Greetings

• Greetings and discussion of broad notion of rhetoric as applying to all communication situations

The SLCC Community Writing Center

• Introduce the center
• Review the programs
  o Writing Coaching
  o Writing Workshops
  o Writing Partners
  o DiverseCity Writing Series
• Describe the use
• Articulate the work that the CWC Writing Assistants do
• Clarify the formal education levels that majority of Writing Assistants have (undergrads)

Focusing Question

Just how is it that dozens of students have consistently—over the last decade—been able to do work that is typically associated with a certain level of academic expertise?

What is Expertise?

• It can describe the ability to apply specialized knowledge to complex problems in particular areas of study or work.
• It is also a way of marking the identity or status of an individual, typically in a comparatively higher or superior role to others.

Quality of Expertise

• Interpret expertise through notions of “qualifications” and “qualified”

Different Concepts of Expertise

• In higher education
  o Valuable commodity owned or earned by individuals
  o Forms rationale for hierarchies
  o Regulates the type of work people do

• At the CWC
  o Hybrid of academic and non-profit cultures—“make do” approach
  o Student Writing Center and Critical Pedagogies
  o Flattened hierarchy
Splitting of Knowledge

- Reference Cheryl Geisler’s work: *Academic Literacy and the Nature of Expertise*
- Two dimensions of knowledge/problem spaces: “domain content” and “rhetorical problem space”
- Apply to literacy tasks
  - Content-focused
  - Rhetoric removed from knowledge
  - Naïve representations of rhetorical space

Knowledge without Rhetoric

- Challenge that students face when confronting rhetoric

Innate Rhetorical Expertise

- Argument that humans acquire rhetorical expertise as they acquire language
- Without rhetoric in formal schooling, learn to mistrust this acquired ability
- One purpose of CWC is to reconnect people with awareness of their rhetorical abilities

Using Rhetoric

- Start Writing Assistant training process in the act of rhetoric, not presenting rhetoric as concepts (content)
- Shift in attitude towards learners, one based in trust
- Story about student who challenged my collegial hypocrisy
- Describe beginning of CWC, none of us knew what to do…we had to collaborate
- Opportunity given by working outside of academia and with small groups of students

Alternate View of Expertise

- Working theory of an alternative view of expertise formed in a collaborative process, rather than found in individual achievement.
  - Meta-knowledge of the existence of rhetorical problem spaces and conscious awareness of our own innate rhetorical abilities
  - Access to a partial understanding of the discourse (including domain content/rhetoric) surrounding the unfamiliar literacy situation via artifacts or dialogue*
  - Trust in each other’s, and our own, innate rhetorical abilities