s argument as the sole determiner of success for this assignment. For instance, I suspect that even if students reported no change in how they thought about the particular issue they wrote about, the anthology assignment may still have helped students reconceptualize argumentation, and thus approach future rhetorical situations more civilly. In *Writing Groups: History, Theory, and*

Implications, Anne Ruggles Gere extends beyond her analysis of writing groups inside and outside academy to discuss the process of cognitive and linguistic development that occurs through collaboration. She explains that “As a result of this negotiation within writing groups, participants develop metalanguage about writing” (95). Referring to Sternberg’s work, Gere goes on to explain how the development of metalanguage is one form of metacognition—metacognition being “a major factor in mental ability because people who are aware of how they think better perform than those who do not” (95).

Moving past students’ reflections to look at their writing, students demonstrated several of the civility moves. One of the most interesting findings comes from my analysis of students’ tone. The majority of students did acknowledge and attempt to understand and respect their peers. Students generally devoted equal attention to summarizing each group member’s paper; they referred to each other as equals and refrained from oversimplifying or evaluating each other’s stance; where there was disagreement among the group members, they carefully identified these differences and suspended judgment of them.

While students did demonstrate civility in the arguments between peers, I am not convinced that this always transferred over to the argument with others outside the group (even though the appeals to common ground occurred relatively equal: 1.75 times for peers and 1.43 times for outsiders). For instance, the group writing about government responsibilities (#18) ignored the existence of outsiders, and while the group writing about gay rights (#1) acknowledged the existence of outsiders, they did not demonstrate a civil rhetorical stance toward them. My hope is for students to think of those outside the group as they do their peers—referring to them as people, exploring the nuance of their argument, and tolerating disagreement. However, I recognize that this is especially difficult for

relatively inexperienced writers, and I also recognize there is a challenge unique to writing. As Walter J. Ong explains in “The Writer’s Audience is Always a Fiction,” “‘readership’ is not a collective noun. It is an abstraction in a way that ‘audience’ is not” (58). In further distinguishing oral and written communication, Ong asks “Where does he find his audience?” and replies, “He has to make his readers up, fictionalize them” (59). Leaving aside the question of whether students can transfer a more civil form of argumentation from their interaction with peers to their interaction with sources or imagined readers, though, what is most essential is that students first demonstrate civility toward their group members, which they did.

The civility that students showed for one another is probably due in part that they were all required to complete the assignment and received a grade. I suspect another reason for their success gets at something I mentioned near the start: closeness. The students had spent the majority of the semester together; they were comfortable with each other and were used to sharing ideas and working together. For the anthology assignment, I set aside class time for them to meet with their group members and converse. While I acknowledge that physical presence can magnify disagreements, the mutual investment helped students move away from defensiveness or performance to invested dialogue. The balance of writing and speaking fostered the best of both mediums: reflection and caution on the one hand, and immediate, honest feedback and clarification on the other.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is that students’ self-assessments are the primary marker of change caused by the assignment. To more effectively monitor growth, it may be beneficial to analyze the civility moves in argumentative writing not only in the anthology

assignment, but also before. I might explore this in the future, but I have so far decided against it. Since my primary purpose for this project is to improve student learning—and since the data are students’ writing—I have weighted pedagogical decisions as more important than creating the ideal research design. Thus, there is no firm “before” point within my study, as I encourage students to continuously work alone and with peers to brainstorm, write, and revise right up until the final exam period.

I have sought to ensure this study is more reliable by using student work from two other instructors’ classes. It would be inappropriate, though, to claim that these findings are representative of first-year writing students everywhere. The results are from a relatively small sample size, gathered from only seven sections of first-year writing over two semesters at North Dakota State University. I am also conscious that these data are taken from classes taught by graduate students (two females and one male), so the findings may be unique to age and experience as well as teaching approach and textbook. In an ideal research study, there would be a larger sample size from multiple universities and a range of instructors (teaching assistants, lecturers, and faculty).

Despite these limitations, the present study was still valuable. One of the greatest benefits of having a small amount of data—as well as knowledge of the instructors and institution—is that it is easier to understand the context of students’ writing. This is especially important when discussing civility. For instance, Rolf Norgaard labels “ignoring context” as the first sin of civil rhetoric. Norgaard makes it clear that any analysis of civility—to itself be civil—should not take statements or arguments out of context. Positions taken out of context ignore the rhetorical dimension of communication (i.e., a rhetor is responding to a particular audience at a certain time); not being attuned to the

contextual constraints frequently contributes to misunderstanding and non-productive arguments. Thus, I see my future research on this project as a balancing act: on the one hand, I hope to test the anthology assignment out in more classes at more institutions to increase the reliability of my findings; on the other hand, I also recognize that collecting too much data or data without much background may actually lead to less reliability, assuming Norgaard is right about the important role of context in determining civility.

Future Work

Whether this occurs within the context of a research study or not, I have several recommendations to improve classroom practice. First, to focus on the anthology assignment, I think that the anthology assignment's potential can be more closely realized if students select a common issue (e.g. high tuition) rather than a broad topic (e.g. government). Currently, I ask students to form groups based on their interest in a general topic; narrowing the scope of that topic or selecting a specific issue for all of them could help. I might also spend more time working with students during the group formation and brainstorming stages to help them focus the issues they plan to write about.

Given what I mentioned above, I should also say that letting student writers address somewhat disparate issues about a general topic can still work well (and I suspect many teachers welcome this flexibility). Take, for instance, anthology #8, which focused on mass media. Let us assume that all students had written about the influence of media on body image. Unless one or more students had taken a different stance, all of the essays probably would have been a variation of "media is bad" and I am not sure they would have learned much. However, only one student wrote about the negative influence of the media on body image, and that student still seemed to learn about her topic and modify her stance,

even though her group members did not write about the same issue. I cannot say if her peers presented her with counterexamples, or if she just identified counterexamples by inferring from their arguments about other forms of media, including video games. Either way, by the end of the anthology, she identified that the stance she took of media being wholly bad seemed to leave something out; she did not abandon her position, but recognized that images in the media can also have a positive effect, which “can motivate people towards their goal of having the ‘perfect body’.” To state all of this more broadly, I think that the potential of the anthology might be best realized when members have different stances on an issue; however, if students do not fit into a “point and counterpoint,” adversarial model—as is often true of first-year students, especially in North Dakota—students can still gain a deeper understanding of their issue by exploring the wider context of their issue via their peers’ essays.

Abstracting slightly, there is value for future work both in the model of collaboration I have outlined, as well as the description of civil rhetoric. The model of collaboration can also be applied to other genres of writing (including classes beyond first-year writing), thus helping students consider multiple perspectives, negotiate differences, and synthesize ideas. For instance, even if students are writing profiles, it seems valuable for them to come together after writing an individual essay and compare or contrast peers’ interpretations. I do not imagine these conversations would focus on argumentation, but I do think that comparing and contrasting different perspectives (especially with physically present peers) is a valuable epistemological and rhetorical skill, and may support many of the habits I hope to develop in situations where the communication is more argumentative. More broadly, I suspect that this model of collaboration—in which individual work

precedes group work—allows students to maintain an even workload and to avoid what Ede and Lunsford call hierarchical collaboration, where there is division of labor or one person fully takes charge. I also suspect that since students started collaborating after they completed individual work (in which they had time to think and write about an issue on their own), it was easier for group members to engage in true, dialogic collaboration (Ede and Lunsford 133-4).

In terms of civil rhetoric, I now plan to teach the civility moves I have outlined. In past semesters of working with the anthology assignment, I only had a general sense of what I hoped to accomplish, but I can now be explicit about the rhetorical strategies I expect students to demonstrate. Beyond the anthology assignment, I can also foresee ways in which this approach to argumentation can be integrated throughout the semester, including a modified rhetorical analysis assignment in which students analyze the civility moves in argumentative essays by student and professional writers, or a disagreement analysis (suggested by one of my colleagues) in which students take a look at some controversy and try to understand and analyze the points of view before offering their own argument. In other words, the anthology assignment aligns with my larger goal of helping students argue more productively. A key step toward that end is understanding the stasis point of an argument and why people hold the positions that they do; careful analysis seems to be part of the solution, as does dialogue with peers.

While I plan to do all I can to improve students' argumentative abilities, I am well aware that one assignment—or even a whole semester—is not enough to re-train how students understand and practice argumentation. Once students leave my class, they need reinforcement of the principles and rhetorical stance I have described, both in other writing

courses and courses in other disciplines that ask students to argue. I hope this current study, along with my future work on this project, can help other instructors take my lead and carry it forth into their own classrooms.

While I think that tempering current argumentative stances with a more civil approach is defensible on its own, I also recognize that what I have said about civil rhetoric contributes to the call being made to improve students' critical reasoning and writing skills. In *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*, Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa analyze data from over 2,000 students from the 2005 and 2007 College Learning Assessment. The authors lament that, shockingly, "Growing numbers of students are sent to college at increasingly higher costs, but for a large proportion of them the gains in critical thinking, complex reasoning and written communication are either exceedingly small or empirically nonexistent" (121)—and this is particularly the case in the first two years of college, a time when many students are taking general education classes like first-year writing. Arum and Roska make it clear that reasoning and writing skills are important for both individual development and democratic citizenry. The authors also situate their research within the context of what many students, parents, and politicians are concerned about—jobs. Arum and Roska refer to a 2008 survey conducted on behalf of the Association of American Colleges and Universities, as well as a 2006 survey that overviews the skills needed in the 21st century workforce:

More than 90 percent of employers rate written communication, critical thinking, and problem solving as 'very important' for the job success of new labor market entrants. At the same time, they note that only a small proportion of four-year college graduates excel in these skills: 16 percent

excel in written communication and 28 percent in critical thinking/problem solving. (143)

In short, students have a long way to go in terms of critical thinking and written communication. Thus, my description of civil rhetoric is not utopian, but, on the contrary, is targeted at very practical goals. Arum and Roska indicate that while many factors influence students' learning, their findings show that students make the greatest improvement in critical reasoning and writing when they have taken courses that require 40 or more pages of reading per week and 20 or more pages of writing per semester. I recognize that quantity is easier to test than quality, but I think we might be better off ensuring that our classes require reading and writing tasks that require students to use higher order thinking skills, like synthesis and evaluation, as the anthology assignment—and the larger shift to civil rhetoric I am arguing for—does.

Implications for the Public Culture

In my introduction, I tried to emphasize that argumentation is pervasive. The way students argue in their writing is influenced by forces outside of the classroom; likewise, the arguments that occur in public and private cultures are influenced by what happens in schools. This means that to significantly change argumentation strategies, the work done in the classroom must be supported by efforts outside of the classroom.

Following the January 8, 2011 shooting at the political rally in Tuscon, Arizona, we once again heard politicians and cultural commentators say that our discourse lacked civility. While the shooter was immune to a civil approach, the events caused many to question how we handle disagreement in our culture. As one just one example, the Civil Conversations Project, a radio program sponsored by American Public media, gained much

attention. Krista Tippett, the program's host, made it clear that while talk of civility is good, people need practical strategies. Indeed, as Norgaard points out, I recognize that few would actually argue against civility (at least as one approach to communication). Instead, "we need to question the term, the conceptual schemes in which we place it, and the rhetoric by which we deploy it" (Norgaard 247). Tippett, in one of her radio programs, identifies that part of the issue is our culture's speed: people need more time to reflect and need more patience when interacting with others. She describes a stance of "curiosity without assumptions" and mentions that discourse can improve if we ask questions of others and then try to identify what experiences or human stories led to their current beliefs. She also mentions two questions worth considering: What value do I see in the position that I disagree with? and What concerns me about my own position? To extend beyond Tippett's commentary, I think public and private discourse can also improve by using the civility moves I identified in my method and analysis sections: common ground, counter-arguments, logic, nuance, openness, and tone. I would join with Tippett in saying that people need strategies—and even specific language to use during an intellectual exchange—but I also want to highlight two factors that may help support civil argument in our culture: the structure of the rhetorical situation and ethos.

First, to describe the structure of rhetorical situations, let me start with an analogy that Kathleen Blake Yancey draws from architecture. Yancey writes that "in 2004, MIT opened a new classroom and lab building designed by Frank Gehry" (293). According to Gehry "The main problem I was given was that there are seven separate departments that never talk to each other. [But] when they talk to each other, if they can get together, they synergize and make things happen, and it's gangbusters" (qtd. in Yancey 293). A bit later,

after noting how the building fostered collaboration, Yancey remarks—“that’s the potential of architecture, to provide a physical structure for relationships old and new. The Stata doesn’t make these relationships, of course, but it does set a stage for a kind of *improvisational* civility that is still in process” (294). Thinking of this in terms of the classroom, then, and our larger culture, it would seem that we cannot guarantee people are more civil, but we can work to create structures or arrangements— both physical and intellectual or procedural—that help foster civility and develop it into a habit.

Argumentation will be held back so long as exchanges are structured like cable news shows where a rhetor is given 20 seconds to explain a complex position, while being interrupted by a host or shouted at by an opponent. Similarly, I do not expect civil argument will occur in contexts where understanding or negotiation are overpowered by performance (such as in a public debate or an exchange where an individual is asked to speak on behalf of a group). Civil rhetoric seems like it can be best fostered in small group or one-to-one interactions, but I also think it can occur in large scale settings—whether delivering a speech or writing a letter to the editor for thousands to see. For productive arguments to occur, what is most important is for participants to be personally invested in communication. This investment can come in the form of external pressures (as in the school setting where a grade is at stake) or from internal pressures (as I will discuss shortly in connection to ethos). Another factor that matters is the medium or media used. I favor blending written and oral communication: the former for reflection and care, and the latter for immediate responses and back and forth exchange. I will not defend this as the best approach in all situations, but instead I want to claim that a civil rhetorician will be self-reflective about the medium or media being used in particular rhetorical situations. For

instance, email or instant messaging may foster civil rhetoric in certain contexts, but if it does not, then the civil rhetor should suggest a more appropriate medium.

Second, physical or intellectual structure is not enough; the actors within this structure must be aware of and committed to ethos—which Aristotle describes as “good sense, good moral character, and *good will*” (91; emphasis mine)—where argumentation is seen as an opportunity to learn and be understood, rather than just pummel an opponent. While I have attempted to make clear that larger trends within our culture are the backdrop of all rhetorical situations—and that these larger trends are difficult to change—I still think each individual is responsible, and that the change occurs one rhetorical situation at a time. Ethos is the internal force that can ensure rhetors operate effectively within carefully structured situations, even when there are no outside pressures. The challenge is that this rhetorical stance—like all virtues—must be chosen and chosen again. While habits make the right choice easier, one still has to choose. The civil rhetor must be attuned to when argumentation can and cannot be productive and he or she will make efforts to engage only when appropriate, saying to their interlocutor, for instance, “if you wish to continue further, let us talk later when I have more time to be careful; or, let us talk in private or later when you have calmed down.”

Return to Theory

In beginning to draw this paper to an end, I should acknowledge that some appeals to civility can be counterproductive. In *Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy* Stephen L. Carter warns that the cost of “consensus is often repression” (49). Carter paraphrases an argument raised by Mary P. Ryan that “our very lack of agreement during the nineteenth century was a mark of the thriving of our democracy, now deadened

by the idea that consensus matters” (51). Pointing to examples like the antebellum South, Kathleen Blake Yancey cautions readers that:

Comity, in other words, can be something quite other than a plural commons or an open hand. Sometimes it seems more a reason not to make change, a claim to decorum that cloaks other motives, a place of refuge for privilege. At the same time, we might note that these cases of comity are false, not a comity of the open hand at all, but a pseudo-comity sheathing a closed fist. (290-1)

I would join with Yancey and say that we should avoid this false civility. To restate a point I made near the start: I do not believe in epistemological egalitarianism; some ideas are right and others are wrong, so consensus should not be our ideal. We should protect our own beliefs and we have a right to get angry. After all, ideas and arguments help shape the world. My central point is that we can better express the importance of ideas by having more productive arguments—accomplished not by yelling but by listening and working carefully to understand and be understood.

As Makau and Marty write,

When cooperation replaces competition, the communicative goal shifts from arguing to win toward arguing to understand. With understanding as the focus, the rationale for combative interaction subsides and the need for learning about different perspectives and for building relationships takes precedence. (87)

Understanding is obviously not rhetoric’s only function, but it is one that needs more attention. A shift toward civility and empathy will probably not revolutionize our politics,

our academics, or our personal interactions. But it is a start, and it seems we have a lot to gain and not much to lose from more civil rhetoric. The call for civility is a kairotic moment; I am optimistic for change, but I know there is no quick fix; civility will remain a perennial problem—as are all endeavors subject to human choice.

I have attempted to move beyond theoretical accounts of civility given by scholars like Enos and Yancey by looking at argumentative practice. I have identified six civility moves, analyzed these in students' actual writing within the anthology assignment, and suggested how civil rhetoric can be fostered with other assignments in other classes. Extending beyond the context of school, I have tried to articulate what factors we need to focus on to support more civil rhetoric in our culture—namely, civility moves, as well as the structure of rhetorical situations and ethos. In doing all of these things, I think I have advanced the conversation forward. And to paraphrase Burke, I recognize that I must depart for now, though I know this conversation will inevitably continue.

WORKS CITED

- Aristotle. *The Rhetoric and the Poetics of Aristotle*. Trans. W. Rhys Roberts. New York: Random House, 1984. Print.
- Arum, Richard and Josipa Roska. *Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. Print.
- Bloom, Benjamin S., ed. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: Book 1 Cognitive Domain*. New York: Longman, 1984. Print.
- Bone, Jennifer Emerling, Cindy L. Griffin, and T.M. Linda Scholz. "Beyond Traditional Conceptualizations of Rhetoric: Invitational Rhetoric and a Move Toward Civility." *Western Journal of Communication* 72.3 (Oct.-Dec. 2008): 434-62. Print.
- Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Rhetoric: The Quest for Effective Communication*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004. Print.
- Bowell, Tracy and Gary Kemp. *Critical Thinking: A Concise Guide*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Bruffee, Kenneth A. "Collaborative Learning and the 'Conversation of Mankind.'" *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*. 2nd ed. Ed. Victor Villaneuva. Urbana: NCTE, 2003. 415-436. Print.
- Burke, Kenneth. *Philosophy of Literary Form*. 3rd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974. Print.
- . *A Rhetoric of Motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969. Print.
- Carter, Stephen L. *Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1998. Print.
- Corder, Jim W. "Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love." *Rhetoric Review* 4.1 (1985):

16-32. Print.

- Ede, Lisa and Andrea Lunsford. *Singular Texts/Plural Authors: Perspectives on Collaborative Writing*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1990. Print.
- Enos, Theresa J. "A Call for Comity." *Renewing Rhetoric's Relation to Composition: Essays in Honor of Theresa Jarnagin Enos*. Eds. Shane Borrowman, Stuart C. Brown, and Thomas P. Miller. New York: Routledge, 2010. 207-35. Print.
- Foss, Sonja K. and Cindy L. Griffin. "Beyond Persuasion: A Proposal for an Invitational Rhetoric." *Communication Monographs* 62 (March 1995): 2-18. Print.
- Foster, David E. "In Defense of the Argument Culture: A Response to Recent Criticisms Against the Use of Adversarial Debate as a Method of Societal Decision-Making." *The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta* 89 (Winter 2004): 13-29. Print.
- Gere, Anne Ruggles. *Writing Groups: History, Theory, and Implications*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1987. Print.
- Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. *They Say I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: Norton, 2006. Print.
- Herreman, Dana. "None of Us Is as Smart as All of Us." *Focus on Collaborative Learning*. Ed. Jeff Golub. Urbana: NCTE, 1988. 5-11. Print.
- Howard, Rebecca Moore. "Collaborative Pedagogy." *A Guide to Composition Pedagogies*. Ed. Gary Tate, Amy Rupiper, and Kurt Schick. New York: Oxford UP, 2000. 54-70. Print.
- Jefferson, Thomas. "First Inaugural Address." *Lend Me Your Ears: Great Speeches in History*. Ed. William Safire. New York: Norton, 2004. 872-7. Print.
- Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: U of Chicago Press,

2003.

Lunsford, Andrea A. "Aristotelian vs. Rogerian Argument: A Reassessment." *College Composition and Communication* 30.2 (May 1979): 146-51. Print.

Lynch, Dennis A., Diana George, and Marilyn M. Cooper. "Moments of Argument: Agonistic Inquiry and Confrontational Cooperation." *College Composition and Communication* 48.1 (Feb., 1997): 61-85. Print.

Makau, Josina M. and Debian L. Marty. *Cooperative Argumentation: A Model for Deliberative Community*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2001. Print.

Mallin, Irwin and Karrin Vasby Anderson. "Inviting Constructive Argument." *Argumentation and Advocacy* 36 (Winter 2000): 120-33. Print.

Norgaard, Rolf. "The Rhetoric of Civility and the Fate of Argument." *Rhetoric, The Polis, and the Global Village: Selected Papers from the 1998 Thirtieth Anniversary Rhetoric Society of America Conference*. Eds. C. Jan Swearingen and Dave Pruett. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1999. Print.

NPR Staff and Wires. "Signs of 'Sanity' in Washington." *Npr.org*. 30 Oct. 2010. Web. 30 Oct. 2010.

Ong, Walter J. "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction." *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*. 2nd ed. Ed. Victor Villaneuva. Urbana: NCTE, 2003 55-76. Print.

Perelman, Chaim and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca. *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*. Trans. John Wilkinson and Purcell Weaver. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame Press, 2006. Print.

Plato. "Gorgias." *Plato: Complete Works*. Ed. John M. Cooper. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997. 791-869. Print.

- Slattery, Patrick J. "The Argumentative, Multiple-Source Paper: College Students Reading, Thinking, and Writing about Divergent Points of View." *Teaching Argument in the Composition Course: Background Readings*. Ed. Timothy Barnett. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2002. Print. 361-77.
- Tannen, Deborah. *The Argument Culture: Moving From Debate to Dialogue*. New York: Random House, 1998. Print.
- Teich, Nathaniel. "Carl Rogers on Communication: Introduction." *Rogsonian Perspectives: Collaborative Rhetoric for Oral and Written Communication*. Ed. Nathaniel Teich. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1992. 21-6. Print.
- Tippett, Krista. "Creating Civility: A Public Conversation with Krista Tippett." *Krista Tippett On Being: The Civil Conversations Project*. American Public Media. 19 Jan. 2011. Web. 20 Feb. 2011.
- Toulmin, Stephen Edelston. *The Uses of Argument*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958. Print.
- Trimbur, John. "Consensus and Difference in Collaborative Learning." *Cross-Talk in Comp Theory: A Reader*. 2nd ed. Ed. Victor Villaneuva. Urbana: NCTE, 2003 461-478. Print.
- van Eemeren, Frans H. and Rob Grootendorst. *A Systematic Theory of Argumentation: The Pragma-Dialectical Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. Print.
- Williams, David E. and Brian R. McGee. "Negotiating a Change in the Argumentation Course: Teaching Cooperative Argument." *Argumentation and Advocacy* 36 (Winter 2000): 105-19. Print.
- Yancey, Kathleen Blake. "In Search of Comity." *Renewing Rhetoric's Relation to*

Composition: Essays in Honor of Theresa Jarnagin Enos. Eds. Shane Borrowman,
Stuart C. Brown, and Thomas P. Miller. New York: Routledge, 2010. 289-301.

Print.

APPENDIX A. ANTHOLOGY ASSIGNMENT SHEET

Collaborative Commentary Anthology

Due Dates:

- **1 Hard Copy from Group:** Final Exam Period, 100 points
- **In-class Group Presentation of Anthology:** Final Exam Period, 25 points (see separate assignment sheet)

Length: Should contain all group members' individual commentaries. Your introduction should be at least the equivalent of 1 full double spaced page, and your conclusion should be at least the equivalent of 2 full double spaced pages. (You might choose to single space your anthology, use columns, and/or utilize other visual design features.)

Description

For this assignment, you will need to compile your individual articles into a cohesive collection. As a group, you will determine how best to arrange the articles written by each of you group members; further, you need to write an introduction, conclusion, and design a cover with a title for your group's collection. While your individual commentaries will be graded separately, all group members will receive the same grade for the anthology.

This assignment asks your group to do the following:

- Introduce the topic and identify its importance to readers. Briefly summarize all of the articles included in the collection and explain your rationale for the order in which each commentary appears.
- Provide a conclusion that unites all of the articles. You should include sections that:
 - Describe how all of the articles relate to each other. Point out themes and assumptions common to all of the individuals commentaries. On which major points do you agree or disagree? (Try to be specific.) On points you disagree, can these differences be resolved? On points you agree, what objections might some readers raise, and how might you respond? Are there questions you still have?
 - What should readers do with this anthology? Are you hoping that readers will change their mind? Do further research on areas that you left out or did not feel like you adequately covered? Assuming readers accept your ideas, should they change their actions from this point forward?
- Proofread all papers
- Design a cover that conveys your topic visually (use more than just a clip art image, though be sure to cite any images you use). You should also title your collection—either something subtly or overtly descriptive of your topic.
- Include a title page and table of contents, which indicates both the title and author(s) of each piece in the collection
- Bind all parts together into one professional document that is easy to navigate (include a table of contents, continuous pagination, consistent design, etc.).

Relevance to your education and life:

This is an age in which many people are locked into set beliefs without considering alternative positions. This collection requires you to acknowledge the complexity of the topic your group chose; even if your opinion does not change, you will at least need to make an effort to understand alternative perspectives.

Furthermore, collaboration is something essential to living with others. In your academic, professional, and personal lives, you will need to work with others. You wrote an individual piece first so that collaboration could be most effective: I want you to recognize and speak with your own voice while understanding its role in a larger conversation.

Rubric

Criteria	F	D	C	B	A	Comments
Introduction You've introduced your topic and mentioned why readers should care about it. You've briefly summarized each commentary in your anthology and explained your rationale for putting them in the order you did.						
Conclusion You've identified themes and assumptions that are common in all of the commentaries, talked about areas of agreement and disagreement of each commentary, and explained how readers should respond to reading your group's anthology.						
Design The cover visually demonstrates that you've considered your topic and audience. Your anthology is bound in one piece and looks professional.						
Organization You've strategically arranged the individual commentaries, included a table of contents, page numbers, and designed the anthology in such a way that it is easy to navigate.						
Style You've effectively targeted an audience of educated peers by treating the topic seriously, while still maintaining your own voices. The anthology demonstrates a variety of sentence structures and lengths. The introduction and conclusion are cohesive, with no awkward gaps between writers.						
Mechanics Your project is reasonably well proofed and easy to read. Your MLA works cited page is reasonably correctly formatted and complete.						

APPENDIX B. ASSIGNMENT REFLECTION FORM

Name _____

Reflection on Commentary Anthology Assignment

1. What did you like best about your group's final assignment presentation?

2. How does your collaboration experience with this anthology assignment and presentation compare with your collaboration experiences in other classes?

3. How did this collaborative anthology assignment change the argument you made in your individual commentary or your thoughts about your group's topic?

4. Which skills or knowledge that you used for this anthology assignment seem like they will be most useful to your future work in your other classes or career?

5. What could have been done (by your instructor, you, or your group members) to make the final assignment and presentation easier or more effective?

APPENDIX C. CODED ANTHOLOGIES

Anthology # (random order)	Common Ground (peers)	Counter-Arguments	Common Ground (readers)	Nuance	Openness	Logical Problems	Tone (+)	Tone (-)
1.	2	5	2	0	0	2	1	2
2.	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1
3.	4	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
4.	2	2	0	2	4	0	0	0
5.	4	1	2	0	0	1	1	0
6.	4	3	0	1	1	0	2	0
7.	2	2	0	2	1	1	0	0
8.	1	5	0	2	1	0	0	0
9.	1	1	1	0	4	2	0	1
10.	1	2	2	2	1	0	0	1
11.	3	0	2	0	1	0	0	0
12.	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	1
13.	3	0	3	2	2	3	1	0
14.	1	2	1	3	0	1	0	0
15.	2	3	1	1	2	0	0	0
16.	1	2	1	0	0	3	0	0
17.	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
18.	2	4	1	2	0	0	1	2
19.	1	2	1	1	1	0	0	0
20.	1	0	0	0	3	0	2	0
21.	5	5	2	6	0	0	0	0
22.	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	0
23.	1	3	2	0	0	1	0	0
24.	1	0	2	5	1	0	1	0
25.	1	1	3	0	3	0	0	3
26.	2	2	1	1	1	1	0	0
27.	1	0	4	0	3	2	1	0
28.	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	0
TOTAL	49	45	40	37	35	18	12	11
AVERAGE	1.75	1.61	1.43	1.32	1.25	0.64	0.43	0.39

APPENDIX D. TITLES OF ESSAYS

	Group Title/Topic	Essay #1	Essay #2	Essay #3	Essay #4
1.	The Civil Rights Struggle: Gay Rights	The Influence of Historical Persecution of Homosexuals on the Modern-Day Debate	Don't Ask, Don't Tell	Gay Housing Rights	
2.	Ethics in Our World	Childhood Obesity	Gay Marriage	Illegal Downloading of Music	
3.	A Changing Economy	Banks Too Big to Fail	Benefits of Drilling for Oil in the ANWR	The Legalization of Online Poker	
4.	Healthcare Anthology: Issues in the Lifecycle	The Cesarean: A Dangerous Copout	Getting to the Point: Needle Exchange Programs	Health Insurance: To Have or Not to Have	Health Care for the Elderly: Cares and Concerns
5.	Family Decisions	Negative Effects of Spanking	Divorce vs. High Conflict... What's Better for Children?	The Importance of Unified Parental Authority in Divorced Homes	
6.	Under the Microscope	Human Invasion	A Bug Problem	Wind Directions	
7.	Alternative Energy: The Promise of Tomorrow	Ethanol: The Solution, Problem, or Both	Producing Electricity: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly	Wind, Earth, or Water	
8.	Mass Media	Images in the Media	Video Game Influence	Sports in the Media	Becoming Associated with Social Networks
9.	The Secret Life of the American Young Adult	Teen Pregnancy	Education for Teen Parents	College Students' Credit Card Debt	
10.	The Effect of Entertainment on Popular Culture	The Internet: It's Impact on Society and Effects on Individuals	Views on the Negative Connotations Forced upon Dungeons and Dragons Enthusiasts	Videogames, a Cause of Violence, Aggression, and Addiction	Violent Video Games: Ruining the Generation?
11.	Social Networking	The Facebook Effect	Myspace, A Place for Music	Pictures of a Stranger We Won't See	
12.	Progress in American Government	President Obama's Troop Withdrawal from Iraq	Neg. Political Advertising: Positive or Poison?		

13.	The Effects of Media on Today's Youth	Information Under Load in Youth Through Television	The Continuation of Comparisons	The Magical Effect of Harry Potter on Readers	
14.	Life in the Fast Lane	Family Mealtime: A Necessary Component of Childhood	Obesity: Live Your Life Better	Society's Fast Track	
15.	Improving Education in Changing World	Who is No Child Left Behind Leaving Behind?	Entiende Usted?	Story Time with Sex	The Fall of Abstinence Only Sex Ed.
16.	Constitutional Controversies of Freedom of Religion	Teaching the Controversy	Ground Zero Mosque	The French Ban on Burkas is Discrimination	
17.	Hidden Facts	The Ground Zero Mosque Debate	Breast Cancer Funding, is it Overdone?	Misconceptions of Marijuana	Steroids for the Records
18.	Government Responsibilities	Lowering the Drinking Age	Youth Violence at Schools	Don't Ask, Don't Tell Policy	Illegal Immigration
19.	The Rights and Regulations of Students	Grading Scales and Curricula Vary Too Much	Eliminating Gym Classes	School Uniforms	Smoking Ban
20.	Human Rights	Hazing: An Obstruction of Our Rights	Modern Homelessness	Homelessness (Sometimes) Isn't the Fault of the Homeless	Ignoring Sex Slavery in the U.S.
21.	The Will of the People?	Voter Apathy	The Root of All Evil		
22.	How It's All Connected	Overseas Disaster Assistance	How Agriculture Affects Us All	Fast Food Industries	
23.	Ethics of Responsibility	A Window into Domesticated Animal Overpopulation	British Petroleum Oil Spill	British Petroleum Disaster in the Gulf of Mexico	
24.	Technology: The Impact on College Students	Distance Education Vs. Traditional Classroom	None of Your Business	The Impact of Text Messaging on How College Students Com.	Texting: The New Technology for Communication
25.	Good Stewardship	The Effects of Global Warming on the Economy	Global Warming and the Melting of the Ice Caps	SeaWorld: Dolphin's Greatest Threat	
26.	The Unknowns	The Debate on Existence of Extraterrestrial Life	Paranormal Existence: The Arguable Unknowns		
27.	Sports: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly	Drug Testing of High School Athletics	Risking Health for Victory	Professional Sports: Is it Worth It?	Headaches in the NFL
28.	Fads and Pop Culture	MTV Impacts	Taking a Bite Out of Twilight	Youtube Commentary	

